PSYCHOLOGY READING LIST

**A Beautiful Mind.** Sylvia Nasar  
There is sometimes a fine line between brilliance and illness, between genius and madness. This biography of John Forbes Nash, Jr., explores the life of a man who emerged from the torture of paranoid schizophrenia, which he suffered for 30 years, to accept the Nobel Prize for economics, honoring work accomplished in the 1950s, before madness obscured his mathematical genius. During the height of the Cold War, in the "Dr. Strangelove" era, he conceptualized the Nobel-prize winning "game" theory, an amalgam of political, mathematical, and economic principles that explains complex global macro events. (Abnormal)

**A Child Called It.** Dave Pelzer  
A boy trying to survive his mother who has abused him his entire life. He tries to escape from his mother.

**A Child Called Noah: A Family Journey.** Josh Greenfield  
A story of a family's day-to-day life living with and loving a brain-damaged child. (Neuroscience)

**An Unquiet Mind.** Kay Redfield Jamison  
Memoir of a leading researcher of manic-depressive illness based on her experiences as a researcher, clinician, and as a person ravaged (and enriched) by the disease. (Abnormal)

**Brilliant Madness.** Patty Duke  
Actress, Patty Duke, writes about having bipolar disorder and how it both destroys her as well as allows her a measure of "brilliance" (Abnormal)

**Cassandra's Daughter, A History of Psychoanalysis.** Joseph Schwartz.  
History of psychoanalysis from its origins in 19th century medical science to the present day. From the couch to Prozac. (History)

**Catch 22.** Joseph Heller  
Captain Joseph Yossarian, a World War II bombardier, is being stationed on the island of Pisona. He is an individualist who seeks to protect his own life by fleeing to the hospital, since catch-22 prevents him from either being grounded for illness or obtaining a leave. (Social)

**Dibbs, In Search Of Self.** Victoria Axline.  
Dibbs presents as a child locked away in his own world...withdrawn and antisocial, unable to relate to anyone. This is a true story, written from his casenotes, classified as educationally subnormal...and then he enters therapy. (Abnormal, Developmental)

**Don't Ask Miranda.** Lila Perl  
Miranda has an unstable home life and must change schools frequently. She is never in one place long enough to develop relationships with her peers. When she is finally asked to join a group, she learns that she must cheat and steal for acceptance. (Social, Adolescence)

**Flowers For Algernon.** Daniel Keyes  
Charlie Gordon is a young man with an IQ of 68 who has a job at a box factory and attends night classes in an effort to improve himself. A (very fictional) experimental brain operation becomes available that promises to triple intelligence (it has already done so for a mouse named Algernon), and Charlie excitedly decides that he wants to give it a try. (Learning, Intelligence)
**Friday's**, Patricia Lee Gauch
A young girl and her involvement with a group that is moving in the wrong direction. Despite warnings from her parents, teachers, and friends, she does not see her mistake until she is in serious trouble. (Adolescence, Social)

**Girl Interrupted**, Susanna Kaysen
Autobiographical account of psychological decompensation during late teens. The subsequent psychiatric hospitalization for two years, and the later understanding of the process. (Abnormal)

**I Am The Cheese**, Robert Cormier
Follows the life of a young boy whose happy, if somewhat unusual life with his friends and family gradually starts to unravel, until the truth of the boy's situation is finally revealed. He seeks to uncover the secret he knows is locked in his subconscious mind that will allow him to locate his parents who mysteriously disappeared during his childhood. (Adolescence)

**I Never Promised You A Rose Garden**, Hannah Green
An adolescent girl's successful struggles with depressive and psychotic symptoms in a psychiatric hospital. (Abnormal)

**I'm Eve**, Chris Costner Sizemore and Elen Sain Pittillo.
Author writes of her 20 multiple personalities. (Abnormal)

**Listening to Prozac**, Peter D. Kramer
Controversial book by a psychiatrist who discusses the use of the drug Prozac as a treatment for depression but which also causes cosmetic changes in personality and character so that people quite literally become "someone else". Raises questions about the nature of personality and character and identity as well as the unsettling implications of being able to tailor your personality with a pill. (Neuroscience)

**Nobody's Child**, Marie Balter & Richard Katz
Marie Balter spent twenty-five years of her life in mental hospitals, then went on to attend Harvard University and to assume a role as spokesperson for the mentally ill. (Abnormal)

**One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest**, Ken Kesey
Fictional account of a mental hospital and the healing effects of a newcomer who fought for the rights (and psychological health) of its patients~to his own detriment (abnormal)

**Ordinary People**, Judith Guest.
Family deals with the tragic loss of their son and brother. (Adjustment Mechanisms, Stress and Frustration)

**Quitting The Nairobi Trio**, Jim Knipfel.
The author spent six months in a locked-door psych ward, only to find that life can be better on the inside. (Abnormal)

**So Much Unfairness of Things**, C. D. Byran
A young man attending a preparatory school which his father and grandfather also attended. Parental pressure to succeed academically causes him to break the schools honor code by cheating on a Latin exam. He is turned in by a friend and expelled immediately. Instead of showing strong disapproval for his son's actions, the incident actually brings the father and son closer together. (Family Relationships, Social)

**Tales From A Traveling Couch**, Robert U. Akeret
A New York psychotherapist sets out to find his most memorable patients and discover what has become of their lives. (Abnormal)

**The Lost Boy**, Dave Pelzer
Sequel to *A Child Called It*. (Social, Abnormal, Developmental)
**The Man Who Thought His Wife Was A Hat**, Oliver Sacks
A music teacher, whose associates have questioned his perception, is referred by his ophthalmologist to the neurologist Oliver Sacks. During the first office visit, Sacks notices that P. faces him with his ears, not his eyes. His gaze seems unnatural, darting and fixating on the doctor's features one at a time. At the end of the interview, at which his wife is present, P. appears to grasp his wife's head and try to lift it off and put it on his own head. "He had . . . mistaken his wife for a hat!" She gave no sign that anything odd had happened. (Neuroscience, Abnormal)

**The Minds Of Billy Milligan**, Daniel Keyes
Story of Billy Milligan's 24 personalities. Milligan was the first person acquitted of a crime due to multiple personalities. (Abnormal)

**The White Seal** Rudyard Kipling
Kotick, a white seal, has a quest for a secluded island which would provide permanent safety from the hunters. After finding such an island, he must convince the skeptical elders who have accepted the killing by the hunters as a part of life to follow him to the island. It is only through violent confrontation that he is able to lead them to safety. (Social)

**There's A Boy In Here**, Judy and Sean Barron
Account of a mother and her autistic son written alternately from the viewpoint of the mother and then the son. (Abnormal)
PSYCHOLOGY FILM LIST

If you use a film with an "R" rating and you are UNDER 17, you must have permission from your parents to use the resource.

The story of John Nash and his schizophrenia. Although not completely true to his life, all agree it presents schizophrenia well. It won four Oscars for 2001.

American Beauty - R - 1999
Mid-life crisis, family, gays, sexuality - Best Picture Oscar (and others) 1999. The Burnham family joins the cinematic short list of great dysfunctional American families.

And the Band Played On PG-13, 1993 (HBO)
"Story of the discovery of the AIDS virus. From the early days in 1978 when numerous San Francisco gays began dying from unknown causes ..." "A superior, made-for-cable film, this Home Box Office adaptation of Randy Shilts's chronicle detailing the emergence of AIDS in America and the fight against bureaucracy and society for a cure is a taut, outrageous, and affecting true-life drama."

As Good as it Gets – PG-13 - 1997
Obsessive compulsive disorder Best Actor and Best Actress Oscars, "For all of its conventional plotting about an obsessive-compulsive curmudgeon (Jack Nicholson) who improves his personality at the urging of his gay neighbor (Greg Kinnear) and a waitress (Helen Hunt) who inspires his best behavior, this is one of the sharpest Hollywood comedies of the 1990s."

Awakenings - PG-13 - 1990
It's about a neurologist who discovers that giving a dopamine agonist to some catatonic patients brings them out of their catatonic state. Robin Williams stars as the neurologist Oliver Sacks. (The movie is based on Sacks' book of the same title.) – hope and despair in finding treatments for mental illness, psychobiology.

Bowling for Columbine - R-2002
Michael Moore’s scathing look at American society. He focuses especially on our violent solution and the marketing of fear. In places it is a little uneven, but is very thought provoking. Oscar for best documentary of 2002.

Boys Don't Cry - R - 1999
Deals with extreme homophobia, cross-dressing, lesbianism.

Breakfast Club, The - R-1985
Teen classic adolescence and rebellion- Forced to spend a Saturday detention in school, five disparate high school kids find that they have more in common than they ever realized.

Crash R 2005
"The movie deals with racial and ethnic struggles in southern California, ... ‘Crash’ is a great movie. ... it’s so many different stories that weave in and out of each other.

*Dead Poet's Society – PG 1989
Adolescence, James Marcia, Erikson, et. al. Robin Williams stars as an English teacher who doesn't fit into the conservative prep school where he teaches, but whose charisma and love of poetry inspires several boys to revive a secret society with a bohemian bent.

Do the Right Thing – R-1989

Fight Club -1999 R
An office employee and a soap salesman build a global organization to help vent male aggression. "
Menopause, inter-generational friendship. "Kathy Bates stars as an unhappy wife trying to get her husband's attention in this amusing and moving 1991 screen adaptation of Fannie Flagg's novel Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe.

Good Will Hunting R-1997
Damon plays a janitor at MIT who is an enormously gifted mathematician. Salivating professors bring the angry and troubled young man to psychiatrist Robin Williams, hoping Damon will conform enough to further his education.

Half Nelson 2006 R
When there's a nebulous attraction between a teacher and a young teenage child--as in the superb Half Nelson--the relationship has all the makings of confused disaster. For both, drugs represent something that may help them escape their worlds.

Hoop Dreams PG-13, 1994
A fascinating documentary that tracks the lives of two inner-city teenagers over a 5 or 6-year period (the film makers shot over 500 hours of videotape in the teens' homes, high schools, etc.).

I am Sam -PG-13, 2002
The story of a mentally challenged man fighting to retain custody of his 7-year-old daughter.

Insomnia R 2002
Al Pacino and Robin Williams it is rich with so many psychological examples:. Disordered behavior, cognitive dissonance, states of consciousness, motivation, sensation/perception, catharsis, adolescent and adult development.

In the Heat of the Night -PG-
1967 original version w Rod Steiger & Sydney Poiter, race relations in a small town, interpersonal dynamics.

The Joy Luck Club R- 1993
Mother-daughter relationships, cultural assimilation, ethnic identity. " The 1993 film adaptation of Amy Tan's bestselling novel is both a delight and a moving experience, an anthology of stories wrapped in one Chinese-American woman's journey to understand her roots."

Kramer vs. Kramer PG- 1979
Divorce, gender, and sex roles, " Winner of five Academy Awards including Best Picture, Actor, and Screenplay, Kramer vs. Kramer remains as powerfully moving today as it was when released in 1979, simply because its drama will remain relevant for couples of any generation.

Lars and the Real Girl 2008 PG-13
To some, Lars and the Real Girl will play as comedy; to others, tragedy. Lars has a new girlfriend named Bianca. Soon the whole town play along with the "delusion."

Little Man Tate -PG-1991
A movie that discusses developmental, intelligence, assessment, and social issues in children. "Basically it's the story of Fred Tate, a prodigious kid (expert in mathematics, physic, music and painting, among many other things), and the struggle of his mother Dede (Jodie Foster) to give his little son the possibility of enjoy a normal life without significant worries, like most of the 8 year old kids have."

Memento –R- 2002
Memory & truth. " Guy Pearce (L.A. Confidential) and Joe Pantoliano (The Matrix) shine in this absolute stunner of a movie. Memento combines a bold, mind-bending script with compelling action and virtuoso performances. Pearce plays Leonard Shelby, hunting down the man who raped and murdered his wife. The problem is that "the incident" that robbed Leonard of his wife also stole his ability to make new memories."
**Million Dollar Baby PG-13 2004**
Developing powerful bonds between "white-trash" Missouri waitress and aspiring boxer Maggie Fitzgerald (Hilary Swank), her grizzled, reluctant trainer Frankie Dunn (Eastwood), and Frankie's best friend and training-gym partner Eddie "Scrap-Iron" Dupris (Morgan Freeman). 2004 Oscars for Best Movie, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor.

**Mystic River R 2003**
"Chilling mystery revolves around three boyhood friends in working-class Boston--played as adults by Tim Robbins, Sean Penn, and Kevin Bacon--drawn together by a crime from the past and a murder (of the Penn character's 19-year-old daughter) in the present. These dual tragedies arouse a vicious cycle of suspicion, guilt, and repressed anxieties, primed to explode with devastating and unpredictable results.

**Pan's Labyrinth (Laberinto del fauno, El) (2006): R**
"In the fascist Spain of 1944, the bookish young stepdaughter of a sadistic army officer escapes into an eerie but captivating fantasy world." Won 3 Oscars, In Spanish with English subtitles.

**Parenthood -PG-13-1989 Steve Martin,**
Great for stages of development through lifetime, and parenting styles and outcomes “The story of the Buckman family and friends, attempting to bring up their children. They suffer/enjoy all the events that occur: estranged relatives...”

**Philadelphia -PG-13, 1993**
Tom Hanks, for a good study of prejudice and discrimination. It showed a good example of how prejudices are formed how they manifest themselves in discrimination, and one way to overcome them.

**Rain Man -R- 1988**

**Shine-PG-13, 1996**
Australian pianist- struggle for independence-15 years in a psychiatric hospital. , "...surprising story about real-life classical pianist David Helfgott, an Australian who rose to international prominence at a very young age in the 1950s and '60s, and suffered a psychological collapse after enduring years of abuse from his father (Armin Mueller-Stahl).

**Spellbound G 2002**
"Spellbound is the extraordinary documentary that follows eight teenagers on their quest to win the National Spelling Bee competition The Bee is as intense a competition as any Olympic match, and for the spellers and their families, the stakes are just as high. The unbearable pressure becomes even more extraordinary as it is felt by ordinary teenagers.

**Stand by Me -R- 1986**
Adolescent development, " but it's more about the joys and pains of boyhood friendship than a morbid fascination with corpses.

**The Usual Suspects -R-1995**
Cons, gullibility, leadership, motivation (David Mamet).

**What's Eating Gilbert Grape?" -PG 13-1993**
Can be used for interesting discussions on how to define "abnormal" "this is the funny, moody tale of a young man named Gilbert Grape (Johnny Depp) who lives at home in a small town with his 500-pound Momma (beautifully played by nonpro Darlene Cates), his mentally retarded younger brother Arnie (DiCaprio, utterly convincing), and his sisters.