



College of Education and Human Development
Psychology – BS in Psychology

PSY 456: Psychology of Movies

Online Asynchronous (Flex) | Credits: 3 | Section: [#] | Term: Accelerated Fall 2026 (2026FAL) – Flex, Oct 5 – Dec 14, 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor	Abby Halston, Ed.D., NCC, LMFT Aloha! I am an Associate Professor of Psychology and Chair of the BS in Psychology at Chaminade, and a licensed marriage and family therapist in Honolulu. I love this course because films shape how all of us understand mental health. Together we will practice watching them with a psychologist's eye and a compassionate heart.
Email	abby.halston@chaminade.edu
Phone	808-739-4641
Office Location	Behavioral Sciences 111A
Virtual Office	Google Meet (link sent by email on request)
Virtual Office Hours	Mondays, 8:00–10:00 a.m. HST, and by virtual appointment (email for a Google Meet link)

Communication

Email or Canvas Inbox is the best way to reach me. I respond within **24 hours, Monday–Friday**; messages sent on weekends or university holidays are answered the next business day. Course announcements are posted in Canvas every Monday morning. Please check Canvas and your Chaminade email regularly.

School & Department

College	College of Education and Human Development
Department	Psychology (BS in Psychology)
Location	Behavioral Sciences Building, Chaminade University of Honolulu
Phone	[(808) ###-#### – add the College phone from the CEHD website]
Questions?	Contact your instructor or the College of Education and Human Development

Course Description & Materials

Catalog Description

This course examines how motion pictures depict mental illness, relationships, and other psychologically relevant issues, as well as how films portray the field of psychology. Topics include universal themes, the psychological value of filmmaking and viewing, application of psychological theories and concepts, accuracy in the depiction of psychological variables, and the psychological impact of popular film. Character analyses address personality, mental illness, developmental issues, conflict, and motivation.

Prerequisite: PSY 101 or instructor consent.

Course Snapshot

Modality	Online Asynchronous (Flex). There are no scheduled class meetings. Work is self-paced within the 10-week session, with two fixed milestone due dates. Milestones cannot be submitted late.
Time Commitment	This is a three-credit hour course requiring 135 clock hours of student engagement, per the official CUH Credit Hour Policy. Over the 10 weeks of this Flex course (about 13.5 hours per week), students will spend 30 hours on textbook reading (15 chapters) and module materials; 31 hours on viewing 13 assigned films plus the final-project film; 33 hours on movie reflections (13); 8 hours on film quizzes (10); 15 hours on online discussions and peer interaction (6); 2 hours on milestone #1: Introduction & pacing plan; 5 hours on milestone #2: Final project proposal & source research; 11 hours on final project research and writing.
Required Materials	Textbook: Wedding, D., Boyd, M. A., & Niemiec, R. M. (2024). <i>Movies and mental illness: Using films to understand psychopathology</i> (5th ed.). Hogrefe. ISBN-13: 978-0889375536. Required films (13): Week 1: <i>The Accountant</i> (2016) (R) Week 2: <i>Shutter Island</i> (2010) (R) Week 3: <i>Silver Linings Playbook</i> (2012) (R) Week 4: <i>The Aviator</i> (2004) (PG-13) Week 4: <i>Thank You for Your Service</i> (2017) (R) Week 5: <i>Black Swan</i> (2010) (R) Week 6: <i>The Danish Girl</i> (2015) (R) Week 6: <i>We Need to Talk About Kevin</i> (2011) (R) Week 7: <i>Beautiful Boy</i> (2018) (R) Week 8: <i>The Father</i> (2020) (PG-13) Week 9: <i>Joker</i> (2019) (R) Week 9: <i>Room</i> (2015) (R) Week 10: <i>Good Will Hunting</i> (1997) (R) Final project (choose one): <i>Manchester by the Sea</i> (2016), <i>A Star Is Born</i> (2018), <i>Rocketman</i> (2019), <i>Nightcrawler</i> (2014), <i>American Sniper</i> (2014), <i>Gone Girl</i> (2014).
Film Access	Films are available at low or no cost through the Chaminade Sullivan Family Library (DVDs and streaming film databases; lib.chaminade.edu), the Hawai'i State Public Library System (free card; Kanopy streaming and DVDs), and digital rental or streaming memberships. The Canvas page <i>How to Access the Films</i> links each title to JustWatch for current options and prices.
Recommended Items	A free Hawai'i State Public Library card; the APA <i>Publication Manual</i> (7th ed.) or the Purdue OWL APA guide.
Canvas	This course is delivered through Canvas (chaminade.instructure.com). Weekly modules contain the overview, readings, film access links, quizzes, reflections, and discussions. Announcements, submissions (with Turnitin), rubric feedback, and grades are all in Canvas.

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Upon completion of the BS in Psychology, the student will be able to:

1. Identify key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology.

2. Demonstrate adaptation and change through critical interpretation, design, and evaluation of psychological research.
3. Demonstrate effective written and oral communication within the field of psychology.
4. Explain the dynamic interaction among mind, body, and social influences as part of educating the whole person.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon completion of PSY 456, the student will be able to:

1. Apply basic psychological principles and theories to the analysis of human behavior depicted in film. (PLO 1)
2. Evaluate the accuracy of film portrayals of psychological topics, diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes. (PLO 1)
3. Identify film techniques used to communicate psychological concepts and influence audience interpretation. (PLO 4)
4. Analyze ethical and social issues related to the psychological impact of popular film. (PLO 2)

Marianist Values

This class represents one component of your education at Chaminade University of Honolulu. An education in the Marianist Tradition is marked by five principles and you should take every opportunity possible to reflect upon the role of these characteristics in your education and development:

1. Education for formation in faith.
2. Provide an integral, quality education.
3. Educate in family spirit.
4. Educate for service, justice and peace, and integrity of creation.
5. Educate for adaptation and change.

PSY 456 is especially guided by **Educate for Adaptation and Change**. Students develop flexible thinking, respect for differences, and critical analysis as they evaluate how cultural portrayals of mental health have changed over time. The course also reflects **Educate for Service, Justice and Peace**: students examine how media stigma affects people living with mental illness, and how accurate, compassionate portrayals can promote dignity and justice.

Native Hawaiian Values

Education is central to both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture — both seek transformative, value-centered learning that serves the marginalized. This is reflected in the 'Ōlelo No'eau (Hawaiian proverbs) below:

1. **Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana):** E ola au i ke akua ('Ōlelo No'eau 364) — May I live by God.
2. **Provide an Integral, Quality Education (Na'auao):** Lawe i ka ma'alea a kū'ono'ono ('Ōlelo No'eau 1957) — Acquire skill and make it deep.
3. **Educate in Family Spirit ('Ohana):** 'Ike aku, 'ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai ('Ōlelo No'eau 1200) — Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped.
4. **Educate for Service, Justice and Peace (Aloha):** Ka lāma kū o ka no'eau ('Ōlelo No'eau 1430) — Education is the standing torch of wisdom.
5. **Educate for Adaptation and Change ('Āina):** 'A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi ('Ōlelo No'eau 203) — All knowledge is not taught in the same school.

Alignment of Course Learning Outcomes

	CLO 1	CLO 2	CLO 3	CLO 4
Marianist Values	2. Integral, Quality Education	2. Integral, Quality Education	5. Adaptation and Change	4. Service, Justice and Peace
PLOs	PLO 1	PLO 1, PLO 3	PLO 4	PLO 2, PLO 3

	CLO 1	CLO 2	CLO 3	CLO 4
Native Hawaiian Values	Na'auao	Na'auao	'Āina (Adaptation)	Aloha
Gen Ed Outcomes (if applicable)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Participation & Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

Student Participation Expectations

This asynchronous Flex course requires consistent, meaningful engagement with content, peers, and the instructor. You set your own pace within the session, but logging in without completing activities does not count as participation.

Students are expected to:

- Complete assigned readings, films, and activities, using the suggested weekly calendar as a guide.
- Log in at least twice a week to review announcements, module instructions, feedback, and grades.
- Contribute substantively to discussions: post original responses and engage thoughtfully with peers (posting during the suggested week gives classmates time to reply).
- Demonstrate preparation, reflection, and critical thinking in all interactive components.
- Meet the two fixed milestone deadlines (Oct 19 and Nov 29) and complete all other work by Monday, Dec 14, 11:59 p.m. HST.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) — Instructor Commitments

- **Weekly Communication:** Written announcements every Monday and a module overview page for each week clarifying objectives, key concepts, and expectations.
- **Substantive Engagement:** Instructor-facilitated discussions that prompt analysis, clarify misunderstandings, connect posts to course concepts, and summarize takeaways.
- **Timely Feedback:** Clear rubrics and substantive feedback on all graded work.
- **Email inquiries:** response within 24 hours, Monday–Friday.
- **Weekly graded work (discussions, reflections):** within 5 school days of submission.
- **Major assessments/projects (milestones, final project):** within 7 school days of submission or due date.
- **Monitoring & Outreach:** Active monitoring of Canvas engagement, with pacing check-ins and referrals for students who fall behind.

Assessment & Grading

Assessment	Quantity × Points	Points	CLOs
Milestone #1: Introduction & Flex Pacing Plan	1 × 20	20	4
Film Quizzes (auto-graded)	10 × 10	100	1, 2
Movie Reflections	13 × 20	260	1–4
Online Discussions	6 × 15	90	1–4
Milestone #2: Final Project Proposal	1 × 30	30	1–4
Final Project: Psychological Film Analysis	1 × 100	100	1–4

Assessment	Quantity × Points	Points	CLOs
Total		600	

Assignment Descriptions

Milestone #1: Course Introduction & Flex Pacing Plan (20 pts; due Monday, October 19, 2026, 11:59 p.m. HST). Introduce yourself, write a short "film autobiography," set learning goals, and submit a 10-week pacing plan and film access plan. Not accepted late.

Film Quizzes (10 × 10 pts; auto-graded). One 10-question multiple-choice quiz per week on the assigned film(s) and chapter(s). One attempt per quiz.

Movie Reflections (13 × 20 pts). For each film, a 450–700-word response to five prompts: psychological concepts and diagnosis, accuracy, film technique, ethics and social impact, and a textbook connection with personal or cultural reflection. Graded with a rubric; submitted through Turnitin.

Online Discussions (6 × 15 pts). An initial post of 250–350 words and two substantive peer replies on films, stigma, representation, and treatment. Graded with a rubric.

Milestone #2: Final Project Proposal & Annotated Sources (30 pts; due Sunday, November 29, 2026, 11:59 p.m. HST). Film and character selection, working formulation, three key scenes, an accuracy question, and three annotated sources. Not accepted late.

Final Project: Psychological Film Analysis (100 pts). A 1,800–2,500-word APA 7 analysis of one approved film covering character analysis, clinical formulation, accuracy, film technique, ethical and social impact, and a culturally responsive treatment recommendation. Submitted through Turnitin.

Full instructions and rubrics for every assignment are posted in Canvas.

Course Policies

Late Work	This is a Flex course. Except for the two milestones, assignments have no individual due dates; all quizzes, reflections, discussions, and the final project close at 11:59 p.m. HST on Monday, December 14, 2026, and are not accepted after that. Milestones #1 (due Monday, October 19) and #2 (due Sunday, November 29) cannot be submitted late. Each milestone closes in Canvas at 11:59 p.m. HST on its due date, and late milestones are not accepted.
Extra Credit	No extra credit is available in this course.
Incomplete Grade	An Incomplete (I) may be considered when a student has completed most of the coursework with a passing grade and an extenuating circumstance prevents completion. Students must request it before the session ends, and remaining work must be completed within 30 days per university policy.
Quiz Attempts	Each film quiz allows one (1) attempt. Correct answers and feedback display after you submit.
Turnitin	All written assignment submissions (milestones, movie reflections, and the final project) are checked with Turnitin. Similarity reports are used as a teaching tool and are reviewed by the instructor; they are not the sole basis for any academic-integrity decision.
Course AI Expectations	Generative AI may not be used to write or substantially draft any submission in this course. Spelling and grammar tools are permitted. If you use AI for brainstorming or for locating sources, disclose how in a brief note at the end of your submission.

Content Advisory & Alternate Films	Several films include violence, self-harm, substance use, abuse, or other mature themes. Content advisories appear on each weekly overview page. Any student may request an approved alternate film from the textbook for any week, with no explanation required, by emailing the instructor. If a film raises personal distress, please pause, use the support resources listed in Canvas, and reach out.
Syllabus Changes	The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus. Changes will be communicated via Canvas announcements.

Final Grades

Final grades are submitted to Self-Service (selfservice.chaminade.edu):

Grade	Range
A	90% and above
B	80–89%
C	70–79%
D	60–69%
F	59% and below

Important Information

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or to a University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, plagiarism, and unauthorized and/or undisclosed AI usage, in addition to more obvious dishonesty. See catalog section Student Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work for further information.

Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Director of the Academic College. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor, Director, and the Dean of Academic College and may include an “F” grade for the work in question, an “F” grade for the course, academic notice, or dismissal from the University.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) Statement

Chaminade University recognizes the increasing role of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in academic and professional environments. AI encompasses, but is not limited to, generative AI platforms, automated writing or content generation software, coding assistants, and similar tools. Students must ensure all submitted work genuinely reflects their knowledge and effort. Using AI to produce or significantly complete graded assignments, exams or other academic tasks – defined as use that substitutes for or substantially replaces a student's own analysis, reasoning or written expression – without explicit instructor approval is considered academic misconduct and will be dealt with according to the University's Academic Honesty Policy.

If an instructor has reasonable grounds to question whether submitted work genuinely reflects a student's own knowledge, authorship, or mastery of course material — or whether it meets the course's expectations for AI use — the instructor may require the student to provide additional or alternative evidence of authorship and content mastery. Such evidence may include drafts, notes, revision history, source materials, process explanations, oral discussion, in class work, or completion of an alternative assessment. A student's refusal or

inability to provide such evidence may be considered, along with other available information, in evaluating whether the work meets course requirements and stated learning outcomes. Instructors will not rely solely on AI detection software or other automated tools in making grading or academic integrity determinations. Such determinations will be based on the totality of the available information and handled in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures. See the catalog section Student Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work for further information.

Title IX and Nondiscrimination

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator. For pregnant and parenting students, I am also obligated to provide you with similar resources for support and protections available to you. My goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources and support you need.

Contact information and reporting options: chaminade.edu/titleix/nondiscrimination/. File a report via the [Campus Incident Report Form](#).

Nondiscrimination Policy and Notice of Nondiscrimination

The university is committed to comply with all State and Federal statutes, rules, and regulations which prohibit discrimination. The university is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender identity and expression, age, religion, color, national origin (including shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics), ancestry, citizenship, disability, genetic information, marital status, breastfeeding, arrest and court record (except as permissible under State law), sexual orientation, or status as a covered veteran. Inquiries about Title IX or general Civil Rights concerns may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be found [HERE](#). On-campus Confidential Resources may also be found here at [CAMPUS CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES](#).

The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at: <https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the [Campus Incident Report form](#). Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates.

The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

Student with Disabilities Statement

Kōkua 'Ike

Accessibility Services recognizes disability as a valued aspect of diversity and ensures equal access to the educational environment in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended; and the principles and professional standards of the Association on Higher Education and Disability. Access is supported through reasonable accommodations and referrals to campus and community resources.

Appointments with the Accessibility Services Coordinator are available through Stellic at <https://chaminade.stellic.com> and may be held virtually or in person. Drop-in appointments are also welcome.

Students seeking support must meet with the Accessibility Services Coordinator as early as possible, even if they are unsure whether they have appropriate documentation of their disability or its impacts. The Accessibility Services Coordinator prioritizes listening to students' experiences and will discuss any documentation needs during the initial intake meeting. Students may seek support at any time.

Learn more at <https://chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations>.

Assessment of Student Work

Chaminade University may use student work anonymously to assess achievement of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes as part of ongoing quality improvement efforts.

Campus Resources & Support Services

The following resources are available to all Chaminade students. Reach out early — these services exist to support your success.

Resource	Description	Contact / Website
Accessibility Services (Kōkua 'Ike)	Accommodations under Section 504 and ADA. Contact early — appointments via Stellic, virtual or in person.	ada@chaminade.edu chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations
Tutoring & Academic Coaching (Kōkua 'Ike)	Tutoring and Academic Coaching Services support students' progression toward their academic, personal, and professional goals with clarity and intention. Services include individualized support in English, math, nursing, sciences, and social sciences, as well as guidance in developing goals and study strategies.	chaminade.edu/tutoring-academic-coaching-services
Sullivan Family Library	Research help, DVDs, and academic streaming film databases.	lib.chaminade.edu
Career Services	Career Services supports students throughout their career journeys. Services include individualized job search strategy coaching, resume reviews, job interview coaching, and access to career-related resources and opportunities.	chaminade.edu/career-services
Basic Needs Resources	Support for food insecurity, housing instability, and other basic needs.	chaminade.edu/basic-needs/
Title IX / Nondiscrimination	Reporting and support for sex discrimination and gender-based violence. Campus Incident Report Form available online.	chaminade.edu/titleix/resources-and-support/
Hazing Prevention	Confidential support, crisis intervention, and reporting for any type of abuse including hazing.	hazingpreventionnetwork.org/athlete-helpline/
CUH Alert Emergency Notification	Emergency text system. Register your cell number via the Chaminade portal and confirm the text to complete enrollment.	chaminade.edu
Campus Safety / SafeSwords	A program for students, faculty and staff, who may feel uncomfortable or unsafe walking alone on campus, at any time of the day. Call security, and a security professional will meet you at your location on campus.	SafeSwords program
Crisis Support (24/7)	988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text). Veterans press 1.	988

Weekly Course Schedule

Note: This is a Flex course. Dates below are a suggested pacing calendar. Only the two milestones have fixed due dates; all other work closes Monday, December 14, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. HST. The instructor reserves the right to modify this schedule. Changes will be communicated through Canvas announcements.

Wk of	Theme	Info / Activities	Due Dates (suggested unless bold)
1 Oct 5–11	Foundations: Film, Psychopathology, and Neurodevelopment	Read: Chapter 1: Films and Psychopathology; Chapter 2: Neurodevelopmental Disorders Watch: <i>The Accountant</i> (2016)	Discussion 1 Week 1 Film Quiz Reflection: The Accountant
2 Oct 12–18	Psychosis, Delusion, and the History of Treatment	Read: Chapter 3: Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders Watch: <i>Shutter Island</i> (2010)	Week 2 Film Quiz Reflection: Shutter Island
3 Oct 19–25	Mood Disorders, Family, and the “Love Cures” Myth	Read: Chapter 4: Bipolar and Depressive Disorders Watch: <i>Silver Linings Playbook</i> (2012)	Discussion 2 Week 3 Film Quiz Reflection: Silver Linings Playbook Milestone #1 due Mon 10/19
4 Oct 26–Nov 1	Anxiety, Obsessions, and Trauma	Read: Chapter 5: Anxiety and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders; Chapter 6: Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders Watch: <i>The Aviator</i> (2004); <i>Thank You for Your Service</i> (2017)	Discussion 3 Week 4 Film Quiz Reflection: The Aviator Reflection: Thank You for Your Service
5 Nov 2–8	Dissociation, the Body, and Perfectionism	Read: Chapter 7: Dissociative Disorders; Chapter 8: Sleep–Wake, Eating, and Somatic Symptom Disorders Watch: <i>Black Swan</i> (2010)	Week 5 Film Quiz Reflection: Black Swan
6 Nov 9–15	Identity, Conduct, and Representation	Read: Chapter 9: Gender Dysphoria and Sexual Dysfunctions; Chapter 10: Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders Watch: <i>The Danish Girl</i> (2015); <i>We Need to Talk About Kevin</i> (2011)	Discussion 4 Week 6 Film Quiz Reflection: The Danish Girl Reflection: We Need to Talk About Kevin
7 Nov 16–22	Substance Use, Relapse, and the Family System	Read: Chapter 11: Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders Watch: <i>Beautiful Boy</i> (2018)	Week 7 Film Quiz Reflection: Beautiful Boy
8 Nov 23–29	Memory, Aging, and Caregiving	Read: Chapter 12: Neurocognitive Disorders Watch: <i>The Father</i> (2020)	Week 8 Film Quiz Reflection: The Father Milestone #2 due Sun 11/29
9 Nov 30–Dec 6	Personality, Violence, and Abuse	Read: Chapter 13: Personality Disorders; Chapter 15: Violence and Physical and Sexual Abuse Watch: <i>Joker</i> (2019); <i>Room</i> (2015)	Discussion 5 Week 9 Film Quiz Reflection: Joker Reflection: Room

Wk of	Theme	Info / Activities	Due Dates (suggested unless bold)
10 Dec 7–14	Psychotherapy on Screen and Course Integration	Read: Chapter 16: Treatment Watch: <i>Good Will Hunting</i> (1997)	Discussion 6 Week 10 Film Quiz Reflection: Good Will Hunting Final Project All work closes Mon 12/14, 11:59 p.m.

University dates: Add/drop Oct 5–13; WNR deadline (Flex) Oct 23; last day to withdraw (W) Nov 20; offices closed Oct 12, Nov 11, and Nov 26–27.