

Professional Ethics for Psychologists

PSYC 228

Fall 2025 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/17/2025

Contact Information

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Jennifer Gregg, Ph.D.
Email:	Jennifer.gregg@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00 - 1:00pm
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays 9:00 – 11:45 am
Classroom:	DMH 353

Course Information

From Catalog: Consideration of ethical and legal issues related to the professional application of psychology. Designed particularly for students involved in field work.

Course Description and Requisites

Consideration of ethical and legal issues related to the professional application of psychology. Designed particularly for students involved in field work.

Notes: MS program priority.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

This is a graduate seminar, so I expect you to be attentive in class, participate in discussions, and limit other distractions. Please place cell phones on silent mode during class and put it away completely and don't take it out during class. Please be respectful of your classmates' opinions, as this is a seminar course and we are likely to discuss topics for which students will have differing opinions. Also, if you discuss patient-related content in class, please be sure to protect that person's confidentiality. Students are asked not to share these discussions outside of class.

Attendance is expected each week. If you do not attend classes, you will miss material that will appear on the exams. If you have to miss a class, please let me know ahead of time. If you have to miss more than one class, please make an appointment with me so we can determine whether you will need to make another arrangement (i.e., take the class at another time) in order to make sure you don't miss important ethics information in your training.

Please reach out to me if you have any concerns during the course of the semester. I am happy to meet outside of office hours to discuss any questions about course content or other questions about the program.

Program Information

Licensure Learning Outcomes (LLOs) indicate how each course meets the educational requirements as detailed by the CA Board of Behavioral Sciences. [The MS Clinical LLOs are detailed on our program website. \(https://sjsu.edu/psych/graduate-programs/masters-clinical-psych/learning-objectives.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/psych/graduate-programs/masters-clinical-psych/learning-objectives.php)

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

1. Interventions and evidence-based applications

- 1.1 Students will be able to apply, compare, and contrast a variety of psychotherapy theories and implement at least one chosen theory or intervention with clinical case material
- 1.2 Students will be able to evaluate, select, and implement empirically supported clinical interventions for clinical case material and clients

2. Communication and Case presentation

- 2.1 Students will be able to integrate and communicate clinical case material
- 2.2 Students will be able to synthesize contextual and cultural variables into their understanding of and presentation of client materials
- 2.3 Students will effectively respond to queries about clinical material and engage in discussions about their clients with supervisors and peers
- 2.4 Students will be able to analyze cases other than those they are treating, applying theories, principles, and relevant empirical findings to those cases

3. Competent Assessment and Evaluation

3.1 Students will be able to evaluate, select, and implement different assessment devices and strategies for assessing client outcomes and processes of change over the course of treatment including nomothetic and idiographic approaches

4. Professional clinical practice

4.1 Students will demonstrate competency consistent with professional standards of practice in areas including, but not limited to, psychotherapy theory, service delivery, ethics, assessment, research methods, family/couples therapy, cultural diversity and humility, risk management and safety planning, psychopharmacology, and issues relevant to adult and child clinical populations.

5. Preparation and meeting professional licensing requirements

5.1 Students will demonstrate fulfillment of coursework and other pre-degree licensing requirements outlined by the Board of Behavioral Sciences

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Program Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

This course meets PLOs 2.3, 2.4, and 5.1

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1: Be able to cite the relevant code of ethics for practicing mental health professionals, including identification of specific codes.

CLO 2: Identify common ethical and legal dilemmas faced by mental health professionals.

CLO 3: Develop an approach to ethical decision-making that reflects knowledge of relevant ethics codes and state regulations, and incorporation of client and therapist perspectives.

CLO 4: Identify resources for staying current on ethical guidelines.

CLO 5: Identify the requirements for the ethical practice of psychotherapy including confidentiality, record-keeping, fees and finances, insurance and managed care, continuing education, reporting requirements, dual or multiple role relationships, scope of practice, research and publication, assessment, requirements for licensure, supervision, sanctions, and other specific issues.

Licensure Learning Outcomes (LLO)

Licensing requirements for academic coursework toward the MFT will be met for this course in the following way:

- LLO1: For the MFT requirements, this course includes instruction in California law and professional ethics for marriage and family therapists, including instruction in all of the following areas of study (as specified in BPC Section 4980.36(d)(2)(J)):

(i) Contemporary professional ethics and statutory, regulatory, and decisional laws that delineate the scope of practice of marriage and family therapy.

(ii) The therapeutic, clinical, and practical considerations involved in the legal and ethical practice of marriage and family therapy, including, but not limited to, family law.

(iii) The current legal patterns and trends in the mental health professions.

(iv) The psychotherapist-patient privilege, confidentiality, the patient dangerous to self or others, and the treatment of minors with and without parental consent.

(v) A recognition and exploration of the relationship between a practitioner's sense of self and human values and his or her professional behavior and ethics.

(vi) Differences in legal and ethical standards for different types of work settings.

(vii) Licensing law and licensing process.

- LLO2: For the MFT requirement set by the BBS in AB1436, this course partially meets the requirement of completing at least 6 hours of coursework or supervised experience in suicide risk assessment and intervention. This requirement is satisfied across the courses in assessment, child psychopathology, ethics, and crisis and trauma intervention.

Course Materials

Required Textbook (must be the 11th edition!):

Caldwell, B. E. (2024). *Basics of California Law for LMFTs, LPCCs, and LCSWs (11th ed.)*. High Pass Education.

ISBN: 979-8986466859

Available in paperback or PDF: <https://bencaldwelllabs.com/collections/books>

Optional Textbook:

Johnson, W. B., & Koocher, G. P. (2011). *Ethical Conundrums, Quandaries and Predicaments in Mental Health Practice: A Casebook From the Files of Experts*. New York: Oxford. ISBN: 9780195385298

This book is optional because we aren't reading all of the chapters and I will post the relevant chapters on Canvas.

Other Resources, Also Available on Canvas

1) *The California Code of Ethics for Marriage and Family Therapists*

Available here:

https://www.camft.org/Portals/0/PDFs/CAMFT_Code_of_Ethics.pdf

2) *Statutes and Regulations Relating to the Practice of: Professional Clinical Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy, Educational Psychology, and Clinical Social Work.*

Available from the Board of Behavioral Sciences website:

<http://www.bbs.ca.gov/pdf/publications/lawsregs.pdf>

We will not read the CA regulations in class. It is a very dense document and it will be helpful when studying for the ethics/legal portion of your licensing exams. In class we will likely discuss instances when CA regulations and CAMFT principles supplement each other or when one takes precedence over the other.

Course Requirements and Assignments

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 three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course-related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

As an example, the expectation of work for a 3-credit course is 150-minutes of direct faculty instruction and six hours of out-of-class student work each week.

For all the assignments below, please note that my policy is that all late work will incur a **10% penalty per day late**.

This class has a total of 270 points:

Assessment Items, Their Value, and Connection to Learning Outcomes				
	How Many?	% of Final Grade	Points	Relevant CLOs
Case Study Quizzes	11	110/270=45%	110 total (10 each)	CLOs 1-3, and 5
Discussion Questions	11	55/270=22%	55 total (5 each)	CLO 3 and 5

Exams	2	90/270=33%	90 total (45 each)	CLOs 1-5
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11 Case Study Quizzes = 10 points each

Each week you will take a short quiz that involves responding to a vignette. The vignette will include ethical issues that are relevant to the reading for that class period. You will be asked to read the vignette, identify the relevant ethical issues, and write a short response to how you would handle the ethical situation. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes.

11 Discussion Questions = 5 points each

Each week you will be expected to turn in three discussion points or questions related to the reading. These will be turned in via upload or text box on Canvas and will be due Sunday night to give me time to review/incorporate them on Monday. The questions should either ask clarification on something you are confused about or pose a question to the class for an issue where you would like to hear other opinions. Your grade will be based on evidence of reading and integrating the material.

2 Exams (midterm and final) = 45 points each

The two exams in this course will include three vignettes worth 15 points each. The vignettes will require you to integrate information from class readings, the CAMFT code, and class discussions. You will have the full class period (2 hours and 45 minutes) to complete each exam.

✓ Grading Information

Your final letter grade will be based on a percentage obtained by dividing your points by the total points for this course (270 points). I will use the following grading rubric:

A+ = 97.0-100%	A = 93.0-96.9%	A- = 90.0-92.9%
B+ = 87.0-89.9%	B = 83.0-86.9%	B- = 80.0-82.9%
C+ = 77.0-79.9%	C = 73.0-76.9%	C- = 70.0-72.9%
D+ = 67.0-69.9%	D = 63.0-66.9%	D- = 60.0-62.9%
F = 59.9% or less Unsatisfactory		

University Policies

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

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Codes/Laws	Assignments
1	8/26/25	Introduction, Syllabus Review, Q&A Law & Ethics Pretest		
2	9/2/25	Overview: Identifying/appreciating the complexity of ethical issues in practice Ethical Decision Making; Enforcement (BBS); Competence and Professional Conduct	MFT and ACA codes (read through) Caldwell Ch. 1 and 3 J & K Ch. 2 CAMFT Codes: 5.11, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.14, 5.15	Case Study Quiz 1 Discussion Questions 1
3	9/9/25	Confidentiality Breaking confidentiality Mandated reporting	Caldwell Ch. 4; J&K Ch. 16, 32, 8 CAMFT Codes: 2.1 - 2.7	Case Study Quiz 2 Discussion Questions 2

4	9/16/25	Informed Consent Abuse Reporting	Caldwell Ch. 6 and 7 J&K Ch. 7, 27 CAMFT Codes: 3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.9, 3.11	Case Study Quiz 3 Discussion Questions 3
5	9/23/25	Privacy/Confidentiality Records/Documentation	Caldwell Ch. 5; J&K Ch. 12, CAMFT Codes: 2.3, 3.12, 5.3	Case Study Quiz 4 Discussion Questions 4
6	9/30/25	Multiple Roles Part I: Definitions, Friendships, Boundaries	J&K Ch. 1, 14, 20, 38 CAMFT Codes: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 12.5	Case Study Quiz 5 Discussion Questions 5
7	10/7/25	Multiple Roles Part II: Attraction and Romance	J&K Ch. 19, 36 CAMFT Codes: 4.5, 4.6	Case Study Quiz 6 Discussion Questions 6
8	10/14/25	Midterm		

9	10/21/25	<p>Values</p> <p>Advocacy, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</p>	<p>Hoop et al. (2008) article on Canvas; Cultural Formulation Interview</p> <p>J&K Ch. 35, 21, 29</p> <p>CAMFT Codes:</p> <p>1.1 - 1.10, 3.2, 5.7, 5.9</p>	<p>Case Study Quiz 7</p> <p>Discussion Questions 7</p>
10	10/28/25	Practice Law and Ethics Exam		
11	11/4/25	<p>Relationships with Colleagues;</p> <p>Professionalism</p>	<p>J&K Ch. 33</p> <p>CAMFT Codes:</p> <p>8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 5.12</p>	<p>Case Study Quiz 8</p> <p>Discussion Questions 8</p>
12	11/11/25	Technology & Telehealth	<p>Caldwell Ch. 9</p> <p>J & K 17</p> <p>CAMFT Codes:</p> <p>6.1 - 6.4</p>	<p>Case Study Quiz 9</p> <p>Discussion Questions 9</p>
13	11/18/25	<p>Assessment & Advocacy & Legal issues</p> <p>Supervision</p> <p>Ethics in Other Work Settings</p>	<p>Caldwell Ch. 12</p> <p>J&K Ch. 26</p> <p>CAMFT Codes:</p> <p>10.1, 10.2, 10.4, 10.7, 9.6, 7.1 - 7.18</p>	<p>Case Study Quiz 10</p> <p>Discussion Questions 10</p>

14	11/25/25	Business and Marketing	<p>Caldwell Ch. 9; CAMFT Articles on Advertising</p> <p>CAMFT Codes:</p> <p>1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 5.2, 5.13, 9.5, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.6, 12.7, 13.1 - 13.9</p>	<p>Case Study Quiz 11</p> <p>Discussion Questions 11</p>
16	12/2/25	Final Practice Test		
TBD		Final Exam		