

San José State University
Psychology
PSYC 190, Capstone, LGBTQ+ Psychology: Current Issues
Section 04, Spring 2026

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Amy Caffrey

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Office Location: DMH 352

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30 – 2:30 and by appointment

Class Days/Time: M/W 3pm – 4:15pm

Classroom: DMH 359

Prerequisites: PSYC 100W, Graduating Senior standing. Pre/Co-requisite: PSYC 120

Course Description

Integrative survey of current issues in LGBTQ+ Psychology, how they developed and likely future directions. Seminar

Completion of research methods PSYC 118 or PSYC 120 prior to enrollment in this course is recommended.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

CLO1 – possess a comprehensive understanding of the major Psychology theories and issues related to LGBTQ+ individuals, couples, families, children, and Community in the USA

CLO2 – have an extensive knowledge of current research in the LGBTQ+ Psychology field from major areas of psychology and be able to identify bias in research regarding LGBTQ+

CLO3 - develop an understanding of the real-world challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, couples and families and the long-term effects of those challenges

CLO4 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in LGBTQ+ psychology and apply them to all aspects of Psychology.

CLO5 – 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 LGBTQ+ behavior and mental processes.

Program learning outcomes (PLOs)

Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are skills and knowledge that students will have acquired 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 LGBTQ+ psychology and general 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.

Course Goals

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Enhance critical thinking about contemporary LGBTQ+ Psychology issues
2. Develop an understanding of the real-world challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, couples and families
3. Demonstrate the ability to focus, refine and present complex theory and research ideas by way of class presentations and class discussions
4. Demonstrate competence in written communication by analyzing, synthesizing, and integrating existing psychology literature relevant to this topic
5. Provide evidence of skills in researching the psychology literature (including accessing electronic and print journal articles in libraries and beyond)
6. Ability to apply these skills to LGBTQ+ Psychology topics of interest
7. Awareness of future research needs regarding LGBTQ+ psychology research
8. Become more culturally aware and competent regarding LGBTQ+ Psychology issues
9. Demonstrate an integration of knowledge and skills developed across the psychology major

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

There is no textbook for this course.

A mandatory reader and additional required reading will be provided via Canvas.

Information and reading due dates will be provided first week of class.

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that you will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3 \(Links to an external site.\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf. \(Links to an external site.\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf)

Research Project and Discussion CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO 4, CLO5

Movie Assignments and Discussion CLO1, CLO3, CLO 4, CLO5

Real Life Project CLO1, CLO3

In Class Activities, Writing & Discussions CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4

Class Participation CLO1, CLO2, CLO3

Research Project:

Each student will choose a LGBTQ+ Psychology topic to research (*topic approval by Instructor*)

Each student will research at least 4 articles on the chosen topic relating to an LGBTQ+ Psychology issue. Students will **lead small group discussion** on the topic they choose on the day the topic is scheduled. Each student will write a research paper applying the research to issues related to LGBTQ+ and to Psychology. Paper to include an APA formatted reference list from published, peer reviewed scientific journals of all articles used.

More details will be discussed in class.

Be sure to write your paper in proper APA format (See APA Publication Manual, 6 Ed. for organizational guidance.)

Movie Assignments:

Each student will be assigned 2 specific LGBTQ+ Historical Documentary movies

The assignment is to gain additional insight into LGBTQ+ Psychology Issues. Student will then write a brief 4–5-page double-spaced paper about the issues addressed in the movie. Students will then discuss the topics addressed in the movie using questions provided.

More details will be discussed in class.

Real Life Project

Experiential learning by attending a LGBTQ+ community events and write about their experiences. Each student will be required to participate in 2 different LGBTQ+ events to experience issues related this course as it is actually practiced outside of academics.

In-Class Activities, In-Class Writing and Class Discussions:

Throughout the semester, students will be given “thought” questions and will watch video clips on a variety of LGBTQ+ Psychology topics. Students will be asked to write short papers on the topics presented and their application to other topics, discussions and reading in this course.

Purpose these writing assignments: (1) to encourage you to read and listen thoughtfully, and (2) to provide evidence that you have both read and engaged (to the best of your ability) in each topic.

These can be considered “quizzes”

Classroom topics, activities and discussions will supplement the reading, and students are responsible for all material, assignments, and explanations given in class, even if they were absent.

In each of the topic presentations/ discussions, students will be responsible for contributing to discussion of that topic. *(Please note that your role as a discussant is a serious one. I will be looking for you to make a tangible contribution to each day's discussion. Merely posing a question or two from the reading- or providing an interesting anecdote are not acceptable. This is a key opportunity for you to develop your critical thinking and evidence-based responses that are the crux of the position papers and discussions for this course.)*

Participation

Participation grade includesturning in all assignments **on time** and following directions; participation in small group and large group discussions; completing in-class writings and activities *(even if you were not present in the class that day)*; demonstration of your learning; paying attention in class.

You are expected to actively participate in all discussions, debates, presentations and class activities. Because this is an experiential class, attendance and participation are crucial. You cannot participate if you do not come to class.

Class Participation points include your attendance & participation at the Final

“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.”

Grading Information

Real Life Project and Discussion = 75pts

Movie Assignments and Discussion = 75 points Research Project = 75 points

Parenting Paper = 50 points

Overall Class Participation &Engagement = 75 points

Final = 50 points

TOTAL = 500 points *(Points will be deducted for late assignments)*

The various parts of the course add up to 500 possible points

A+ = 490 - 500

A = 465 - 489

A- =	454 - 464
B+ =	440 – 453
B =	415 - 439
B - =	400 - 414
C + =	389 – 399
C =	368 - 388
C - =	350 - 367
D =	322 - 349
F =	less than 321

Classroom Protocol

This class will use a seminar format with assigned reading and classroom discussion. This classroom is a professional environment and should be treated that way. Please practice the following guidelines to help the class run more smoothly as well as to limit the number of distractions that occur

Laptops and electronics

You may NOT use your laptops or phones in class unless we are doing a particular assignment which requires a laptop. Connecting to the internet and using class time to check emails, visiting social networking sites, surfing the web will result lowering of grade

If you need to take notes in this class you must use paper and pen/pencil

Please turn OFF (not on vibrate) all cell phones, pagers, tablets, watches and any other electronic devices before entering the classroom. If found texting during the lecture you may be asked to leave for the remainder of the lecture.

NOTE: Many topics in this course may evoke strong emotions. Within the framework of individual expression, students are expected to show respect for others and their viewpoints, even when those views are opposed to those of the student.

Each student is expected to:

- Attend all classes (your grade is dependent on your participation not your attendance)
- Complete all assigned readings prior to each class
- Actively participate in all classroom discussions. Pay attention
- Arrive on time // Do not leave early
- Turn off all cell phones, laptops & watch alarms prior to entering Zoom classroom.
- Don't talk when your instructor is speaking or when other students are talking
- Be respectful of the thoughts, opinions, and experiences of others even though you might not agree with what they are saying. Many of the topics in this class may have personal significance to some students. Please make a special effort to listen to them
- Turn in all assignments on time
- Some Course material will be available on Canvas. These materials are not meant to be a substitute for coming to class. This a senior course... my expectation is that you will be very engaged in the material as it is being discussed

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), 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 [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

PSYC 190 LGBTQ+ Psychology Section 04

Class Outline (subject to change)
Capstone: *LGBTQ+ Psychology Current Issues*
Spring 2026 PSYC 190 – 04

Week 1

- 1/26 Overview
- 1/28 Introduction to LGBTQ+ Psychology

Week 2

- 2/2 Language /Culture / Symbols
- 2/4 Identity Labels/ Diversity

Week 3

- 2/9 Nature vs Nurture (Theories)
- 2/11 ID Formation // Coming Out

Week 4

- 2/16 Transgender & Nonbinary Identities (Adults)
 - 2/18 WORKDAY for Movies Papers
- Movie Papers DUE 2/22

Week 5

- 2/23 Movie Discussion
- 2/25 Discrimination & LGBTQ+ Specific Microaggressions

Week 6

- 3/2 Current LGBTQ+ Issues
- 3/04 Laws effecting LGBTQ+ people

Week 7

- 3/9 LGBTQ+ Relationships / LGBTQ+ Parenting
 - 3/11 Parenting Paper WORKDAY
- Parenting Paper DUE 3/15

Week 8

- 3/16 Parenting Paper Discussion // Teaching Children about LGBTQ+ Families through books
- 3/18 Transgender Children & Case Example

Week 9

3/23 Critical Thinking & LGBTQ+ Issues

3/25 LGBTQ+ History

Spring break 3/29 – 4/5

Week 10

4/6 Ballroom & Drag Communities

4/8 Real Life Project Discussions Real Life Papers DUE 4/7

Week 11

4/13 Avoiding LGBTQ+ Bias in Research – In-Class writing

4/15 Sexual Orientation Change Efforts AND SOCE Case Example

Week 12

4/20 Research WORKDAY – NO CLASS

4/22 Being an Ally to LGBTQ+ Community and Individuals // LGBTQ+ Strengths

Research Papers DUE 4/26

Week 13

4/27 Research Discussions

4/29 TBA

Week 14

5/4 International LGBTQ+ Rights & Issues

5/6 TBA // Additional Mental Health Issues

Week 15

5/11 LAST CLASS

Future of LGBTQ+ Psychology and Research

LGBTQ+ Influence on Society

In-Class Writing