PSY 440 Topic Paper Guidelines

The purpose of this project is to provide students with an opportunity to better understand psychopathology by diagnosing a character from either popular literature or popular cinema. This project constitutes 60 of the 300 points possible in this course. Since this project contributes substantially to the grade, significant effort should be reflected in this written project. **The guidelines below should be followed closely when completing this project as they provide the key criteria used to evaluate the papers.**

I.   **Reading/Viewing.** When reading the book or viewing the movie, students should be aware of the guidelines to facilitate preparation of the term paper. Frequently refer to these guidelines when reading/viewing and make notes for future reference when writing the term paper.

II.   **Term Paper Preparation.** Each student will submit an original paper (though you may collaborate to determine the diagnosis) of no less than 7 pages and no more than 12 pages written to correspond to the points below. <u>All papers must adhere to the following outline and use the following headings:</u>

> **Introduction:** Tell the character that you are describing. Include information on the source from which you obtained your data (e.g., movie title, book title) and cite the source using APA style. This will mean that you will have to cite your movie in APA Style (and, yes, it can be done). Give a brief (two [2] to three [3] paragraph) description of the movie story line, with an emphasis on the scenes that include the symptoms you will be discussing.

> **Diagnosis:** Provide a DSM-5 diagnosis for the character. Include a discussion of the symptoms of the disorder that the character meets. Describe what the character does in the movie that demonstrates symptoms of the disorder. In addition, discuss which disorders would need to be ruled out as a diagnosis and what information you would need to make this determination.

> **Information About the Disorder:** Provide information about the disorder you select as your diagnosis. Include in here information about etiology, associated features, and prevalence rates, along with any other pertinent information. You should refer to peer-reviewed articles in this section.

> **Impact on Personal Functioning:** Provide a summary of the impact of the disorder on the person's daily functioning. What types of distress did the person experience? Was the individual able to hold a job, go to school, etc.? How was the person treated? Was there evidence of stereotyping or labeling? Describe the effect on the family system and personal relationships (both positive and negative).What was the experience of the disorder for this individual, his or her family/friends/associates, and his or her spouse/significant other? Provide a description of how the individual thrived. What were his or her contributions to society, if any? Were there aspects of the person's functioning that were not affected?

Treatments: Describe the treatment(s) provided (medical, psychotherapy, psychopharmacological, etc.) to the character. What were the goals of treatment? Compare the treatment provided to that recommended in your text and/or research literature. If there was no treatment provided, describe the type of treatment you believe would be most effective for this character. If you determine that no treatment is necessary, give your rationale for this decision.

Personal Reaction: Describe your experience in watching the movie and diagnosing the character. What did you learn from performing this exercise? How has your thinking changed/not changed? Finally, how confident are you in your diagnosis? Is there anything that could increase your confidence?

Summary: End with a brief paragraph that reiterates your take-home message. Do not simply end the paper, but tie it all together at the end. (You could call this section **Conclusions** if you want.)

III.   **Style:** The paper should be written in the most current version of APA style. The only exception is that I do not want an abstract. everything else should conform to the most recent version of the *APA Publication Manual*. You should also work to avoid direct quotes (which will be punished at 0.1 points per quote) and contractions.

IV.   **References:** The paper should be appropriately referenced. There needs to be a minimum of five (5) references for the paper. Three (3) of these references should be peer-reviewed journal article references.