

**San José State University
College of Social Sciences
Psychology of Contemporary Families, Spring 2026
PSYC 209 (1)**

Instructor: Dr. Elena Klaw
Email: Elena.klaw@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Mon 3:00-4:15 in CL 203 and by appointment
Class Days/Time: Mon 12:00-2:45, DMH 308

Course Description

An overview of contemporary family issues faced by mental health practitioners in clinical settings. Emphasis will be placed on the identification and conceptualization of these issues from a clinical-community psychology perspective, stressing the application of psychosocial understandings to clinical practice with families.

Course Learning Objectives and Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Understand the variety of family forms existent in the United States.
- Understand the influence of gender, race, culture, and class on family dynamics and functioning.
- Critically analyze the current child welfare system and legal system as it affects service provision.
- Demonstrate familiarity with empirically based methods for assessing and serving families in which there is violence or neglect.
- Master guidelines for providing competent, culturally sensitive family clinical services.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon completion of the MS in Clinical Psychology...

- Students will demonstrate breadth of knowledge of a variety of psychotherapy theories and in-depth knowledge of one chosen theory of intervention
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of empirically supported clinical interventions and evidence ability to select clinical treatments given this literature
- 2.1 Students will demonstrate effective integration and communication of clinical case material

- 2.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize contextual and cultural variables into presentations 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 think and discuss cases other than their own, applying theories, principles, and relevant empirical findings to those cases
- 3.1 Students will demonstrate understanding of different assessment devices and strategies for assessing client outcome over the course of treatment including standardized nomothetic and idiographic approaches
- 4.1 Students will demonstrate depth and breadth of understanding in areas including, but not limited to, psychotherapy theory, service delivery, ethics, assessment, research methods, family therapy, cultural diversity, psychopharmacology, and issues relevant to adult and child clinical populations. Students will be able to apply this knowledge to clinical cases
- 5.1 Students will demonstrate fulfillment of coursework and other pre-degree licensing requirements outlined by the Board of Behavioral Sciences.

Licensure Learning Outcomes

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

- LLO1: For the LPCC requirements, this course is designed to fulfill category (F) LLO2: For the LPCC requirements, this course partially meets the requirement for requirement for a minimum of 15 semester or 22.5 quarter units of advanced coursework to develop knowledge of specific treatment issues or special populations. (Note the units for this course are not repeated from the LPCC core content areas.)
- LLO2: In addition, for the LPCC requirements, this course meets requirement for instruction in the understanding of human behavior within the social context of socioeconomic status and other contextual issues affecting social position; an understanding of the effects of socioeconomic status on treatment and available resources; Case management, systems of care for the severely mentally ill, public and private services for the severely mentally ill, community resources for victims of abuse, advocacy for the severely mentally ill, and collaborative treatment.
- LLO3: For the LPCC requirements, this course also meets requirements for instruction in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same-gender abuse dynamics as well as child abuse assessment and reporting.
- LLO4: For the LPCC requirements, this course helps meet the requirement for instruction that is integrated throughout the curriculum that provides principles of mental health recovery-oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery-oriented practice environment; provides the opportunity for students to meet with various consumers and family members of consumers of mental health services to enhance understanding of their experience of mental illness, treatment, and recovery; and integrates the principles of mental health recovery-oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery-oriented practice environments.

- LLO5: For the MFT requirements this course also includes instruction in the broad range of matters and life events that may arise within marriage and family relationships and within a variety of California cultures and includes instruction in all areas of study specified in BPC Section 4980.36(d)(2)(C) including in child and adult abuse assessment and reporting, spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same-gender abuse dynamics, cultural factors relevant to abuse of partners and family members, childbirth, child rearing, parenting, and step parenting, marriage, divorce, and blended families, and the psychological, psychotherapeutic, community, and health implications of the matters and life events related to each of the above matters;
- LLO6: In addition, for the MFT requirements this course also includes instruction about the effects of socioeconomic status on treatment and available resources. (*BPC Section 4980.36(d)(2)(F)*)
- LLO7: The course includes instruction in resilience including the personal and community qualities that enable persons to cope with adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other stresses and the areas of study specified in BPC Section 4980.36(d)(2)(G);
- LLO8: Finally, the course includes instruction case management, systems of care for the severely mentally ill, public and private services and supports available for the severely mentally ill, community resources for persons with mental illness and for victims of abuse, advocacy for the severely mentally ill, and collaborative treatment as specified in BPC Section 4980.36(e).

Required Readings/Texts

The following three books are available through Canvas, at Spartan Bookstore, Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com. Hand-outs will also be provided through the Canvas course site.

Beam, C. (2013). *To the End of June: The Intimate Life of American Foster Care*. Houghton Mifflin. ISBN 978-0544-10344-3

Hines, D. A., Malley-Morrison, Kathleen M. & Dutton, L. B. (2021). *Family Violence in the United States: Defining, Understanding, and Combating Abuse*, Sage. ISBN 9781506394954

Snyder, R. L. (2020). *No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us*. Bloomsbury. ISBN-10 1635570980

The following two books will be provided on Canvas by the instructor, courtesy of the author. Used paperback copies can be purchased through Amazon.com.

Johnson, J. L. & Grant, G. (2005). *CaseBook Series: Domestic Violence*. Allyn & Bacon. ISBN 020538952X

Johnson, J. L. & Grant, G. (2005). *CaseBook Series: Foster Care*. Allyn & Bacon. ISBN 0205389503

Recommended Supplementary Reading:

Gottlieb, L. (2019). *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone: A Therapist, HER Therapist, and Our Lives Revealed*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. ISBN-10 328662055

Henderson, R. (2024). *Troubled: A Memoir of Foster Care, Family, and Social Class*. Gallery. ISBN-10: 1982168536

Miller, C. (2020). *Know My Name: A Memoir*. Penguin. ISBN-10 0735223726

Shirk, M. & Stangler, G. (2006). *On Their Own: What Happens to Kids When They Age Out of the Foster Care System*. Basic Books. ISBN 978081334180

Vuong, O. (2021). *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous: A Novel*. Penguin. ISBN-10 0525562044

Evaluation

Grading: There are 100 total possible points for this course. Thus, each point equals a percentage point. Barring medical or legal emergencies, all work must be handed in on time for full consideration. Please submit all work using Canvas.

Your grade is based on:

- **Two Integration Assignments** containing responses to questions in the CaseBooks. (40 points)
- **One Original Final Report** regarding best practice guidelines in a relevant area of your choice to share in writing with me and the class. (20 points)
- **Brief Proposal of an Action to Prevent Violence.** List of options is provided. (5 points)
- **Brief Presentation on Finals Day of Action to Prevent Violence** (5 points)
- **One Brief Clinical Case Report** (assignment attached) that will be shared verbally, on Canvas and in writing to the class. (20 points)
- **Participation** (10 points). Class discussion is an essential aspect of the course. Thus, you are expected to contribute each class session with **questions and/or comments related to the readings**.

The scale that I use to evaluate your work is the following:

98-100=A+	88-89=B+	78-79=C+	68-69=D+	< 60=F
93-97=A	83-87=B	73-77=C	63-67=D	
90-92=A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-	

The procedures of the course are subject to change as circumstance demands. You are expected to attend scheduled class meetings, and check email and the Canvas site regularly to remain current. If you are ill, or test positive for Covid, please let me know so we can make an alternate plan for you to get the necessary information. Email and office hours are the best ways to reach me. Please add "20926" to the subject of your emails. I will do my best to respond to email within 2

business days. I do not necessarily check email on evenings, week-ends or University holidays. Please refer to me as “Dr. Klaw,” or “Professor (Prof.) Klaw” in your communications.

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>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources. As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
 - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic Integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 [pdf] requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. You are discouraged from using AI tools UNLESS under direct instruction from your instructor to do so. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability. AEC will contact the instructor with further details, if needed. If you’d like to discuss course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special

arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me during office hours or by appointment as soon as possible.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Campus Village B computer lab. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

The SJSU Writing Center is located on the second floor of the MLK Library. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services

Located on the corner of 7th Street and San Carlos in the Student Wellness Center Room 300B, SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services has professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors that are available to provide confidential consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more, visit the Counseling Services website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

Contact SJSU Cares

SJSU wants to help you stay healthy! Resources are available to help you pay for medical bills or insurance. SJSU Cares can help if a student is a victim of a crime, or of a natural disaster like fire or flood. We know that housing insecurity is also a real issue in Silicon Valley. If you are facing any kind of emergency situation, contact SJSU Cares to find support and resources.

Food Assistance

If you find yourself struggling to afford food while attending SJSU, SJSU Cares has programs to help:

- Spartan Food Pantry
- CalFresh Application Assistance

These programs can help you get the food you need to focus on your education. Additionally, there are many other food resources available on campus and in the surrounding community.

The Military and Veterans Resource Center (VRC)

The San Jose State University VRC is designed as a one-stop resource that plays a primary role in serving the university's growing community of veterans and military students. The one-stop VRC is dedicated to assisting eligible student Veterans, Reservists, National Guard, Active Duty, and dependents with state/federal education benefits and certification, campus resources, and intentional student programs that aid in the transition from military to education to career. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit the VRC website at <https://www.sjsu.edu/veterans/about/contact-us.php>

**Course Schedule is subject to change due to unforeseen events and the availability of speakers and videos. You are responsible for attending class and checking email and Canvas to remain current.*

CLASS/TOPIC	READING FROM CASEBOOK/ON LINE HANDOUTS DUE	READINGS FROM BEAM, HINES, AND SNYDER BOOKS DUE	EVALUATION DUE
<p>Class 1 1/26</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Video (59 mins): <u>Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, ACE-Aware Nation Conference</u></p>	<p><u>Canvas Handout: Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire for Adults</u></p>		<p>Respond to ACE Film Questions on Discussion Board</p>
<p>Class 2 2/2</p> <p>Issues & Definition of Family Violence & Abuse</p>	<p><u>Canvas Handout: Advanced Multi Systemic Interview Guide</u></p>	<p>Hines, Ch.1: Issues in the Definition of Family Violence, 2–48. Ch. 2: Cultural Contexts, 49-102.</p>	<p>Case Presentation:</p>
<p>Class 3 2/9</p> <p>Violence and Systems</p>	<p><u>Foster Care</u> Multisystemic Approach, 1-27. <u>Foster Care</u> Ch. 2 Crisis in Foster Care (“Raney Family”), 29-55.</p>	<p>Beam, Part One: Catch, 3-57.</p>	<p>Case Presentation:</p>

CLASS/TOPIC	READING FROM CASEBOOK/ON LINE HANDOUTS DUE	READINGS FROM BEAM, HINES, AND SNYDER BOOKS DUE	EVALUATION DUE
<p>Class 4 2/16</p> <p>Child Physical Maltreatment & Neglect</p> <p>No Class Meeting</p> <p>Complete on-line <u>Child Abuse</u> <u>Mandated Reporter</u> <u>General Training</u></p>	<p><u>Canvas Handout:</u> Everytown (2023). How Can We Prevent Gun Violence in Schools?</p>	<p>Hines, Ch. 3: Child Physical Maltreatment, 104-146.</p>	
<p>Class 5 2/23</p> <p>Child Sexual Abuse</p> <p>Speaker: <i>SV YWCA</i>, Jennifer Sanchez Nieto, Assoc. Dir. Clinical Services 1:00-2:30</p>	<p><u>Foster Care</u> Ch. 5 Dan, 101-116.</p>	<p>Hines, Ch. 4: Child Sexual Maltreatment, 147-180.</p>	<p>Submit Mandated Reporter Training Certificate or Photo</p> <p>Integration Assignment 1 Due: Foster Care “Raney Family”</p> <p>Case Presentation:</p>
<p>Class 6 3/2</p> <p>Child Psychological Maltreatment & Attachment</p> <p>Speaker: Child Advocates SV Angelina Rodriguez, CASA Specialist 1-2:30 (<i>pending</i>)</p>	<p><u>CDC Social Ecological Model</u></p>	<p>Hines, Ch.5: Child Neglect & Psychological Maltreatment, 181-218.</p> <p>Beam, Part One: Catch, 58-94.</p>	<p>Case Presentation:</p>

CLASS/TOPIC	READING FROM CASEBOOK/ON LINE HANDOUTS DUE	READINGS FROM BEAM, HINES, AND SNYDER BOOKS DUE	EVALUATION DUE
<p>Class 7 3/9</p> <p>Prevention & Intervention</p> <p>Speakers: Ruth Downey, LMFT & Justin Wirth, LMFT Rebekah's Children's Services 1:30-2:30</p>		<p>Hines, Ch. 6: Prevention & Intervention in Child Maltreatment, 219-254.</p> <p>Beam, Part Two: Hold, 97-188.</p>	Case Presentation:
<p>Class 8 3/16</p> <p>Intimate Partner Violence</p> <p>Video (12 mins): <u>Warning Signs</u></p>	<p><u>Domestic Violence</u> Ch. 2 Mikki's Story, 29-47.</p>	<p>Hines, Ch. 7, Maltreatment of Women by Male Partners, 257-302</p> <p>Snyder, Preface & Part I: The End, 1-57.</p>	Case Presentation:
<p>Class 9 3/23</p> <p>Gender & Partner Violence</p> <p>Rolanda Pierre-Dixon, Esq. SCC DA 1-2:30</p>	<p><u>Domestic Violence</u> Ch. 2 Mikki's Story, 48-68.</p>	<p>Hines, Ch. 8, Maltreatment of Men by Female Partners, 303-342.</p>	Case Presentation:

CLASS/TOPIC	READING FROM CASEBOOK/ON LINE HANDOUTS DUE	READINGS FROM BEAM, HINES, AND SNYDER BOOKS DUE	EVALUATION DUE
3/30 No Class Spring Recess			
Class 10 4/6 Intimate Violence in Teens and Young Adults Video (15 mins): ONE LOVE		Hines, Ch. 9, Maltreatment in College Student Relationships, 343- 410. Snyder, Part I: The End, 58-103.	Case Presentation:
Class 11 4/13 Day of Dialogue MLK Library Room 225	<u>Canvas Hand-outs:</u> Everytown (2024). Gun Violence in America Goodman (2023). <u>Tragedy Upon Tragedy: Mass Shootings</u> Everytown (2024) Those Who Serve: Firearm Suicide in Vets Peace Science Digest (2023.) Effects of ..Polarization on..Violence	Snyder, Part II: The Beginning, 107- 158.	Brief Proposal for an Action you will take to prevent violence: Specify what you will do and why (see list on Canvas).

CLASS/TOPIC	READING FROM CASEBOOK/ON LINE HANDOUTS DUE	READINGS FROM BEAM, HINES, AND SNYDER BOOKS DUE	EVALUATION DUE
<p>Class 12 4/20</p> <p>IPV and Risks in LGBTQ+ Relationships</p> <p>Speaker: Amy Caffrey, LMFT 1-2:30</p>	<p>Bender (2021). Violent Victimization Among LGB Populations</p>	<p>Hines, Ch.10, Sexual Minority Populations, 411-454.</p>	<p>Integration Assignment 2 Due: DV “Mikki”</p> <p>Case Presentation:</p>
<p>Class 13 4/27</p> <p>Sexual Assault</p> <p>Video (55 mins): It Was Rape</p>	<p><u>Canvas Hand-out:</u> <u>New National Intimate Partner & Sexual (NISVS) Violence Report Released</u></p> <p>NYT (2024). Troubling Trend In Teenage Sex</p>	<p>Snyder, Part II: The Beginning, 159-208.</p> <p>Snyder, Part III: The Middle, 211-280.</p>	<p>Case Presentation:</p>
<p>Class 14 5/4</p> <p>Abuse of Elderly</p> <p>No Class Meeting</p> <p>Complete Training: Mandated Reporting Elder & Dependent Adult Abuse</p>		<p>Hines, Ch.12 Maltreatment of Older Adults, 496-530.</p> <p>Ch.13 Maltreatment of Sibs & Parents, 531-566.</p>	<p>Final Paper: Best Practices Report</p>

<p>Class 15 5/11</p> <p>Ending Cycles of Violence</p>	<p>Hines, Ch.14 Looking Forward, 573-575.</p>	<p>Beam, Part Three: Release, 191-258.</p>	<p>Submit Mandated Reporting Training Certificate/Photo</p> <p>Case Presentation:</p>
<p>Finals Day</p> <p>Mon 5/18 10:45-12:45</p>			<p>Final Presentation: Present or Describe Your Action and Why it Was Important</p>

Clinical Case Report: Worth 20 points. Each student will share a brief clinical report pertaining to one of the cases that is described in an assigned CaseBook (*Foster Care* or *Domestic Violence*), or in one of the other the assigned books (*To the End of June*, and *No Visible Bruises*).

Alternately, you may choose a case contained in the recommended supplementary reading. For this assignment, you may either write about a single client who is an abuse survivor or foster child, or an entire foster family (as discussed in the book *To the End of June*). You must choose a case that has not been discussed in class and is not the topic of an integration assignment (You cannot choose “Mikki” or “The Raney Family”).

This Case Report will be graded on completeness, clarity, and coherence. In keeping with the format of standard clinical reports and a multi-systemic approach, describe the following in no more than 5 pages. If information isn’t available, state what you would do to explore or address the area of concern.

1. Demographics: Describe information available as to gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation/identity, ethnic/cultural identification, and education level of the client/family seeking treatment. (1 pt.)
2. Presenting Problem: Provide a very brief description of the concern that client or referral source reports as the reason for currently seeking treatment. Note referral source and symptoms reported by client or referral source. State what you know about duration and severity of symptoms, and concerns or distress reported. (2 pts.)
3. Strengths: Briefly describe strengths and resources in the client or family’s life such as coping skills, abilities, support figures, cognitions, beliefs, activities, plans, or goals. Describe history of resilience in terms of overcoming obstacles or challenges. You can add what information you might ask about. (2 pts.)
4. Possible Diagnoses Involved: Note any evidence for meeting criteria for a specific DSM diagnosis. If so, provide a brief justification for each aspect of the DSM diagnosis. Discuss rule outs or alternate interpretations if appropriate. Be sure to note any biological/medical concerns that might be significant in treating this client or family. You can add what information you might ask about. (4 pts.)
5. History, particularly client involvement with social services: For client or family seeking treatment, include relevant information about past and current family functioning as well as

milestones met, and traumatic events. Discuss the influence of systems on client or family treatment such as schools, judicial system, Child Protective Services, psychiatry, therapists, homeless shelters, foster placements, group homes, treatment centers, mutual-help groups, youth programs, health care, mandated classes, mentors, and incarceration. You can add what information you might ask about. (4 pts.)

6. The role of socio-cultural variables, such as ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, dis/ability, and class on client/family concerns. Discuss immigration/acclimation history if appropriate. If relevant, discuss religious beliefs, values shaped by culture, cultural conflicts experienced, gender role beliefs and practices, and experiences of discrimination. Discuss risk and protective factors related to social and economic resources. You can add what information you might ask about. Sum up by conceptualizing the client's focal problem in terms of client's functioning within the contexts described in parts 3 and 4. (4 pts.)

7. Treatment Plan: Describe the theories (eg CBT, BT, Attachment, Humanism, Feminist, Narrative, Family Systems, Gestalt) used to inform your approach and describe the treatment you would provide as the client/family's psychotherapist, clearly and briefly citing specific techniques. Based on parts 1 – 4, demonstrate the ways in which your ongoing or proposed treatment addresses what you hypothesize are the key concerns, symptoms, risk factors, and coping strengths of the client. (4 pts.)

8. Recommendations Provide a multi-systemic overview based on the information above. Bring in traditional clinical theory (eg CBT, BT, Psychodynamic, Humanism, Family Systems, Gestalt) as well as community-based approaches (advocacy, policy change, involvement in school and community programs) discussed in your reading to suggest future interventions that would benefit the client or family and help to alleviate the current distress. (4 pts.)