

# Child Psychopathology

## PSYC 142

Fall 2025 Section 02 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/06/2025

### Contact Information

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#### Office Hours

Tues/Thurs

9:00-10:00 AM

### Course Information

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#### Lecture

Tues/Thurs 10:30-12:00

BBC 225

### Course Description and Requisites

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Nature, causes, assessment, and treatment of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional problems of children and adolescents. Emphasis on psychological, social, and biological determinants of human behavioral and psychological disturbance.

Prerequisite: PSYC 001.

Letter Graded

### Classroom Protocols

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# Class Protocols and Procedures

## Expectations for Behavior

You are expected to arrive on time to each class meeting and attend to what is going on. You are expected to behave in a respectful manner toward your peers and instructor. When differing opinions emerge in class discussions, I expect you to maintain a civil tone. You can expect me (the instructor) to do the same. If you engage in behavior that is overtly disrespectful, disruptive to the class, threatening, racist, bigoted, or otherwise harmful toward others, you may be removed from the class for the day and we will discuss paths forward for you to engage appropriately in the class.

You are expected to check Canvas and email regularly, and to communicate professionally through this means. You may message me through Canvas, or email me at my SJSU email address. If you use a non-SJSU email address, please make sure your email includes your full name, as it appears on Canvas. I expect you to communicate professionally via Canvas, just as in class.

## My Email and Office Hours Policies

- I make every effort to answer email within 24 business hours (Monday- Friday, 9 AM- 5 PM)
- If I don't email you back within 48 business hours, please re-send your email, as it's possible that I missed it
- I typically do not answer email in the evening or on weekends
- I try to keep emails short, especially when they are about scheduling, logistics, etc.. Please do not take my brevity for rudeness or a lack of interest in helping you.
- I do not review assignment drafts over email. We can discuss these in office hours .

## Office Hours

- Please come to office hours! I want to help you succeed as a student, both in my class and broadly. I *like* talking 1-1 with my students, and students usually say these conversations are helpful too.
- I am happy to talk to you about the following in office hours:
  - Course content that you have questions about (either things you're "not quite getting", or things that you understand but have "bigger picture" questions about)
  - Challenges you're having with studying for the class, or otherwise getting what you want
  - Jobs in the field
  - Career plans
  - Graduate School
  - Your overall experiences as a student at SJSU (and ideas for ways to move forward if you're feeling "stuck" in general as a student)

- Resources at SJSU and in the community to help with personal challenges you might be facing

Because professionalism and boundaries are important to me, I do **not** do the following in office hours:

- Provide psychotherapy to students (though I can help answer questions about getting therapy at SJSU CAPS or elsewhere, if that would help you succeed as a student)
- Ask students questions about their personal lives that are unrelated to things they have come to office hours to discuss
- Talk about my own personal life in great detail
- Scold students for having struggled on exams or assignments

## Program Information

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**Program learning outcomes (PLOs)** are skills and knowledge that students will have achieved upon completion of the Psychology BA degree. Each course in our curriculum contributes to one or more of these PLOs. The PLOs for the Psychology BA degree are:

1. Knowledge Base of Psychology. Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.
  2. Research Methods in Psychology. Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.
  3. Critical Thinking Skills. Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.
  4. Applications of Psychology. Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.
- Values in Psychology. Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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Upon successful completion of this course....

CLO1 – Critical thinking development: Abnormality in Historical Context. Students will be able to describe a contemporary approach to defining psychopathology in children and adolescents, and they will be aware of the historical context around defining psychopathology.

CLO2 – Knowledge based and application development: Understanding paradigms. Students will be able to describe the major paradigms (biological, cognitive, behavioral, psychodynamic, and sociocultural) used in understanding the etiology, assessment, classification, and treatment of psychological problems in children and adolescents.

CLO3 – Research Methods development: Clinical science. Students will be able to describe the role of science (with its varying methods) in the study of “normal” and “abnormal” behavior in children and adolescents.

CLO4 – Critical thinking and application: Classification. Students will be able to identify the process of classification and explain its dependence on theoretical paradigms including the use of the current diagnostic system for psychopathology, with emphasis on application to problems commonly seen in children and adolescents.

CLO5 – Critical thinking and application: Assessment. Students will be able to name different purposes of assessment of abnormal behavior in children and adolescents, and to identify different modalities appropriate to these purposes

CLO6 – Knowledge base and application & Values in psychology - Evidence based interventions development. Students will be able to identify different types of psychological, social, and biological interventions used in treating psychological problems and clinical disorders and the value of empirical evidence for those interventions.

## Course Materials

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### Introduction to Abnormal Child and Adolescent Psychology

**Author:** Weis, R.

**Publisher:** Sage

**Edition:** 4th

**ISBN:** 9781071840627

The course will be based on the 4th edition of the textbook, and students are responsible for the content in that edition. the course does *\*not\** require students to complete specific exercises from the textbook or any online activities that are "bundled" with the text. Students should be advised that the content of the 3rd edition is highly similar; students choosing to use the 3rd edition should take care to (1) ensure that the content they are reading maps to the correct chapter/topic in the 3rd edition, and (2) ensure that (together with lecture) their reading is providing good coverage of the Learning Objectives for each module (which form the "study guide" for exams).

### iClicker

We will use iClicker polling in this course (see Participation section below). Students do not need to purchase anything to do this, but they do need to plan carefully to make sure they are configured to participate in iClicker sessions each class. Students may participate in iClicker polls using a smartphone, tablet, or laptop.

To use a smartphone, students should download the iClicker app and visit the following URL: [join.iclicker.com/WUOJ](https://join.iclicker.com/WUOJ) ([join.iclicker.com/WUOJ](https://join.iclicker.com/WUOJ)). Students using laptops or tablets should visit the following URL for instructions, <https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/frequently-asked->

[questions/iclicker-frequently-asked-questions.php \(https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/frequently-asked-questions/iclicker-frequently-asked-questions.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/frequently-asked-questions/iclicker-frequently-asked-questions.php). If students anticipate that they will **not** have consistent access to a laptop or smartphone, or if they simply prefer not to use these technologies, they should contact the instructor to arrange an alternate means of participation.

## Supplemental readings

Supplemental readings (e.g., journal articles) may be assigned. They will be made available on Canvas at least 3 business days before they are due.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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[placeholder for general comment about course requirements]

## Welcome Assignment

This is a relatively informal writing assignment to get you thinking about the course topic, what experience and perspective you bring to our class, and what will help you succeed. You will respond to 5-9 questions in about 300 words total (*not* 300 per question). Responses will be graded based on coherence and relevance to the questions posed.

## Participation

Each class meeting, students will be able to earn one participation point for participating in active learning exercises using iClicker polling. Starting with the second class meeting, you will respond to 1-4 clicker questions during each class period. These will be questions mixed into lectures and activities to (a) assess your comprehension of material that has just been covered, (b) gauge your engagement during in-class activities, and/or (c) gauge your reactions to class material (e.g., How engaging? How clearly presented? How well paced?). Questions may be administered at any point during the class period, including the beginning and end of the class. These questions will be graded on participation, not accuracy. Students who participate in all clicker questions during a class period will receive 1 participation point for that day. Students who participate in some, but not all, clicker questions on a given day will receive 0.5 participation points for that class. Students who do not participate in any clicker questions on a given day will receive 0 points for that day. The instructor reserves the right to substitute a brief, written assignment, graded in a similar fashion, should Clicker be unavailable due to technical issues, or if another mode of participation is better suited for class goals that day (e.g., having students submit questions for an upcoming guest speaker). Students are responsible for ensuring that they have a functional way to participate in clicker sessions each class (see p. 2 of this syllabus). No credit will be awarded to students who do not submit clicker responses due to technical difficulties, running out of battery, etc. will not be considered an excuse for failing to submit. You are encouraged to regularly check Canvas to ensure that your responses are registering correctly.

## Weekly Assignments (Pre-Discussion Reflections and Post-

# Discussion Reflections)

**Weekly Assignments.** For each of the topics covered, you will complete two assignments.

**Pre-Discussion Reflections (due before THURSDAY class).** After you engage with course content for each chapter, you will summarize and reflect on your learning and self-assess how competence with the learning objectives for the topic at hand. You will write about 250-300 words (1-1.5 double-spaced pages) total on the concepts you found most significant. Essentially, you will pass these assignments by completing them as instructed, on time, and without plagiarism. The assignment descriptions in Canvas contain more explicit detail about what is required to pass.

**Post-Discussion Reflections (due FRIDAY 1159 PM).** After each small-group discussion, you will complete another assessment designed to (a) guide you to reflect on what you gained from the small-group discussion with your peers (b) evaluate what steps you need to take to succeed on the upcoming exam, and (c) reflect on the “take-away” messages most significant to you from this Unit. You will also include your notes from your small-group discussion here, to document your active engagement and participation in these integral class activities.

## Unit Exams

About once per month, you will complete a unit exam designed to assess the specific competencies (learning objectives) listed for each chapter. The questions will revolve very heavily around the learning objectives. and will consist of approximately 25-30 multiple choice questions. Almost all of the questions will require you to apply concepts to real-world situations, rather than to simply match terms to definitions. You will have 60 minutes to complete each exam All exams will be closed book, closed note, and administered during class time and/or the final exam period. You will need to bring your own Scantron (882E, green, 50 spaces on each side).

## Required Project: Everyday Parenting

**Required Project:** [Everyday Parenting Project](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K_7vEfQjKul33CtvbGsP4gH4dbcO76FSZ7CESSf1o4/edit?usp=sharing)

([https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K\\_7vEfQjKul33CtvbGsP4gH4dbcO76FSZ7CESSf1o4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K_7vEfQjKul33CtvbGsP4gH4dbcO76FSZ7CESSf1o4/edit?usp=sharing)). You will complete an online, self-paced Coursera class entitled “Everyday Parenting” (<https://www.coursera.org/learn/everyday-parenting> (<https://www.coursera.org/learn/everyday-parenting>)) by Dr. Alan Kazdin, world-renowned parent training expert (and SJSU alumnus!). This 15-hour course highlights how the principles of evidence-based treatment for disruptive behavior disorders can be put into practice by parents. *This is not intended to train you to deliver this as a psychotherapeutic intervention, nor is it intended as psychological intervention for any children in your life.* You will complete the course and then write a paper in which discuss (a) what stood out to you the most from the class, (b) your thoughts on how the strategies could be applied in specific applied scenarios, (c) contextual and cultural fit of the strategies for various kinds of individuals.

## Optional Projects

Two optional projects are available in this class as “extra credit” opportunities. You are expected to complete the Everyday Parenting project as part of the “Course Class Achievements”, and you may do one or more of the other projects to boost your grade. Each project provides an in-depth look at the

application of course concepts. For each project, you will complete some significant research or applied experience and then write a paper that showcases what you learned. Please see the Projects module on Canvas or the embedded links below for comprehensive project descriptions and rubrics. Brief descriptions of the projects are as follows:

### Book Project

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B5HpyCLCt2jRSCKQl9ZW3uo7zZITXfQjKU5LApISSu8/edit?usp=sharing>). This project provides you an in-depth, complementary, evidence-based point of view on some topic within child psychopathology. You will read a book from a list and then write a ~10-15 page (depending on book length, see descriptions) paper in which you, (a) provide a chapter-by-chapter summary of the book, (b) reflect on the book overall, and © integrate what you learned from the book with your existing knowledge base about mental health. *If you wish, you may do this project three, on three separate books.*

Sampler Platter Project (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZlOZZatIVtXSP4E5mfJdPwuySz7-kd2qWWCojNkHvZo/edit?usp=sharing>). The project requires you to engage with a variety of briefer works related to different topics in child mental health, and clinical/applied psychology broadly. Works include research-related talks at SJSU, documentaries, podcasts, and TED talks. The idea here is that you are getting briefer and shallower exposure to a larger number of outside perspectives, compared to the book project. That is, if the books in the book projects are “entrees”, then the short works in this project come together to form a “sampler platter” for you to enjoy. There is a large “menu” of works listed, and you can pick works that appeal to your interests and preferences the most. You will write a ~10-15 page paper (again, length will vary depending on the number of different works) that is similar to that for the book project in that you will: (a) provide a chapter-by-chapter summary of the book, (b) reflect on the book overall, and © integrate what you learned from the book with your existing knowledge base about mental health.

## Final Reflection Paper

This is the culminating experience for the course. You will write a ~5-page paper reflecting on how your views on child psychopathology, the broader fields of psychology and child development, public policy related to children and families, and online learning have (or have not) changed through this course. The idea of this assignment is for you to assess where this course has fit in the broader journey of your education and life experience. This is not a research paper or technical report. You will be successful on this assignment if you respond to the prompts and write professionally. A detailed assignment description and rubric will be available at least halfway through the course.

## Final Exam and Culminating Experience

The final exam/experience consistent of two parts: (1) Unit Exam 4, which is administered during the University-Scheduled final exam period (**Thurs Dec 11 10:45-12:45**); and, (2) the the Final Reflection paper. It is due at the beginning of the University-designated final exam period (See course schedule).

Final exams are governed by University Policy S06-4 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S06-4.pdf>) which states that *"There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course."* Consistent with this policy, exams will only be given at alternative times if (a) there are verifiable emergency circumstances or (b) if a student has more than two exams scheduled within a 24-hour period, in which case the student must contact the instructor *at least three weeks before the last regular class meeting* to schedule an alternative exam time.

## Recommended Weekly Schedule

We will cover about one topic per week. In general, class activities and assignments will follow the same structure and deadlines each week. Below is a recommended schedule, with assignment due dates in *italics*. Things may be a bit different on weeks where there is an exam, guest lecture, or due to other circumstances.

Sunday or Monday (on your own, 1.5 hours)

- Review Learning Objectives on Canvas
- Read textbook chapter

Tuesday (in person, ~1.25 hours)

- 10:30-11:45- Attend class, participate in iclicker polling

Tues or Weds (on your own, ~1.5 hours)

- Review learning objectives and assess where you need more clarification
- Review textbook chapter and your course notes (if you didn't before class Tues)
- Jot down questions you want answered in class Thurs
- *Complete Pre-Discussion Reflection assignment (due Thurs 9 AM)*

Thurs (in person, ~1.25 hours)

- 10:30-11:45- Attend class, participate in iClicker polling
- wrap-up any lecture left from Tues
- Small-group discussion activities in class

Thurs or Fri (on your own, ~1 hour)

- *Complete Post-Discussion Reflection assignment (due Fri 1159 PM)*
- Re-assess your ability to complete the learning objectives

Projects and Studying for Exams (on your own time; 2.5 hours/week on average)

**Definition of a Credit Hour**

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, *for each unit of credit*, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Over the fifteen-week semester, students are expected to dedicate 135 hours to a three-unit course, inclusive of attending lectures, reading course materials, etc. In other words, students are expected to dedicate 9 hours a week to this course, inclusive of all course activities.

## ✓ Grading Information

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### Criteria

Instead of a traditional grading rubric, this class uses a grading contract. Please review the below information about grading contracts and how our specific course grading will work.

**How is a grading contract different from a traditional grading scheme?** With a grading contract, students complete a set of core activities and achievements to earn a “baseline” grade in the class, and can raise their grade further by completing other achievements. Grades can also be lowered beyond the baseline grade if students fail to complete the core achievements. In a grading contract, a single low score will not irreversibly lower your course grade. Also, because grading contracts do not rely on mathematical averaging, students who earn low-but-passing scores on assignments and exams in the beginning of the course will find it easier to raise their course grade with strong performance in the middle and end portions of the course.

**Why use grading contracts?** Grading contracts are intended to be more equitable to students by: a) giving students more control over what assignments they choose to put the strongest effort into; b) reducing pressure around assignment deadlines; c) allowing performance in the middle and end of semester to “redeem” low-but-passing scores from earlier in the semester; and, (d) providing pathways for students to earn high course grades (including As) when they excel on other kinds of assignments (e.g., projects) instead of exams.

**I’m worried this will lower my motivation and just settle for the “baseline” grade.** This contract is an invitation to get excited about the parts of the class that speak to you most and best fit your strengths as a student. Please plan out how you will excel in this class by playing to your strengths, interests, and goals for this class. As you look over the course assignments, identify the ones that appeal to you most, and plan on doing them to the very best of your ability. For many of you, this means that you should figure out a timeline for completing multiple projects by the project due date. Dr. Capriotti will help keep up the motivation by encouraging you to check in with yourself and your group members about your progress throughout the semester.

OK, sounds interesting, but way complicated! How the heck will I keep track of all of this? You are encouraged to use the [142 Student Grade Calculator](#) to keep track of where you stand in the class throughout the semester. You will enter your earned and expected grades for each assignment, and the calculator will tell you what your final grade would be.

**How you can use the grading contract to your advantage.**

*Want to earn an A and not sure what path best suits you?*

The best path to ensuring an A is to complete all assignments on time, perform well on exams, and completing one project by the end of October. From there, you can see if you need to complete another project to achieve your desired final grade.

*Feel like traditional exams and assignments capture your knowledge well?*

You could earn an **A** in the course by...

- Completing all core activities, and....
- Scoring 87% or better on all 4 exams

*Feel like written assignments and project-based learning shows your knowledge better than traditional exams?*

You could earn an **A** in the course for...

- Completing and passing 4 projects (the Everyday Parenting project and 3 others), and...
- Scoring 87% or better on one exam and passing the other exams

### **Policy on Engagement Throughout the Course**

Students must pass at least 2 assignments related to specific content from all 4 course units in order to pass the course. This includes exams, pre-discussion reflections, and post-discussion reflections. Students who pass fewer than 2 assignments in one or more units will receive a grade of F in the class, regardless of their performance in other units.

Type	Weight	Topic	Notes
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Type	Weight	Topic	Notes
Core Class Achievements			<p>You will earn a course grade of B- if you pass* ALL of the following core class achievements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome Assignment</li> <li>• 8 of 10 Pre-Discussion Reflections</li> <li>• 8 of 10 Post-Discussion Reflections</li> <li>• Participate in 22 of 25 class meetings (starting with the second class meeting)</li> <li>• Everyday Parenting Project</li> <li>• Exams 1-4 (65.00% or higher is passing)</li> <li>• Final Reflection Paper</li> </ul> <p>*A note on what's considered "passing" in this class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For exams, a passing score is 65.00% or higher.</li> <li>• For other assignments, you must follow instructions specified in the assignment to pass. Each assignment's description lays out what is required to pass.</li> </ul>
Grade Boosters			<p>Grade Boosters</p> <p>You will earn an additional third of a letter grade (e.g., B- vs. B) for completing EACH of the following achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Score 87.00% or higher on an exam (4 boosts available total, 1 for each exam)</li> <li>• Complete and pass an additional project (3 boosts available total, 3 available projects, 1 required)</li> </ul>
Grade Sinkers			<p>Grade Sinkers</p> <p>You will lose half a letter grade for each instance where your course performance does not meet expected minimum standards. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Score &lt; 65.00% on an exam (including a 0 for failing to take an exam; each exam &lt; 65% lowers course grade by half a letter)</li> <li>• Completing fewer than 8 of 10 Pre-Discussion Reflections (one half grade decrease, regardless of how many fewer than 8 completed, e.g., 2 vs. 7)</li> <li>• Completing fewer than 8 of 10 Post-Discussion Reflections (one half grade decrease, regardless of how many fewer than 8 completed, e.g., 2 vs. 7)</li> <li>• Not turning in any passing project (i.e., you turn in ZERO of the 3 possible)</li> </ul>

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

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Please click the following link to [access the course schedule](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hKGoPgpa9JloZaagJKOVG9pDxt5qCXBE0z4JWxsQi0/edit?usp=sharing) (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hKGoPgpa9JloZaagJKOVG9pDxt5qCXBE0z4JWxsQi0/edit?usp=sharing>).