

Clinical Psychology

PSYC 160

Spring 2026 Section 02 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/06/2026

Contact Information

Instructor:	Erin Woodhead, Ph.D.
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Office Hours:	Tuesdays 11:00-1:00 and by appointment.
Class Days/Time:	T/TH 3-4:15
Classroom:	DMH 166
Prerequisites:	Psyc 001

Course Description and Requisites

Survey of clinical psychology as a profession. Emphasis placed on training models, specializations within the field, the scientific study of psychological interventions, and the graduate school admissions process for masters and doctoral level psychotherapists.

Prerequisite: PSYC 001.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

I expect you to be attentive in class, participate in discussions, and limit other distractions. Please place cell phones on silent during class. If you must make or answer a call, please excuse yourself from class. Please do not browse the web during class. Most importantly, please be respectful of your classmates' opinions. Attendance is expected each week. If you do not attend classes, you will miss discussion that will help you better understand the 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 a few classes, please make an appointment with me so that we can discuss your progress in the course and your reasons for not attending class.

Program Information

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)

CLO1: Describe the historical roots of clinical psychology and current issues facing the field (e.g. training psychotherapists, cultural competency, the role of diagnosis in treatment planning, evidence based treatment approaches).

CLO2: Identify the different types of training programs that lead to different degrees (masters and doctorate), corresponding licenses (MFT, LCSW, licensed clinical psychologist), and the advantages and challenges in each of these professional paths. Describe the different specializations within clinical psychology.

CLO3: Describe the role of science in the study of clinical psychology and the unique approaches to documenting clinical change and its use in evidence based practice including single case methodology, randomized trials, and the concept of clinical vs. statistical significance. Discuss application of science in evaluating treatments as a consumer.

CLO4: Describe and identify the major theories/models used in the assessment, classification, treatment of psychological problems, the rationale for treatment or technique selection, as well as general issues in psychotherapy.

CLO5: Identify the role that culture, gender, racial identity, sexual orientation, and other contextual variables play in case conceptualization and psychological interventions, as well as the training of mental health professionals.

CLO6: Demonstrate familiarity with the code of ethics and ethical principles for practicing psychotherapists and the limitations of confidentiality.

CLO7: Identify the types of assessments administered by psychotherapists and the role of assessment in identifying psychological problems and determining psychotherapy interventions. Discuss the scientific evaluation of assessment devices (including reliability and validity) and the importance of these data in determining the value and applicability of these instruments in clinical work.

Course Materials

The textbook for this course is required. It is available from the SJSU bookstore and other outlets:

Pomerantz, A. M. (2023). *Clinical Psychology: Science, Practice, and Diversity (6th edition)*. Sage. ISBN 978-1071851951

Course Requirements and Assignments

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 below the baseline grade if students fail to complete the core achievements.

Grading Contract Details

Core Class Achievements

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

- 10 out of 12 weekly quizzes
- 10 out of 13 class activities
- Exams 1 and 2 (70% or higher is passing; 42 out of 60 points or higher)
- Final paper

Grade Boosters

You will earn a grade boost (e.g., B- to B) for completing EACH of the achievements below. There are several types of boosters available.

- Score 90% or higher on an exam (2 boosts available total, 1 for each exam)
- Complete additional booster assignments (details available on Canvas)

Grade Sinkers

You will lose part of a letter grade (i.e., B- to C+) for each instance where your course performance does not meet expected minimum standards. These are:

- Score < 70% on an exam (including a 0 for failing to take an exam; each exam < 70% lowers course grade by part of a letter grade)
- Completing fewer than 10 out of 12 weekly quizzes (grade sinker, regardless of how many fewer than 10 completed, e.g., 2 vs. 9)
- Completing fewer than 10 out of 13 class activities (grade sinker, regardless of how many fewer than 10 completed, e.g., 2 vs. 9)
- Not passing the final paper

*A note on what's considered "passing" in this class

- For exams, a passing score is 70% or higher. For this class, that means 42 points out of 60 points or higher.
- For pass/fail 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 previously approved by the instructor.
- For all assignments and papers, a passing paper has very few words copied directly from the original material. This means that you use your own words to describe concepts and that you don't plagiarize entire sentences from the original work. One full sentence copied and pasted from the original work is enough to qualify for plagiarism. See Canvas for more grading information on the papers (linked in each assignment's description)

1) Midterm and Final Exams (Passing = 70% or higher)

There will be two exams in this class given during class time. The exams are closed notes/closed book. Each student can bring one 3x5 index card with handwritten notes on both sides to the exam. This card will be turned in with your exam. The exams will be 12 short answer questions (5 points each). A study guide that lists relevant concepts will be available for each exam. There are no make-ups for the exams. You will have one class period to complete the exam. **For the short answer on the midterm and final, you need to use your own words and provide your own examples (don't copy sentences or examples from our textbook). You need to write in complete sentences with no bullet point responses.**

Final Examination or Evaluation

The final examination will be the second exam, which is not cumulative. The final exam will count the same as any other exam.

The final exam will be held on Thursday May 14 from 1-3pm in our usual classroom. The exam will be the same format as the midterm (12 short answer questions worth 5 points each) and it is not cumulative. Remember that a passing score is 70% or greater (42 points out of 60 points or higher)

2) Reading Quizzes

At the start of most Tuesday classes, a closed-notes short answer quiz will be given on the chapter being covered that week. You will have 2 options for questions and will choose 1 to respond to. **Please write in complete sentences in paragraph form for your responses. No bullet point lists. Quizzes are graded as complete/incomplete.**

3) Class Activities

During most Thursday classes, students will turn in a class activity that is done individually or together during class time. You will pass the activity if you follow the directions and write in complete sentences in your responses. No bullet point lists unless the instructor specifies that in the instructions.

4) Paper

There is one final paper required for all students, which is a Career Paper. **Details about the paper are available on Canvas under the relevant assignment.**

For the Career paper, you will write a 1 page double spaced narrative on your specific career goals. Following this, you will identify three specific job listings that match your career goals. For each job listing, you will identify how it meets your career goals, what qualifications/training/license you need for the job, and what you can do in the near future to make yourself more competitive for the job. For one of the jobs, you will write a cover letter and include a relevant resume.

5) Booster assignments

Several booster assignments will be available on Canvas to raise your grade to the next grade level (e.g., B- to B). Details on the booster assignments are available on Canvas.

Grading Information

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. 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 to not accept late work unless we have discussed it beforehand. All assignments (except for exams) are graded as pass/fail (defined as complete or incomplete in Canvas).

Assignment	How Many?	Relevant CLOs
Weekly Quizzes	12 total, 10 required	CLO1-7
Class Activities	13 total, 10 required	CLO1-7
Exams	2 required	CLO1-7
Final Paper	1 required	CLO2
Booster assignments	Optional	CLO1-7

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

Note: Schedule is subject to change with fair notice – if changed, I will announce it in class and via email.

When	Topic	Notes
Week 1: Jan 22	Course Introduction	Read syllabus fully ahead of our first class.
Week 2: Jan 27 and 29	Ch 1: Clinical Psychology	Assignments: Read Ch 1 Tues: Quiz Ch 1 Thurs: Activity Ch 1

When	Topic	Notes
Week 3: Feb 3 and 5	Ch 2: Evolution of Clinical Psychology	Assignments: Read Ch 2 Tues: Quiz Ch 2 Thurs: Activity Ch 2
Week 4: Feb 10 and 12	Ch 3: Current Controversies and Directions	Assignments: Read Ch 3 Tues: Quiz Ch 3 Thurs: Activity Ch 3
Week 5: Feb 17 and 19	Ch 6: Conducting Research in Clinical Psychology	Assignments: Read Ch 6 (no quiz for Ch 6) Thurs: Activity Ch 6
Week 6; Feb 24 and 26	Ch 5: Ethical and Professional Issues	Assignments: Read Ch 5 & APA Ethics Code (on Canvas) Tues: Quiz Ch 5 Thurs: Activity Ch 5
Week 7: Mar 3 and 5	Ch 4: Diversity and Cultural Issues in Clinical Psychology	Assignments: Read Ch 4 Tues: Quiz Ch 4 Thurs: Activity Ch 4
Week 8: Mar 10 and 12	Ch 8: The Clinical Interview	Assignments: Read Ch 8 Tues: Quiz Ch 8 Thurs: Activity Ch 8
Week 9: Mar 17 and 19	Ch 7: Diagnosis and Classification & Midterm	Assignments: Read Ch 7 Tues: Ch 7 and Midterm Review (no quiz) Thurs: MIDTERM
Week 10: Mar 24 and 26	Ch 9: Intellectual and Neuropsychological Assessment	Assignments: Read Ch 9 Tues: Quiz Ch 9 Thurs: Activity Ch 9

When	Topic	Notes
Week 11: Mar 31 and Apr 2	SPRING BREAK	
Week 12: Apr 7 and 9	Ch 10: Personality Assessment and Behavioral Assessment	Assignments: Read Ch 10 Tues: Quiz Ch 10 Thurs: Activity Ch 10
Week 13: Apr 14 and 16	Ch 11: General Issues in Psychotherapy & Brief Overview of Theories	Assignments: Read Ch 11 Tues: Quiz Ch 11 Thurs: Activity Ch 11
Week 14: Apr 21 and 23	Ch 16: Group and Family Therapy	Assignments: Read Ch 16 Tues: Quiz Ch 16 Thurs: Activity Ch 16
Week 15: Apr 28 and 30	Ch 18: Health Psychology	Assignments: Read Ch 18 Tues: Quiz Ch 18 Thurs: Activity Ch 18
Week 16: May 5 and 7	Ch 19: Forensic Psychology	Assignments: Read Ch 19 Tues: Quiz Ch 19 Thurs: Activity Ch 19 Final Paper and all booster assignments due by Monday May 11 at 11:59pm
Thursday May 15	FINAL EXAM	in our usual classroom from 1pm-3pm. Same format as the midterm.