

# GCN 770.OA: Psychopharmacology

FALL/2021

14 SESSIONS/ Wednesday 7-9 PM/ ZOOM MEETING

**COURSE INSTRUCTOR:** Dr [Anna Flores Locke](#)  
**CONTACT INFORMATION:** [anna.locke@nyack.edu](mailto:anna.locke@nyack.edu); 646-378-6163  
**APPOINTMENT INFORMATION:** Virtual office hours: Monday - Wednesday 1 - 4 PM,  
evenings hours also available using link below  
**APPOINTMENT LINK:** <https://calendly.com/anna-locke/30min>

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

Sinacola, R.S.; Peters-Strickland, T.; Wyner, J.D. (2020). *Basic Psychopharmacology for Mental Health Professionals*. Pearson.

**OTHER RESOURCES:** Google Meet and E360

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## CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an on-line course, designed through PowerPoints, cases, videos, and required readings to provide students with an appreciation and understanding of basic classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications. Use of this knowledge occurs to make appropriate referrals for medication evaluations, and so side effects of such medications can be identified. This course emphasizes the key CACREP Clinical Mental Health Standard 2.h.: Classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation. (3 credits)

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Identify examples of psychotropic medications that are used in the clinical treatment of commonly diagnosed psychological conditions of clients and describe impact on symptoms
- Understand the basic structure and function of the nervous system as it pertains to psychotropic medications
- Understand the ethical parameters of what non-medical mental health professionals can and cannot discuss with clients and advocate.
- Understand hypothesized therapeutic and side effects of psychotropic medications.
- Understand the role of counselors in working with psychiatric consultation to help manage symptoms.
- Understand the role of counselors in talking with clients who have questions about psychotropic medications.
- Be able to articulate the current debate about the appropriateness of psychotropic medications for children
- Be able to articulate the relationship between the pharmaceutical companies, the FDA, managed care, and the consumer.
- Be able to articulate the counselor's role as advocate and its relation to social justice issues about who gets medicated and who has access to the more expensive medications.
- Describe the means by which drugs are taken into and distributed throughout the body, how

they are metabolized, and eliminated

- Be able to articulate basic findings of ethnopharmacotherapy and pharmacoeconomics
- Understand the concepts of tolerance and dependence.
- Identify principle classes of psychoactive drugs and the typical sites and mechanisms of action
- Increase awareness of drug interactions and the possible impact of recreational drugs on client functioning

CMHC 2.h. is assessed based on quizzes, midterm, and final exams. The materials cover antidepressants, anxiolytics, anti-psychotics, mood-stabilizers, stimulants, herbaceuticals, and some drugs of abuse. Students apply advocacy skills to written cases including their knowledge of referral processes and side effects.

This course is housed within the Alliance Graduate School of Counseling and the Department of Mental Health Counseling. This course is overseen by Dr. Antoinette Gines-Rivera, Director, Alliance Graduate School of Counseling, Nyack College, Manhattan Campus.

This course is housed within the Alliance Graduate School of Counseling

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:	Assignment* Measuring Goal Attainment:	Other Alignments	
		Core / Skill	Dept / Prg
1. The student will learn the biopsychosocial aspects of psychopharmacology by applying an ethical and integrated clinical model. (IL Standard 4, 3.a – Applying)	Readings Drug Report Cases	Inspiring and equipping students worldwide for ministerial, educational, and community-building professions in their part of the world. (Corresponds to Nyack Core Value “Socially Relevant”-5)	Standard 2.h.: Classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation.
2. The student will develop understanding of the basic structure and function of the nervous system, therapeutic and side effects of psychotropic medications, and concepts of tolerance and dependence. (IL Standard 4, 2.b – Understanding)	Readings Midterm exam Final exam Drug Report	Developing skills to serve a diverse clinical population as counselors. (Corresponds to Nyack Core Value “Intentionally Diverse”-3)	Standard 2.h.: Classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation.
3. The student will develop an understanding of their role in talking to clients about psychopharmacology, as an	Readings Cases Discussion Questions	Developing a professional identity that incorporates	Consultation

advocate, and working with  
psychiatric consultations to help  
manage symptoms.  
(IL Standard 4, 3.a - Understanding)

consultation.  
(Corresponds to  
Nyack Core Value  
"Personally  
Transforming"-4)

The above student learning goals are aligned with the institutional core academic goals and skills and the department's and/or program's goals stated in the college catalog (<https://www.nyack.edu/site/nyack-catalog/>). Attainment of goals is evaluated by the identified assignments.

\*Assessments primarily serve as measures of individual student growth and goal attainment. Secondly, samples of student work and/or evaluations of student work may be used by the School/Department and Institution for improving student learning and as evidence of program effectiveness. Care will be taken to protect student identity.

### **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:**

All due dates and times are listed in Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Please note that the due dates are not the day of class, some are before class and others are after. This is intentionally done to allow you sufficient time across the week to complete the assignments and be prepared for classroom discussions.

#### **1. Participation and Attendance:**

Major methods of learning in this class are discussions, lectures, quizzes, and case scenarios, with 7 two hour synchronous meetings on Mondays (7:00 – 9:00 p.m. EST) and 7 asynchronous meetings. Before Monday's meeting, video lectures, PowerPoints, assignments, and/or chapter reading must be reviewed and completed. The time together will be used for discussion, presentations, small group exercises, etc. Therefore, everyone's attendance and participation are necessary. One excused absence (need to send an email to the Instructor before class on the reasons for the absence) during the course will be permitted (there will be a loss of points). However, the second absence will constitute a considerable lower grade and a third absence will constitute excessive absences and a non-passing grade. If the computer you are using does not have a working internal or external microphone, at all times, by the first synchronous session you will need to drop this course.

#### **1. Discussion Questions - 7 in total (25% of final grade)**

The purpose of these discussion questions is to have each student reflect and engage with their peers regarding the content of the assigned reading. There will one reading discussion question for every asynchronous class; seven in total. The purpose of the discussion questions is for students to have an intelligent dialog with their fellow classmates; post your thoughts on the topic and incorporate the chapters' content into your answers to show that you are learning the material. It is a post that displays significant importance, value, validity, solidity and independence of thought. It is a response that adds depth and breadth to a discussion. It includes proper grammar and spelling. It directly addresses the question and does not "go off on a tangent." It begins by addressing the class and ends with your name. The minimum required word count is 150-200 words and applies to all discussion question main responses that are graded as well as all replies graded for participation. Quotes and references to course materials are strongly encouraged to allow other students to learn by your example.

#### **2. Cases - 3 in total (25% of final grade)**

- Students will complete 3 cases (assigned in e360) with questions to assist with critical thinking, application of medications (negative/positive), dilemmas, understanding of terms, etc. The questions will assist you in understanding and responding to the case vignette. The answer to each question should be pertinent and thorough. Include citations if needed to answer the question(s). The case response page length should be 2-4 pages per case.
- Reviewing the cases in the textbook will be helpful. APA format for this paper should be used; however. The rubric used to grade this paper is the standard online MA in MHC paper grading rubric. A copy of that rubric is available in e360 Resources.

**3. Selected Drug Report (20% of final grade)**

- This assignment will consist of 4 dropbox submissions of a written report on the topics described below. Each separate report must be 3-5 pages (title page and abstract not required, however reference page is required), written in APA format, and include a minimum of three references (all references must be within the last five years).
- You will select a pharmaceutical drug used for the treatment of psychiatric disorders to complete this assignment. You will be emailed an excel sheet to choose the drug, and it must not be the same as another student. Once a student selects a drug, you must select another one that is not taken.
- The 4 topics to be discussed are:
  - i. *Historical background of a drug*: Introduce the selected drug and give a brief historical perspective.
  - ii. *Mechanism of Action*: Discuss the pharmacodynamics of the drug. Include any specific Impacts of the drug at both the cellular and the systemic levels on the CNS.
  - iii. *Pharmacokinetics*: Discuss the absorption, distribution, metabolism and elimination of the drug. Include specific events such as blood brain barrier, placental barrier and physiological and psychological reactions and side effects.
  - iv. *Pharmacotherapy*: Indications and Contraindications for this drug. Discuss why and for whom this drug is prescribed. Include relevant psychopathology and psychodiagnostics.

**4. Midterm and Final Exams (Each 15% of final grade; in total 30% of final grade)**

- These will be available on e360. They are not timed and open book

Grades for this class are calculated for each category of grading. Each category is assigned a percentage of the total grade. The course grade is based on the following components:

- Online Discussion Questions – 7 in total..... 25%
- Cases – 3 in total..... 25%
- Drug Report..... 20%
- Midterm Exam..... 15%
- Final Exam..... 15%
- Total Points 100%

As outlined in the catalog, all grades are calculated based on the following scale of Letter Grade/Percentile Equivalents:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	F
93-100%	90-92%	88-89%	83-87%	80-82%	78-79%	73-77%	70-72%	0-69%

Care should be taken to perform at one’s best in each class. Minimum course, program, and institution grade requirements are outlined in the college catalog (<https://www.nyack.edu/site/nyack-catalog/>), falling below which may affect timely degree completion and/or financial assistance.

**CARNEGIE UNIT ACCOUNTABILITY**

In order to demonstrate accountability to reach the student learning goals listed above, this course holds to a professional academic standard known as the Carnegie Unit. This impacts the amounts of reading, “seat time” (instructional time), and outside work assigned. Standardized expectations are 45 hours of instructional and homework time per credit (**135 hours of instructional and homework time for a 3-credit course**). Accreditors and the US Department of Education have set these standards so as to assure that students receive a fair education.

The estimated instructional and homework hours for this course, by category, are as follows:

Type of Work	Hours
Course Presentations/“Lectures”	42
Required Readings	30
Writing Assignments	20
Studying for Exams	10
Online discussions	20
Exams	15
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>135</b>

**Week 1**

**Overview**

GCN 7700.OA: Psychopharmacology  
Fall 2021

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>September 08</b> 7-9 PM EST Zoom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW OF COURSE</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and review syllabus (due date: 09/07)</li> <li>• Ch. 1 (due date: 09/07)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 2</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>September 15</b> Asynchronous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BASIC NEUROBIOLOGY</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 2 (due date: 09/14)</li> <li>• Art Assignment via Dropbox (due date: 09/17)</li> <li>• DQ # 1 (due date: 09/18)</li> <li>• Select drug for report using the excel sheet</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 3</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>September 22</b> 7-9 PM EST Zoom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY AND PHARMACOKINETICS</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 3 (due date: 09/21)</li> <li>• Drug Report # 1 (due date: 09/25)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 4</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>September 29</b> Asynchronous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HISTORY TAKING AND ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 4 (due date: 09/29)</li> <li>• Create an initial interview template submit via dropbox (due date: 10/01)</li> <li>• Case # 1 (due date: 10/02)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 5</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>October 06</b> 7-9 PM EST Zoom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TREATMENT OF UNIPOLAR DEPRESSION</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 5 (due date: 10/05)</li> <li>• DQ # 2 (due date: 10/08)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 6</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>October 13</b> 7-9 PM EST Zoom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TREATMENT OF BIPOLAR DISORDER</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 6 (due date: 10/12)</li> <li>• Case # 2 (due date: 10/15)</li> <li>• Drug Report # 2 (due date: 10/16)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 7</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>October 20</b> Asynchronous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TREATMENT OF ANXIETY DISORDERS</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 7 (due date: 10/19)</li> <li>• DQ # 3 (due date: 10/23)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 8</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>October 27</b> Asynchronous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MIDTERM EXAM</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b></p>

GCN 7700.OA: Psychopharmacology  
Fall 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>due date: 10/29</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>November 3</b> <b>7-9 PM EST</b> <b>Zoom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TREATMENT OF PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS</li> </ul>
	<b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch. 8 (due date: 11/02)</li> <li>DQ# 4 (due date: 11/05)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>November 10</b> <b>Asynchronous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TREATMENT OF ADHD AND DISORDERS OF ATTENTION</li> </ul>
	<b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch. 9 (due date: 11/09)</li> <li>Case # 3 (due date: 11/12)</li> <li>Drug Report # 3 (due date: 11/13)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>November 17</b> <b>7-9 PM EST</b> <b>Zoom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TREATMENT OF COGNITIVE DISORDERS &amp; TREATMENT OF SLEEP DISORDERS</li> </ul>
	<b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chs. 10 &amp; 11 (due date: 11/16)</li> <li>DQ # 5 (due date: 11/20)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>December 1</b> <b>Asynchronous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TREATMENT OF PERSONALITY DISORDERS</li> </ul>
	<b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch. 12 (due date: 11/30)</li> <li>Drug Report # 4 (due date: 12/04)</li> <li>DQ # 6 (due date: 12/03)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>December 08</b> <b>7-9 PM EST</b> <b>Zoom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TREATMENT OF CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY AND COMORIDITY</li> </ul>
	<b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chs. 13 &amp; 14 (due date: 12/07)</li> <li>DQ # 7 (due date: 12/10)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>December 15</b> <b>Asynchronous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FINAL EXAM</li> </ul>
	<b>Activities, Assignments and/or Exams</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Final Exam by 12/17</li> </ul>

**COURSE POLICIES**

- **Reasonable Accommodation:** Any student eligible for and requesting academic accommodations due to a disability is required to provide a letter of accommodation from the Office of Disabilities Support Services within the first six weeks of the beginning of classes.
- **Student Identity Verification and Privacy:** Student identity in the online course is verified via measures for online course enrollment (student name, matching institutional email address, and student ID#) and online course login (secure login and pass code via my.nyack.edu portal). Use of the Edvance360 Software and System is implemented and maintained in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99, and assurances are provided that information protected by FERPA is secure from people unauthorized to use the System.
- **Attendance/Absence:** For online courses, instructors are to have 45 hours of instruction for every credit hour, which is demonstrated through the Carnegie Unit explanation in this syllabus. Attendance is taken once a week based on the student's interaction in the online course, as determined by threaded discussions, submitted papers, quizzes/exams, and/or synchronous class sessions. Attendance will be marked in the Faculty Portal for those students who have demonstrated participation based on that week's interaction in the course. Missing any class time is detrimental to students and should be avoided. Students, however, are permitted one hour of absence (excused or unexcused) for each credit hour before grading penalties are imposed. There will be only **ONE** unexcused and **ONE** excused class absence allowed each semester. IF there is an additional absence for unavoidable circumstances, such as severe illness, the death of a family member, etc. you will be expected to explain your absence in writing in a typed appeal letter to the professor. The professor will respond with a typed statement of how you can make up the class. This will typically involve a 2-3-page research paper or book report on a topic selected by the professor. **THIS REMEDY FOR ABSENCE MAY ONLY BE USED ONCE PER SEMESTER.** Any additional absence not addressed in this manner will result in a **grade reduction in the course**. One letter grade will be deducted from each extra absence. For example, let's say your accumulative grade is A-, it becomes B+ when you're absent twice instead of the one allowed absence; and becomes a B if you're absent three times. **You will automatically fail the class (and be forced to drop out of internship) if you are absent more than three times.**
- **Late Assignments/Extensions:** All assignments are due on the date designated. One point of your grade will be deducted for each week assignments are handed in late without professor's approval. *Assignments handed in more than two weeks late will NOT be accepted (student will receive a grade of ZERO for that assignment).* Assignments cannot be handed in past the last day of the class, unless an extension request was approved by the professor and filed with the Registrar's Office no later than the last day of the class (before final exams week begins—see *Extensions for Late Work policy in the college catalog*).
- **Make-Up Exams:** Students may not be absent from an announced examination period except for reasons beyond their control. In the event of an unavoidable absence, the student must arrange for a make-up examination with the instructor.
- **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** In a Christian college academic integrity is particularly important. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing (the unacknowledged use of other people's words or ideas as though they were your own) will be subject to the penalties as *described in the plagiarism policy in the college catalog and student handbook*.
- **Academic Quality:** Remember that grades for assignments are based not only on the completion of the assignment but the **quality** of work produced. The higher the **quality** of skills and abilities demonstrated, in areas such as expression and depth of thought, organization, writing, research, reporting, and observation, the higher the grade given to the assignment. All written assignments will be completed using the indicated style guide.
- **Style Guide for written work:** All written assignments are to be double-spaced, with title page, no abstract needed, references page and follows APA formatting. Please refer to the APA manual or Purdue OWL for guidance.
- **Writing Center:** Because ALL Writers Need Feedback - The Writing Center is available to assist all students with writing for any classes. Peer Writing consultants, who are fellow Nyack College students

and alumni, are trained to help with all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming to organizing to revising and editing papers. Plan well in advance to bring the assignment sheet, or a draft of the paper, and specific questions/concerns to any of the Center's locations. Students are also able to have access to online consultations through Google Docs via their nyack.edu email account. The Center's services are free. Students can drop in and work with a consultant or make an appointment through the website or by calling the Center. For more information about Writing Center services and locations, please visit the website: <https://www.nyack.edu/writingcenter/>

- **Communication with Instructor:** Nyack College email will be the primary mode of communication with students, unless specified otherwise. Please check your email regularly.
- **Grievance Procedure Policy:** Students who have a grievance relative to academic policies, grades given, or other academic judgments should first seek to resolve their complaints with the professor. If resolution is not reached, the matter may be directed to the department head or program director of the class in question. If this does not solve the problem, a formal complaint may be made in writing to the respective Academic Dean whose judgment is final. *See the full Grievance Procedure Policy posted in the college catalog.*
- **Discrimination (Title IX):** Sex and gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, are prohibited in educational programs and activities, including classes. Title IX legislation and College policy require the College to provide sex and gender equity in all areas of campus life. If you or someone you know has experienced sex or gender discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or stalking, we encourage you to seek assistance and to report the incident through resources available at [www.nyack.edu/safetyandsecurity](http://www.nyack.edu/safetyandsecurity). Confidential assistance is available at the Student Counseling Center. Faculty are NOT confidential under Title IX and will need to share reported information with the Title IX Coordinator. For these and other policies governing campus life, please see the Student Handbook.
- **Electronic Devices:** It is expected that ALL electronic devices be MUTED during class time. Do not answer phone calls or text messages during class.
- **Online Classrooms:** The technology used to facilitate online classrooms is Google Meet (aka Google Hangout or Hangouts Meet), and this technology can be launched from your Google Calendar when in [my.Nyack.edu](http://my.Nyack.edu). (Click on the Google App 9 square icon when in your [my.Nyack.edu](http://my.Nyack.edu) account and select Calendar). Additionally, it can be launched by typing in the following URL where xxx-xxxx-xxx is a 10 character string provided in each e360 course shell: [meet.google.com/xxx-xxxx-xxx](https://meet.google.com/xxx-xxxx-xxx). Furthermore, Google Meet has a mobile app called Hangouts Meet in the App Store that can be downloaded onto a smart device. Lastly, students and/or professors occasionally encounter problems connecting to the online classroom via Google Meet. As a back-up plan, each professor has a conference call-in number (identified on E360) to quickly move the online classroom to an audio-only conference call as needed.
- Examples of good Online Classroom Etiquette: **The Core Rules of Netiquette** by Virginia Shea (an excerpt from *Netiquette* )
- **Withdrawal Date:** Withdrawal from a course is allowed until the class reaches the 75% mark of the course length. Withdrawal requires signatures on the Registrar's Course Withdrawal form and the process should be started well before the deadline. Financial implications and satisfactory academic progress implications provided by the financial aid counselor and the academic advisor should be considered during the Course Withdrawal form process.