

Methods of Psychotherapy PSYC 258

Fall 2026 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/19/2026 to 12/07/2026 Modified 08/20/2026

Contact Information

Instructor:	Jennifer Gregg, Ph.D.
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Office Hours:	12:30 - 1:30pm Tuesday and Thursday
Class Days/Time:	Thursdays 9:00 – 11:45 am
Classroom:	DMH 308

Course Information

Course Description

This course is intended to provide you with an overview of the theories and methods of psychotherapy and to teach you to think critically about each of them. We will examine the major theoretical frameworks within psychotherapy and explore the relative strengths and drawbacks of each one, while learning the key psychotherapy microskills and intervention techniques they employ.

From the SJSU Catalog:

Survey of the theoretical background and practical application of various approaches to psychotherapy.

Notes: MS program priority.

Course Description and Requisites

Survey of the theoretical background and practical application of various approaches to psychotherapy.

Prerequisite: PSYC 139.

Notes: MS program priority.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

As a graduate student, you should not be missing your classes. If you need to miss a class, please let me know by phone or email and I will likely tell you to get the notes from another student. This will be better than nothing, but there will be a lot happening during this class, and notes from other students will not properly cover what happens, so for your own benefit try not to miss class.

Office Hours

The students who have historically done the best in this class are those who came and met with me in my office when they got stuck, rather than just staying stuck. If you can't make my office hours, email me (email is the most reliable way to contact me) and we can set up another time to meet. Ultimately, as a graduate student, it is your responsibility to get your needs met, but I will be as present and flexible as I can be to help you succeed. Take me up on it.

📋 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 Goals

Specifically, the goals of this course are for students to learn to conceptualize and plan treatment for a given theory, while learning the basic microskills and intervention strategies for that theory.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

CLO1: Understand the role of psychological theory in the selection and delivery of psychotherapy Satisfied by reading responses and case application papers

CLO2: Learn to conceptualize clinical cases from a variety of theoretical perspectives, taking into consideration therapist and client contextual features (including age, sex, race, ethnicity, spirituality, sexual orientation, language, disability, and socioeconomic status) and current evidence of effectiveness.Satisfied by case application papers and case application papers

CLO3: Understand and discriminate the etiology and mechanisms of change of the major paradigms of psychotherapy, and learn how to implement appropriate interventions from within those paradigms.Satisfied by reading responses, deliberate practice sessions, and recorded demonstrations

CLO4: Learn treatment planning within the principles of evidence-based practice.Satisfied by reading responses and case application papers

CLO5: Learn key interventions and therapeutic techniques for each theorySatisfied by deliberate practice sessions and recorded demonstrations

Course Materials

Required Texts

Essential Psychotherapies, Theory and Practice (4th Edition)

by Stanley B. Messer, Nadine J. Kaslow, The Guilford Press

Published 2019

ISBN-13: 978-1-4625-4084-6, ISBN: 1-4625-4084-8

Other Readings

Supplementary Journal Articles. A copy of supplementary journal articles is available for download on the course website. These are essential readings and you will be responsible for them during the semester.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Over the course of the semester, you will read about a variety of theories, and you will be required to do 3 things for each theory: 1) come to class knowing the answers **6 specific theory-related questions**, 2) take a quiz assessing your knowledge (and ability to apply) of those answers, and 3) **practice** and key intervention methods for each theory

For each theory, you will need to be able to answer the following questions *based on the assigned readings* (not outside sources). I will be assessing your understanding via a short quiz at the beginning of class, which will be followed by our going through the questions together so you can ensure you understand the basics of each theory before we move on. We will then practice microskills related to each theory's application.

Theory-Related Questions

1. What is the **mechanism of the problem** – how do symptoms or problems develop? How are they maintained? (Note: each theory has a unique mechanism of the problem)
2. What is the structure of sessions? What happens in the sessions? How active/directive is the therapist? Is treatment typically long- or short-term? Is homework used?
3. What is the **mechanism of change** for this approach (i.e., what personal characteristics change to produce improvement, and how is it brought about)?
4. Does this approach utilize specific interventions? If so, what are the most important ones? Be able to describe at least one in detail.
5. Is there empirical research to support this approach? If so, for whom?

6. What are the strengths and weaknesses for this approach in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion?

In-class Deliberate Practice

Experiential learning and shaping is a big part of how you will become a professional in this field. In this class that will include in-class discussions and deliberate practice role plays that will allow you to get in-class practice with each theory/intervention. If you are not sure if you are engaging enough with the material in class or in role plays, I would encourage you to seek me out during office hours to check on your level of participation.

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, (so **9 hours per week for our class**) 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

The components of your grade are

Assignment	Points	% of Total grade	Learning outcome(s)
Theory Responses/Case Responses	9@ 50 pts each) 450	~88% of grade	CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4
In-class Deliberate practice sessions (participation)	50	~12% of grade	CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4, CLO5
Total Points	500		

Determination of Grades

Grades will be determined by the following scale:

100-93%=A, 92-90%=A-,

89-87%=B+, 86-83%=B, 82-80%=B-,

79-87%=C+, 76-73%=C, 72-70%=C-,

69-67%=D+, 66-63%=D, 62-60%=D-,

and 59.9% and less = F.

Unless otherwise specified, there is no extra credit available in this course.

Absolutely no late work will be accepted.

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	Deliberate Practice/ Microskills	Due	Reading
1	8/20	Introduction to course			Course Syllabus
2	8/27	Microskills Overview	Exploratory Questions Empathic Understanding		

Week	Date	Topic	Deliberate Practice/ Microskills	Due	Reading
3	9/3	Theories and Evidence-Based Practice in Psychotherapy	Validation		Spring, B. (2007). Evidence-based practice in clinical psychology: What it is, why it matters; what you need to know. <i>Journal of clinical psychology</i>, 63(7), 611-631. Minieri, A. M., Reese, R. J., Miserocchi, K. M., & Pascale-Hague, D. (2015). Using client feedback in training of future counseling psychologists: An evidence-based and social justice practice. <i>Counseling Psychology Quarterly</i>, 28(3), 305-323.
4	9/10	Case Conceptualization	Collaborative Goal-Setting		Morris, S. J. (2003). A metamodel of theories of psychotherapy: A guide to their analysis, comparison, integration and use. <i>Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy: An International Journal of Theory & Practice</i> , 10(1), 1-18.
5	9/17	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Psychotherapy	Multicultural Orientation Microskills		Buchanan, N. & Wiklund, L. (2020) Why Clinical Science Must Change or Die: Integrating Intersectionality and Social Justice, <i>Women & Therapy</i>, 43:3-4, 309-329. Davis, D. E., DeBlaere, C., Owen, J., Hook, J. N., Rivera, D. P., Choe, E., ... & Placeres, V. (2018). The multicultural orientation framework: A narrative review. <i>Psychotherapy</i>, 55(1), 89.
6	9/24	Cognitive Formulations	Delivering a CBT Treatment Rationale Cognitive Restructuring	Quiz 1	Cattie, Buchholz, & Abramowitz - M & K Ch. 5

Week	Date	Topic	Deliberate Practice/ Microskills	Due	Reading
7	10/1	Behavioral Formulations	Behavioral Activation Exposure Hierarchy	Quiz 2	Antony, Roemer, & Lenton-Brym – M & K Ch. 4
8	10/8/26	Cognitive and Behavioral Combined Formulations	CBT Tools	None	Persons, J. B., Brown, C. L., & Diamond, A. (2019). Case Formulation-Driven Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. Handbook of cognitive-behavioral therapies, 1(2), 45-60.
9	10/15	Acceptance and Commitment Therapy	Staying with Emotional Experience	Quiz 3	Masuda & Rizvi (ACT portions) – M & K Ch. 6
10	10/22	Dialectical Behavior Therapy	Inviting Client to Engage in Problem-Solving	Quiz 4	Lynch, T. R., Chapman, A. L., Rosenthal, M. Z., Kuo, J. R., & Linehan, M. M. (2006). Mechanisms of change in dialectical behavior therapy: Theoretical and empirical observations. Journal of clinical psychology, 62(4), 459-480.
11	10/29/26	Psychoanalytic Formulations	Making Process Comments I	Quiz 5	Wolitzky - M & K Ch. 2
12	11/5	Psychodynamic Formulations	Making Process Comments II	Quiz 6	Curtis – M & K Ch. 3
13	11/12	Functional Analytic Psychotherapy	Contingent Responding	Quiz 7	Kohlenberg, R. J., & Tsai, M. (1994). Functional analytic psychotherapy: A radical behavioral approach to treatment and integration. Journal of Psychotherapy Integration, 4(3), 175.
14	11/19/26	Humanistic Formulations Person-Centered	Unconditional Responding	Quiz 8	Bohart & Watson - M & K Ch.7
15	11/26	Thanksgiving			
16	12/3	Multicultural/Feminist Approaches	Broaching	Quiz 9	TBA
Final Exam	12/10 10:45 – 12:45	Final Exam			