1. **Course Designation and Identifier**

   1.1 Adler Graduate School  
   1.2 Course number 514  
   1.3 Psychodynamics of Psychopathology  
   1.4 Three (3) credits  
   1.5 Prerequisites:

2. **Course Description**

   This course offers an in-depth examination of psychopathology from an Adlerian perspective. The course leads students through an Adlerian-based understanding of the development of the most frequently diagnosed mental disorders. Students gain skills in identifying etiology, tracking psychodynamics, and seeing life style attributes in psychopathology, from an Individual Psychological perspective.

3. **Texts, Materials, and Resources (required and optional)**

   3.1 Required texts:


   3.3 Required articles:

   Related biographical online articles (see individual units)

   3.4 Required websites:
Related websites (see individual units)

3.5 Required videos: see the coursepage for the list

4. Competencies and Learning Outcomes

Students in this course learn:

4.1 The Adlerian theory about the various factors that contribute, individually and together, to the development of psychopathology in children, adolescents, and adults, viewed by Adlerian psychology as distortion in thinking and reasoning.

4.2 The Adlerian perspective to human growth and development and the variables that contribute to a healthy and productive lifestyle characterized by productivity, vibrant relationships, and strong social interest. (A6)

4.3 The Adlerian view of the etiology of neuroses and mental disorders, taking in particular a holistic, psychosocial point of view. (E1)

4.4 The interaction of psychological distress, hesitation in the face of challenges, and demands of social living; each concept viewed as essential to the understanding of the Adlerian view of psychopathology. (E4)

4.5 Specific examination of certain, more frequently, diagnosed neuroses and mental illnesses and their onset in children, adolescents, and adults, i.e. anxiety, depression and eating disorders. (F1)

5. AGS Online Course Overview

5.1 AGS online courses have the same total duration as residential courses – 7 weeks (5 weeks of coursework plus two weeks for completing final assignments). You should expect to spend 135 hours on all course-related activities. Your instructor will be actively available for all class activities and individual consultations for the duration of the coursework and as needed until final papers grades are submitted.

5.2 Your course instructor will respond to your questions or comments within 48 hours (barring unforeseen circumstances). You will be expected to observe the same response time-- replying within 48 hours. During the class, your instructor will post specific office hours on your class webpage.
5.3 Please stay current in the class. Generally, you will be expected to complete reading assignments, submit at least two substantive postings per week (in response to the questions and/or tasks by your instructor), and – in some cases - engage in experiential activities, per syllabus. These expectations are very general, as you will find unique teaching style and specific expectations presented in each online class.

5.4 Although you will likely find that you have a lot of experience in the discussed topics, please remember that the most convincing position is the one supported by the most current and relevant research. You will find these sources in peer-reviewed journals. Use APA style and format requirements in referencing sources.

6. Course Outline

6.1 Week 1: Units 1 and 2

Unit 1 topic:

**Personal Introductions**

*Stress and its relationship to pathological development*

Viewing: Robert Sapolsky: Stress portrait of a killer.

Unit 2 topic:

**Introduction to Individual**

*Psychology’s perspective of pathology*

Readings: Sperry, all authors (2015) pages 2-4: Alfred Adler’s View; pgs 7-8: Psychosocial, environmental, cultural, biological considerations; pgs. 15-24 Adlerian case conceptualization

Ansbacher & Ansbacher (1956), pg.22-30; 101-125; 143-145; 239-256; 281-298; 366-382

Other reading – per Moodle coursepage
6.2 Week 2: Units 3 and 4

Unit 3 topic:

*Adlerian dynamics relative to the development of the neurotic and psychotic lifestyle(s)*

Readings: (continued from Unit 2)

Sperry, all authors (2015) pages 2-4: Alfred Adler’s View; pgs 7-8: Psychosocial, environmental, cultural, biological considerations; pgs. 15-24
Adlerian case conceptualization

Ansbacher & Ansbacher (1956), pg.22-30; 101-125; 143-145; 239-256; 281-298; 366-382

Optional- supportive sites
http://www.adlerian.us/

Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts related to an understanding of psychopathology and the role these concepts may play in the etiology of different neurosis, and development of the individual style of life.

Inferiority feelings
Compensation and overcompensation
Social interest
Striving for significance
Felt minus/perceived plus
Cognitive schema
Birth order
The Creative Self
Organ inferiority
Family atmosphere
Parenting styles
Pampered and Neglected child
Striving for perfection
Useless side of life (wasting behavior)
Hesitating attitude (“yes, but…”)
Life tasks
Safeguarding
Unit 4 topic:

*Affective (or Mood) Disorders/Psychosexual Disorders*

*The Case of Jeffrey Dahmer*

Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts related to an understanding of psychopathology and the role these concepts may play in the etiology of the development of the neurotic style of life (lifestyle).

Readings: Note: These readings will be continued to Unit 4

Ansbacher & Ansbacher (1956), pgs. 299-303, 411, 420, 424-427

Sperry, all authors (2015) pgs. 95-103 (MDD) (stop at Treatment considerations); pg. 268-270 (Sexual Disorders); 278 (paragraph on Paraphilic Disorders)

Video (online): Stone Phillips interviews – Segments 1 & 2 (parts 1-6).

6.3 Week 3: Units 5 and 6

Unit 5 topic:

*Eating Disorders: Anorexia Nervosa*

*The Case of Karen Carpenter*

Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts related to an understanding of psychopathology and the role these concepts may play in the etiology of the development of the neurotic style of life (lifestyle).

Readings:

(continued readings from unit 4); in addition:

Sperry, all authors (2015) pg. 152-158 (Eating Disorder: Anorexia Nervosa)
Video (online): AE Biography – Carpenters: Harmony and Heartbreak (pts. 1-6).

Unit 6 topic:

**The Affective (or Mood) Disorders** *(continuation)*

**Substance Use Disorders**

**The Case of Anna Nicole Smith**

Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts related to an understanding of psychopathology and the role these concepts may play in the etiology of the development of the neurotic style of life (lifestyle).

Cont. Readings:


Other reading – per Moodle coursepage

6.4 Week 4: Units 7 and 8

Unit 7 topic:

**Substance Abuse: Alcohol**

**Case of Betty Ford**

Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts related to an understanding of psychopathology and the role these concepts may play in the etiology of the development of the neurotic style of life (lifestyle).

Cont. Readings:

Ansbacher & Ansbacher (1956), pgs. 299-303, 411-420, 424-427

Sperry, all authors (2015) pgs. 311-20
Unit 8 topic:

**Schizophrenia**

*Case of Ted Kaczynski*

Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts related to an understanding of psychopathology and the role these concepts may play in the etiology of the development of the neurotic style of life (lifestyle).

Readings: Ansbacher & Ansbacher (1956), pg. 314-318, 314-318; 303-308; 423

Sperry, all authors (2015) pgs. 177-94 (Schizophrenia)

Video: Ted Kaczynski: The Unibomber Special on 20/20, parts 1-6

6.5 Week 5: Unit 9

Unit 9 topic:

**Anxiety Disorders**

*Case of “Lars”*

Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts related to an understanding of psychopathology and the role these concepts may play in the etiology of the development of the neurotic style of life (lifestyle).

Readings: Ansbacher & Ansbacher (1956), pgs. 299-308 63-8, 73-4, 80-5

Sperry, all authors (2015) pgs. 63-68, 73-74, 80-85 (re Anxiety in relation to our case presentation).

Video/Movie: Lars and the Real Girl (2007) by Craig Gillespie

6.6 Week 6: Working towards completion of required SPT

6.7 Week 7: Working towards completion of required paper
7. Grading

A  90-100 points
B  80-89 points
C  70-79 points
R  Retake- Needs more time or instruction to master the requirements of the class
NC  Quality of work or participation falls below minimum expectations, including:
   • Not attending class.
   • Not properly notifying registrar of a withdrawal
   • Missing class periods in excess of the number allowed by AGS’s course attendance policy (see section 9 below)
   • Not resolving a grade of incomplete within 45 days after the last class meeting (not the assignment due date) and an agreed upon extension has not been arranged by the student and instructor. The Incomplete turns to No Credit (NC) and the course must be repeated at full price.

8. Assessment/Evaluation Procedures
(Detailed descriptions of these assignments are available on Moodle)

8.1 Assignment Overview

8.2 Original Forum Posting Submissions
Original posts are graded on a scale of 0-4 points. Responses posted after the deadline will not be graded. You can earn a maximum of 36 points in this required activity.
8.3 Peer Responses

Peer responses can earn up to 2 points per unit, with a maximum of 18 points total. Peer responses are graded on accuracy, relevance, presence of scholarly support, and delivery (including compliance with major grammar and punctuation rules and netiquette). Peer responses posted after deadline will not be graded.

In these responses, you will a) bring another aspect to the discussion, add a new insight to already offered ideas; b) find additional scholarly support for your classmate’s position and demonstrate that you have done some good additional reading on the issue; c) reply to a group of your classmates by comparing or contrasting their stated positions, or probing, offering a counter-thought; and/or d) integrate your classmates’ observations into your original position (whether supportive or not).

In meeting at least one of the above (a-d) requirements, a good peer response will bring the discussion to an advanced level and will parallel what you might observe in a live
8.4 Special Projects: Reflective Response (12 points)

This is your opportunity to reflect on your learning experience. How has your understanding of Adlerian dynamics in relation to the etiology of psychopathology changed throughout this course? Is there a specific dynamic that you really gained insight to and has had an impact on how you may view pathology in the future? Was there a discussion in this class that impacted your knowledge and/or awareness, including self-awareness?

Please pick any discussion from this class that impacted your understanding of psychodynamics of psychopathology, and record a video. In your video, please explain the chosen psychodynamics (with respect to a particular psychopathology) in a way that would be very Adlerian, while making sense to a non-Adlerian professional and emphasizing unique contributions of Individual Psychology in understanding that particular psychopathology.

8.5 Final paper (30 points)

Choose one of the persons investigated through the units and write a paper discussing four main psychodynamics related to their pathology.

Use APA format to write this paper, and cite at least 5 peer-reviewed sources. The paper should be no longer than eight (8) pages inclusive of title and reference pages.

9. **Online Discussions or Activities**

Online classes provide an opportunity for open and insightful dialogue. As in any dialogue, these discussions demonstrate many facets of diversity, including diversity of values, opinions, and experiences. We view these differences as welcomed and needed attributes of a scholarly discussion. Acknowledgment of and respect for these differences is a sign of mature scholarly debate.

Following are guidelines governing online discussions:

9.1 Faculty members monitor discussions and intervene when requested or deemed necessary.

9.2 NEVER post to the course room content:

   - That is known to be illegal,
   - That is potentially harassing, threatening, or embarrassing,
9.3 The tone of the exchange is one of respect for individual differences. If you disagree with an opinion expressed by a classmate or instructor, respond in a scholarly manner, arguing about the subject of discussion vs. the person who posted it.

9.4 Students are encouraged to not overuse exclamation marks (!!!!!), CAPITAL LETTERS, or other marks of emotional reaction that may be received as yelling, etc.

9.5 Online communication presents a significant level of ambiguity, as verbal content of communication is not well supported by its non-verbal (including contextual) components. If a student feels threatened or offended by a statement made by another student during online portion of a class, please address the issue immediately with the other student(s) to clarify their position and your reaction. If this does not work, contact your class instructor so actions can be taken if necessary.

9.6 During online discussion, follow the same rules concerning protection of confidential information, as you would follow in face-to-face discussion. Confidential client information is not appropriate in forum postings. Further, mental health related issues pertaining to you or your family members must be used with caution, if at all.

9.7 Be aware that some agency-specific information, such as descriptions of programs that have been developed or specialized treatment approaches, may potentially be a subject of copyright law. Although it is not always possible to know whether information is protected, the minimum expectation is to always identify and credit the source of information.

9.8 If the expectations in professional communication or other expectations specific to unique nature of online scholarly activities are not met, the concerning issue will be addressed with involvement of Program Director (or Academic VP, if needed or determined by the PD as requiring higher level of intervention). A student or a faculty member may raise the issue.

9.9 Any off-list communication between student and faculty will be conducted through Moodle, or redirected to Moodle of a student starts it via conventional private e-mailing.

10. Special Project Time (SPT)
Special Project Time (SPT) allows students the opportunity to integrate course materials. SPT is meant to be a self-contained experience, requiring 30 hours to complete. SPT generally focuses on either (a) an experiential exercise paired with a short, 2 page integrative writing component or (b) a research exercise and a short, 2 page integrative writing component.

An integrative, SPT experience can be based on an individual project or a group project. Once again, the individual or group completes an experiential or a research oriented exercise, followed by a short integrative writing assignment.

SPT experiences may be constructed in such a way that they pertain to students’ unique degree plans. This is done in consultation with the course instructor.

SPT specifics for this course are posted on Moodle.

11. **Writing Guidelines including APA Format**

11.1 All written assignments in courses at the Adler Graduate School, including those submitted in online courses, must be in APA format unless specifically noted by the course instructor (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), 2009, American Psychological Association. ISBN 1-4338-0561-8).

11.2 Strict APA publication rules in Online Peer Discussions might prove difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. Following the “letter” of the Manual (i.e., not using “I”, or passive voice, keeping proper margins, or complying with headings requirements) may be either difficult or counterproductive in forums such as peer discussions. However, it is still important to adhere to the “spirit” of the APA Manual (i.e., grammar, orderly presentation of ideas, reducing bias in language, and presenting scholarly statements and arguments).

11.3 Prior to submitting a response, please proofread carefully. Grammar and spelling errors may make your response difficult for other students to appreciate.

11.4 Please keep in mind that, while the Internet offers a lot of exciting and up-to-date information, not all Internet sources are considered scholarly. For example, Wikipedia is not an academically peer-reviewed source. Rather, it is an “anybody-reviewed” source and, therefore, can’t be used in presenting your argument in AGS classes-related tasks.

12. **Attendance and Participation Policy**

12.1 At the beginning of each course, please complete or update your student profile on Moodle and get familiar with your classmates and the instructor by visiting their profile information.
12.2 You are expected to attend each of the course learning activities. In the AGS asynchronous online courses, you attend the class by complying with posting and other submission deadlines.

12.3 In most of the courses, you will have two deadlines per week during the five weeks of coursework. For each week, and in conjunction with online instruction and other learning activities, your course instructor will announce two discussion questions or topics corresponding with two of the units in the course outline. The questions will appear in Moodle each Monday morning for the five weeks of coursework. You will have until Tuesday night (11:59 PM CST) for the first question and Friday night (11:59 PM CST) for the second question to submit your original response.

12.4 Your original response will be at least 350 words, with at least one scholarly reference. Through discussions supported by in-text citations and other references, your response will reflect critical thought related to the topic and specific assignments for that unit.

12.5 You will then have until Wednesday night (11:59 PM CST) and Saturday night (11:59 PM CST) to respond to at least two of your classmates’ postings for each question (four responses per week). These peer responses have to be substantive. In these responses, you will bring another aspect to the discussion, find additional scholarly support for your classmate’s position, reply to a group of your classmates by comparing or contrasting their stated positions, integrate your classmates’ observations into your original position. In sum, an ideal peer response will bring the discussion to an advanced level and will parallel what you might observe in a live scholarly debate.

12.6 You can post your peer responses at any time between Monday and Wednesday (for discussion topic One) and between Thursday and Saturday night (for discussion topic Two), but not before you post your original response. Your course instructor will acknowledge your participation and will grade the quality of it by responding to your original pasting, whether individually or in a summary format.

12.7 It is the AGS attendance policy that student have to attend at least 80% of the class sessions in order to be eligible for a letter grade. Not complying with posting deadlines or not posting at all will be counted as a missed class.

13. Participation Disclaimer

Active participation in class discussions/exercises/demonstrations is encouraged. As with other AGS courses, in this course, individual students must determine for themselves the level of disclosure/intimacy that is appropriate for them.
Whenever confidential information/material is used in any AGS course, students and faculty members are expected to observe AGS policy concerning the handling of confidential information/material. Full descriptions of these policies are readily available.

14. **Academic Integrity Policy**

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects, and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism, or some other form of dishonest conduct may result in failure for the work involved. Academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the Adler Graduate School. Here are examples of academic dishonesty:

- **Cheating** - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit.

- **Fabrication** - Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of academic integrity.

- **Plagiarism** - The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

15. **Nondiscrimination Clause**

The Adler Graduate School is an equal opportunity educator and employer. The Adler Graduate School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or physical disability in the employment of faculty or staff, the admission or treatment of students, or in the operation of its educational programs and activities. The institution is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws.

16. **Learning Accommodations (including students with disabilities)**

If a student in this course has a documented learning disability, tell the instructor during the first week of class. The instructor needs to know on the front end so
that he or she can work with you. The Adler Graduate School is committed to helping all students be successful, as best as can be reasonably accommodated. Documenting a learning disability occurs at the student’s expense. When documented appropriately, the Adler Graduate School makes all reasonable accommodations.

17. **Instructor Contact Information**

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