

San José State University
Psychology Department
PSYC 142, Child Psychopathology
Spring 2025

Instructor:	Matthew Capriotti, PhD
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Office Hours:	In person: Tues 10:15-11:45 AM (no appointment needed) Alternative appointments also available via Zoom (email me to schedule)
Class Days/Time:	N/A. This is an asynchronous course. There are no set meeting times.
Classroom:	Online
Prerequisites:	PSYC 001

MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas Learning Management System (<http://sjsu.instructure.com>). You are responsible for regularly checking Canvas regularly to learn of any updates.

Course Description

Overview of common child and adolescent psychological disorders and developmental psychopathology addressing issues such as ethnicity, SES and gender differences throughout; the course focuses on DSM5 classifications, adaptive and maladaptive behaviors, risk and protective factors within the child, family and environment and developmental models.

Course Learning Objectives (CLOs)

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.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirement:

PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2 – 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.

PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology – 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.

PLO4 – Application of Psychology – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society

Required Texts, Readings, and Materials

Textbook. We will be using the 3rd edition of Weis’ textbook (citation below). This is available at the SJSU bookstore or online via various retailers.

- Weis, R. (2021). Introduction to Abnormal Child and Adolescent Psychology. Publisher: SAGE Publications, Inc, 4nd edition, Print ISBN: 9781071840627

Supplemental Readings. Supplemental required readings may be assigned throughout the semester. These will be posted on Canvas at least one week before they are due.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Structure and Weekly Schedule

This is an asynchronous online class. There are no live class meetings. Each week, you will read, watch recorded lectures, and complete assignments. I will be available via Canvas message, email, and in office hours to support your learning. I will also provide feedback on assignments to facilitate your learning.

I recommend you follow the following weekly schedule to stay on track with the course:

- Fri- Complete Starting Point assignment
- Sat, Sun, and/or Mon- Read chapter and watch lecture
- Tues- Complete reflection discussion post
- Weds- Reply to discussion posts
- Thurs- Work on projects or study for exam

Due Dates

Unless otherwise noted, Starting Points are due Monday 1159 PM and Reflection Discussions (your post and replies) are due Thurs 1159 PM.

Grading Information

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.

Determination and Grades and Grading Contract Details

Core Class Achievements

You will earn a course grade of B if you pass* ALL of the following core class achievements.

- Welcome Assignment
- 13 of 15 Starting Point Assignments
- 13 of 15 Reflection Discussion Post assignments (note that this includes writing your post AND replying to 2 classmates' posts)
- Exams 1-4 (65.00% or higher is passing)
- Everyday Parenting Project
- Final Reflection Paper

Grade Boosters

You will earn an additional third of a letter grade (e.g., B- vs. B) for completing EACH of the following achievements:

- Score 87.00% or higher on an exam (4 boosts available total, 1 for each exam)
- Complete and pass an additional project (one boost for each project passed)).

Grade Sinkers

You will lose a third of a letter grade (e.g., B- vs. B) for each instance where your course performance does not meet expected minimum standards. These are:

- Score < 65.00% on an exam (including a 0 for failing to take an exam; each exam < 65% lowers course grade by 1/3 of a letter)
- Completing fewer than 13 of 15 Starting Point assignments (1/3 letter grade decrease, regardless of how many fewer than 13 completed, e.g., 2 vs. 12)
- Completing fewer than 13 of 15 Reflection Discussion posts (1/3 letter grade decrease, regardless of how many fewer than 13 completed, e.g., 2 vs. 12)
- Completing fewer than 13 of 15 Post-Discussion Reflections (1/3 letter grade decrease, regardless of how many fewer than 13 completed, e.g., 2 vs. 12)

*A note on what is considered “passing” in this class

- For exams, a passing score is 65.00% or higher.
- For ungraded assignments, you must follow instructions specified in the assignment to pass. Each assignment’s description lays out what is required to pass.
- Assignments must be completed on time to be considered passing, unless a student arranges an extension as described in the class policies.

Assignments

Grading will be based on the following assignments. Detailed rubrics are available on Canvas within the descriptions for each assignment.

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.

For each of the 16 topics covered, you will complete two assignments. Both of these must be completed by Thurs 1159 PM each week:

Starting Points. *Before* you engage with class lectures, readings, etc., you will write 100-150 words on your knowledge of the topic. You will also state two things you want to learn about the topic at hand. The idea of this is to guide you to self-assess how your own lived experience, knowledge from other courses, and (if relevant) work/volunteer experience have formed a foundation of knowledge for you already. You will get full credit if you write at least 100 words and pose two questions.

Reflection Discussion Posts. *After* you engage with course content for each chapter, you will write a discussion post of 250-300 words that summarizes the 2-3 things that stood out to you from that module (e.g., because they were interesting to you, seemed particularly relevant, or changed your mind on something). For each concept you discuss, include a citation to a specific page in the book and/or lecture slide. You must also pose at least one question that you To earn credit, your post must summarize at least 2 issues, pose at least one question, and meet the word count requirement.

You must also respond to 2 classmates’ posts to earn credit. Your replies can do things like (a) elaborate on the points your classmate has made based on your knowledge from this course, other courses, or volunteer, work, or personal experience, (b) point out additional examples that align with the original post, & explain (respectfully) a difference of opinion that you have, or (d) provide some thoughts on the question they posed. Your replies must do at least one of the four things described above and be at least 75 words long to earn credit.

Required Project: [Everyday Parenting Project](https://www.coursera.org/learn/everyday-parenting). You will complete an online, self-paced Coursera class entitled “Everyday Parenting” (<https://www.coursera.org/learn/everyday-parenting>) by Dr. Alan Kazdin, world-renowned parent training expert (and SJSU alumnus!). This 20-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. 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. 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. 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.

Pseudoscience Project. This option involves an in-depth analysis of a specific pseudoscientific (fake science) treatment for a child/adolescent problem. You will research the treatment, including both claims made by its proponents, and scientific literature. Your paper will include an analysis of the treatment and proponents’ claims about how it works, specific analysis of at least 3 scientific studies on it reported in peer-reviewed journals, and discussion of evidence-based alternatives (with better scientific support) to the pseudoscientific treatment.

Unit Exams

After we have covered 3-4 topics, 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. Question types will include multiple choice and short-answer. Each exam will have about 25 questions. You will have one, 55-minute attempt to complete it. You may use notes, the textbook, and other online resources but you may not work with other students on this and you may also not use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) on exams (see below).

The instructor may use weighting (of individual items and/or of total scores) to “curve” exam scores. This may result in increases or decreases in students’ final, curved exam score. Curved exam results will be posted within one week of the exam due date.

End-of-Course Reflection

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 your career path (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.

Extra credit opportunities are built into the grading and assignment structure of the course (see above). No additional opportunities will be arranged.

Late work: I do not accept late work since the structure of this class allows for missing some work without penalty. You are advised to save your penalty-free skips in this course for situations beyond your control that lead to you being unable to complete assignments. Examples include brief illnesses, needing to help a family member, car trouble, etc.. I will not modify deadlines for these sorts of reasons.

If a student has an unusual health situation or crisis that impacts their ability to engage in academic work for 2 weeks or more, I will consider working with that student to give extensions on assignments. This might include things like extended illness involving a hospitalization or being displaced due to a natural disaster or fire. In these cases, I will request documentation to verify the situation. We will discuss to determine the best plan of action (extended deadlines, an incomplete grade in the course, and/or withdrawing from the course and taking it at a later date).

Academic dishonesty, including ChatGPT and other AI software. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Students can use notes, textbooks, and online resources for assignments and exams. Working together with other students on exams is considered an academic honesty violation. Downloading, distributing, or publicly posting exams or other course materials is also academic dishonesty. All written work and short-answer or essay exam items will be checked for plagiarism using TurnItIn. I will follow University policies regarding academic dishonesty, which indicate that I must report all incidents to the University. Penalties within the course may range from a loss of credit for an assignment to failing the class, depending on the severity of the infraction.

Students may not use AI software (e.g., ChatGPT) to produce text on assignments where they are supposed to submit their own work. I will use TurnItIn's AI detection feature to evaluate whether an assignment is likely to have been composed by AI software. The first violation of this may result in the student being asked to re-do the assignment for violations. For subsequent violations, students may receive a failing grade without the opportunity to resubmit work. In these situations, other disciplinary actions for repeated academic dishonesty may apply.

Students also may **not** use AI software (e.g., ChatGPT) on exams. AI software tends to reliably miss certain questions on my exams. I reserve the right to weigh these questions MORE heavily toward final exam scores in order to create a normalized grade curve. This could result in students who use ChatGPT on exams earning LOWER grades through the curving process.

Students are encouraged to learn more about plagiarism by completing the tutorial at: <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/plagiarism>. Links to an external site. Please note that students who commit plagiarism

without being aware that they are doing so are still subject to disciplinary action under University policies; so, it is in your best understanding to develop a good understanding of this issue.

Final Examination or Evaluation

The culminating experience for this class is the End-of-Course Reflection paper. 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.

Definition of a Credit Hour

SJSU has standards, consistent with national norms, about how much time commitment is expected for 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.

Class Protocols and Procedures.

This class requires reliable internet access. You are strongly encouraged to complete course activities from a laptop or desktop computer.

Internet outages. You are responsible for submitting work on time. If you experience a prolonged internet outage (for days or weeks), you will need to find another way to access the internet to complete assignments (e.g., at a local public library).

I understand home WiFi outages do happen. Please download this syllabus to your computer and smartphone so you have access to it in the event of an internet outage. If you experience an internet outage just before a deadline, please complete the work in MS Word or another word processing program, use your smartphone to take photographs of the assignments, and email them to me before the assignment deadline with a brief note explaining the situation. This will validate that you completed the work on time, and you can then submit it through Canvas as usual once your connection is restored.

Extra credit is not available. Student may complete additional projects to obtain grade boosters to increase their course grade (see above).

Late work. Late work is not accepted in this class. The flexibility in grading policy is designed to minimize the need for extensions. For example, if you come down with a cold and cannot submit an assignment paper, you are expected to use one of your 2 “freebies.”

In very unusual circumstances where students have prolonged absences (e.g., due to an extended illness), the instructor will meet with the student and may grant extensions based on these individual circumstances. The instructor reserves the right to request documentation of the student's extenuating circumstances in these cases.

Expectations for Behavior

You are expected to behave in a respectful manner toward your peers and instructor in online interactions. When differing opinions emerge in class discussions, I expect you to maintain a civil and professional tone in your writing. 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 online class discussion boards.

You are expected to check Canvas and email regularly, and to communicate professionally through this means. Please use Canvas only (not email) for electronic course-related communication. I expect you to communicate professionally via Canvas, just as in class.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

PSYC 142, Child Psychopathology, Spring 2025 Schedule

This is a tentative schedule of lecture topics, assignment due dates, and exam dates. Any changes in the content of assignments or exams will be given at least one week in advance of the due date/exam date.

In general, Starting Point assignments will be due on Mondays and Reflection Discussions will be due on Thursdays of the same week.

Week	Start Date	Topics & Readings	Exam/Project Due dates
0	Th 1/23	Class overview, Syllabus	Welcome Assignment due F 1/24 11:59 PM
1	F 1/24- Th 1/30	Intro - Chapter 1	Starting Point 1, Reflection 1
2	F 1/31-Th 2/6	Causes - Ch 2	Starting Point 2, Reflection 2
3	F 2/7- Th 2/13	Assessment - Ch 4	Starting Point 3, Reflection 3
4	F 2/14- Th 2/20	Treatment & Ethics - Ch 4	Starting Point 4, Reflection 4 Unit 1 Exam (due F 2/21 1159 PM)
5	F 2/21- Th 2/27	Clinical Science & Pseudoscience - Ch 3. Article will be provided- located under this Module	Starting Point 5, Reflection 5
6	F 2/28- Th 3/6	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities- Ch. 5	Starting Point 6, Reflection 6
7	F 3/7- Th 3/13	Autism Spectrum Disorders- Ch. 6	Starting Point 7, Reflection 7
8	F 3/14- Th 3/20	Learning Disabilities- Ch. 7	Starting Point 8, Reflection 8 Complete Unit 2 Exam (due F 3/15 1159 PM)
9	F 3/21-Th 3/27	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)- Ch. 8	Starting Point 9, Reflection 9
10	F 3/28 - Th 4/10 (lengthened for Spring Break)	Conduct Problems- Ch. 9	Starting Point 10, Reflection 10 Everyday Parenting Project due Fri 4/11 1159 PM
11	F 4/11- Th 4/17	Substance Use Disorders- Ch. 10	Starting Point 11, Reflection 11
12	F 4/18- Th 4/24	Anxiety Disorders- Ch. 11	Starting Point 12, Reflection 12 Unit 3 Exam (due F 4/25 1159 PM)
13	F 4/25- Th 5/1	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and child maltreatment - Ch 12	Starting Point 13, Reflection 13

14	F 5/2- Th 5/8	Depression, Self-Harm, & Suicide - Ch 13	Starting Point 14, Reflection 14 Unit 4 Exam (due F 5/9 1159 PM)
15	F 5/10- M 5/12	Psychotic & Bipolar Spectrum Disorders	Starting Point 15, Reflection 15 Projects due M 5/12 1159 PM
	Final Exam		Final Reflection paper due Fri 5/16 1159 PM