

Psychology of Women

PSYC 107

Fall 2025 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/19/2025

Contact Information

The best way to contact me is via email @ desiree.ryan@sjsu.edu.

I will do my best to reply to emails within 48 hours, but response times may take longer at the beginning of the semester and during finals.

Office Hours: Thursdays, 12-1:30, DMH 316, or by appointment

Phone: 408-924-5653

Course Information

Course Time: TR 9:00-10:15am

Classroom: DMH 355

Course Description and Requisites

Sex-role development of women in terms of bio-social factors involved in intellectual and personal-emotional functions. Psychological theory and research.

Prerequisite(s): PSYC 1.

Grading: Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Inclusivity and Engagement Principles: Together, we will co-create a classroom environment that is inclusive and welcoming to everyone. In this course, we will respectfully discuss diverse experiences related to gender identity, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, among others. To ensure that everyone's identities and experiences are valued and heard, I expect each of you to regard one another with the utmost respect. If you feel these principles are not being met by me or your peers, please let me know immediately.

Note on Device Use: To ensure the environment is marked by respect and inclusivity, I ask that you please refrain from texting, browsing the internet, and/or using social media. I understand some of you may need to check your texts or phones for family emergencies, etc., so I ask that you please do so quietly and mindfully. *If you are becoming distracted and not listening to or engaging with the course material, me, or your peers, I will ask to speak to you privately. If the behavior continues, I will ask you to leave the classroom.*

Accessibility: I aim to make our learning community as accessible as possible. This means that I will provide accessible materials and create opportunities for different kinds of classroom engagement (i.e., traditional test taking, written assignments, group discussions, personal reflections, take-home assignments). If course materials are inaccessible, or you experience a barrier to participating in class, please bring this to my attention immediately, and I will gladly work with you to ensure accessibility. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access to this course, please visit the [Accessible Education Center \(https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/). Additionally, please get in touch with me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably during the first few weeks of the semester, so I can ensure your needs are being met and I am doing all I can to support you.

Academic Integrity: All submitted work must be your own original work and produced exclusively for this course. Academic integrity includes following exam and paper rules, using only permitted materials during an exam, keeping what you know about an exam to yourself, incorporating proper citation of all sources of information, and only submitting your own original work. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented.

The use of **AI (e.g., ChatGPT)** at any stage of course assessments is prohibited. For example, students may not use AI to generate ideas, guide paper writing, or construct sentences, paragraphs, or full papers. Violations will be taken seriously and may result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or the course. I cannot guide you in developing your critical thinking and writing skills if you use AI during this course.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, disclosing exam content during or after you have taken an exam, accessing exam materials without permission, copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source, that is submitted for grading as your own, and plagiarism such as using internet material without proper citation.

Violations will be taken seriously and may result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or the course. If you have any questions, please talk with me before completing an assignment.

Distribution of Lecture Notes and Other Course Materials: All materials in this course are the intellectual property of their creators. As a student, you have access to many of the materials in the course for the purpose of learning, engaging with your classmates, and completing assignments. You have a moral and legal obligation to respect the rights of others by only using course materials for purposes associated with the course. You are not permitted to share, upload, stream, sell, republish, share the login information for, or otherwise disseminate any of the course materials, including video and audio files, assignment prompts, slides, notes, syllabus, simulations, datasets, discussion threads.

Please note that teaching and learning is an iterative process, and as such, the course schedule and other syllabus content (e.g., exam question format) may shift as we progress through the semester.

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)

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs): Upon successful completion of the Psychology of Women course, students will be able to:

CLO #1: Display knowledge of the feminist psychology perspective.

CLO #2: Apply current research findings to understand and critically interrogate the gender binary.

CLO #3: Understand and demonstrate knowledge about the intersectional nature of the psychology of women

CLO #4: Critically evaluate structural sources of inequality for women (e.g., gender and racial pay gap, barriers to accessing healthcare, violence against women).

CLO #5: Apply course concepts to construct an original argument about an issue women face in written format.

Course Materials

Course Readings: Each week, you will read roughly 2 scholarly articles and a news article (~60 pages of reading a week). All articles are posted on Canvas, along with optional readings. There are no other required texts for this course.

Quizzes and Exam Materials: You will take 3 quizzes and 2 exams. You will take these quizzes and exams via Canvas, either on your own time within the timeframe the quiz/exam is open, or in class. If you elect to take the quiz/exam in class, please bring your computer with you.

Additional Materials: We will be doing in-class assignments and discussions that will require you to write your thoughts down. Please come to each class with a pen or pencil and paper. You may also wish to have a device with you to pull up readings in class, however, this is not mandatory.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Readings:

This is an upper-division content course; therefore, you will be reading substantially more than in your lower-division courses. For this class, you should expect to read approximately 60-70 pages a week. Reading will consist of up-to-date scholarly articles, book chapters, news articles, and online content (e.g., reports, opinion pieces). Each week's reading is designed to inform you of: (1) psychological theory regarding women and gender; (2) framing of women's issues in news media and across social media platforms; and (3) how people are interpreting and perceiving current events and narratives around women and women's issues.

Lectures and Class Activities/Discussions:

For the bulk of the semester, each week will be composed of lecture on Tuesdays, and a mini lecture and discussion on Thursdays. Group discussions are a significant part of this course as they give you a way to apply course concepts, develop critical thinking skills, and guide your verbal reasoning abilities while engaging with research findings. Both passive learning (i.e., lecture) and active learning (i.e., applying course concepts in discussions and activities) are implemented in this course to support your success as a well-rounded thinker and scholar.

Course Assessments:

Course Total Points = 100 points

- 50 points: 2 exams (25 pts each)
- 20 points: Letter to legislator
- 15 points: Content quizzes (3 quizzes, 5 pts each)
- 15 points: In-class activities & discussions and/or take-home assignments

Assessments Breakdown:

1. Exams (50 points: 2 exams, 25 points each): To meet CLOs #1, #3, and #4, you will take 2 exams on Canvas. Exams will be open-note (not open-partner, open-Google, or open-AI) tests. You will have 75 minutes to answer 50 questions (roughly a minute and a half per question). Because the exams are timed, I strongly suggest you study as if this were an in-class, scantron exam, and use your notes as a backup. Exam questions may take the form of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, fill-in-multiple blanks, multiple answers, multiple drop-downs, matching, and short essay answer questions.

Throughout the course, I will hold 3 exams; you will only need to take 2 of them. You are welcome to take all 3 and drop your lowest score, or only take 2 of them. Canvas will automatically drop your lowest score (which will be a zero if you do not take it). I will open the exam at 9am on the exam date and leave it open for 48 hours. Once you open the exam, a timer will start and will only have 75 minutes to complete the exam. Please ensure you are in a quiet environment with stable wifi. If the wifi goes out, this exam will be dropped as your lowest score. Once you've seen the exam, I cannot reopen it for you under any circumstances (this is why I have a very flexible exam policy). I will be in our classroom during the regular class time if you wish to take the exam there (I recommend this option).

Further detailed information regarding exam content will be given in class.

2. Letter to Legislator or Op-Ed Writing Assignment (20 points):

To deepen your understanding of a topic related the psychology of women and learn how to use research to support an argument about a social or policy issue affecting women, you will choose one of the assignments below. This assignment will facilitate the completion of CLO #5.

Option #1: Writing your Elected Representative.

Consider an issue affecting women that you feel particularly passionate about, and write a 1 page, single-spaced letter to your representative advocating for change.

It is best to choose an issue we have discussed in lecture or read about. However, if there is an issue not covered in lecture or in the readings that you would like to write about, please email me your topic for approval. For example, you may want to write about sex trafficking of young girls or women but this is not covered in class. I can work with you to ensure your topic is feasible for this assignment. Please see below for ACLU's guidelines for writing your representative and assignment details.

ACLU: Tips on Writing to Your Elected Officials

Letters are an extremely effective way of communicating with your elected officials. Many legislators believe that a letter represents not only the position of the writer but also many other constituents who did not take the time to write. These tips will help increase the effectiveness of your letter:

1. **Keep it brief:** Letters should never be longer than one page, and should be limited to one issue. Legislative aides read many letters on many issues in a day, so your letter should be as concise as possible.
2. **State Who You Are and What You Want Up Front:** In the first paragraph, tell your legislators that you are a constituent and identify the issue about which you are writing. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, it helps to identify it by its bill number (e.g. H.R. ____ or S. _____).
3. **Hit your three most important points:** Choose the three strongest points that will be most effective in persuading legislators to support your position and flesh them out. *Note: these three points will be the space where you integrate research findings.
4. **Personalize your letter:** Tell your elected official why this legislation matters in the community or state.

5. **You are the Expert:** Remember that your legislator's job is to represent *you*. You should be courteous and to the point, but don't be afraid to take a firm position. Remember that often your elected official may know no more about a given issue than you do.

You can get the contact information for your Members of Congress at [Congress.org](https://www.congress.org)

Assignment Details:

1. **Choose a topic** we've discussed in class. If you would like to address an issue related to women that we have not discussed in class, email me for approval.
2. **Choose 3 main points.** Each point needs to be supported by 2 research articles and cannot be counted towards the 2 articles for another main point (i.e., you must have 6 relevant articles for this assignment). You can include more but you need to include at least 6.
3. **Explain why your elected representative should care about this issue.** What are the implications of this problem?
4. Letter must be well written, professional, and address the representative(s) appropriately (e.g., using the official's proper title and spelling their name correctly!)
5. Your letter should be 1 page, single-spaced (about 500-600 words)

Consider not just talking about an issue, but also:

1. Expressing support for a proposed law, policy, or course of action.
2. Expressing opposition against a proposed law, policy, or course of action.
3. Suggesting an alternate course of action that they may not have previously considered.
4. Look up and include a discussion of past decisions that your representative has made that you approve of (or disapprove of).
5. Providing a solution you think will be beneficial for your community or the community you are discussing.

Score Breakdown (20 points):

- Appropriate topic/issue (discussed in class or approved by instructor): **1 pt**
- 3 main points are sufficiently discussed, well-supported, and relevant to the topic of letter: **6 pts**
- Inclusion of 6 research articles (must be accurately and appropriately used): **6 pts**
- Letter is respectful (i.e., uses proper titles, names are spelled correctly, paragraphs are devoid of spelling and grammatical errors): **2 pts**
- Letter interweaves psychological literature and political facts in a way that is understandable, cohesive, and critical, and letter is well-written and polished: **4 pts**
- Letter is between 500-600 words: **1 pt**

Helpful Sites:

<https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/ContactingOfficials/Tips>

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/letters-to-elected-officials/main>

Example letter (you can use this as a guide but don't forget to discuss research findings and insert citations ["i.e., Bullock & Singh, 2020; Singh & Bullock, 2020; Vallegra & Zurbriggen, 2018"]).

<https://evans.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congressman-evans-letter-governor-wolf-and-mayor-kenney-about-election>

Option #2: Op-Ed.

Adapted from Jen State "Assignment Type: Op-Ed" and Action Teaching's Action Writing: Using Op-Eds to Advance Science Literacy

OpEd– short for Opposite to the Editorial, is a newspaper opinion piece from the general public. These pieces highlight a significant social issue.

Although op-eds come in many forms, the best pieces share several key features:

1. They identify a specific puzzle (e.g., Why are U.S. obesity rates increasing?)
2. They examine the problem in light of current scientific thinking (i.e., theory) and evidence (e.g., research findings)
3. They convey novel insights about the nature of the problem or propose solutions based on available evidence.

Through this Op-Ed assignment, my goal is to help you strengthen your writing skills, especially your ability to translate research findings into everyday language, and to advocate for a cause or policy that you care about. Your piece will allow you to engage meaningfully in the political sphere.

Assignment Details:

For this assignment, you will begin by reading (or listening to on audio, which I strongly recommend) Chanel Miller's Memoir [*Know My Name*](#). I want to give a content warning that this assignment will involve reading Miller's personal recount of her rape, the court proceedings, and the aftermath. While the book is challenging to read and digest, it is an extremely powerful text and contextualizes a wider public health issue– violence against women and sexual assault.

After reading *Know My Name*, you will write an Op-Ed about violence against women and sexual assault. You will draw on Miller's experience to ground your writing. You will also need to reference two points from lecture (e.g., sexual assault statistics from one lecture and a discussion of empathy from the men and masculinity lecture). The two points need to come from two separate lectures. Because you are reading an entire book, you do not need to pull in outside sources (i.e., scholarly articles), but you may find incorporating some scholarly literature helpful in building your argument. Please see below for scoring criteria.

Score Breakdown (20 points):

- Make a central, critical argument (must be factual!). Your argument doesn't need to be overly complicated, but it should display higher-order thinking and some complexity of thought: **4 pts**
- Have 3 main supporting points that are sufficiently discussed, well-supported, and relevant to the topic of Miller's memoir: **6 pts**

- Reference the memoir throughout the argument (points from the memoir must be accurately and appropriately used): **3 pts**
- Op-Ed is professionally written (i.e., addressed to someone, all names are spelled correctly, paragraphs are devoid of spelling and grammatical errors): **3 pts**
- Letter interweaves 2 points from lecture in an understandable, cohesive, and critical way (points need to be discussed and unpacked): **3 pts**
- Letter is between 500-600 words: **1 pt**

Example: Op-Ed on the implications of body-shaming. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/01/AR2006110102969.html>

Example: Op Ed in the form of an open letter to men about rape.

<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2018/10/07/eileen-zurbriggen-an-open-letter-to-men-about-rape/>

3. Content Quizzes (15 points: 3 quizzes, 5 points each):

To ensure you are regularly engaging with content outside of lecture, reading, and keeping pace with the course, I will hold 4 quizzes throughout the semester. You can take all 4 and I will drop your lowest grade. You can also skip a quiz and I will drop the zero. This flexibility is to allow space for emergencies, illness, lateness, etc. Again, please plan accordingly. Quizzes meet CLO #1, #3, and #4

4. In-Class Activities & Discussions and/or Take-Home Assignments (15 points):

Throughout the semester (usually once a week), you will break into groups to engage in activities and/or discussions where you will apply course concepts and reflect on your own personal experiences related to the psychology of women. These discussions are important as we will be engaging actively and deeply with the course content in a ways that cannot be facilitated by reading lecture slides at home on your own. These activities and discussions will facilitate the completion of CLO#1, #2, #3, and #4.

✓ Grading Information

Grading Breakdown:

93-100% A	87-89% B+	80-82% B-	70-76% C
90-92% A-	83-86% B	77-79% C+	60-69%

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	Lecture Topic	Due Date
1	Thurs, 8/21	Welcome & Class Overview	No readings due
2	Tues, 8/26	A Feminist Psychology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waves (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th) Seven Major Feminist Perspectives 	<i>Towards a New "Bad" Feminist Canon: Why Feminism Remains Essential</i> <i>Why We Still Need Feminism in 2023</i>
	Thurs, 8/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven perspectives cont'd 	Liss et al. (2024) <i>Ch. 1, A Feminist Psychology</i> (pages 1-45)
3	Tues 9/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven perspectives cont'd 	Boyle (2024). <i>Ch. 1, #MeToo and Feminism: Weinstein and Beyond</i> (note: read just ch. 1, pages 9-39 in the PDF)
	Thurs, 9/4	Power and Privilege: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Hierarchies and The Invisibility of Privilege Intersectionality 	Pham & Tram-Mai (2025) Blaine & Brenchley (2020) <i>Microaggression Focus Area</i> Quiz #1
4	Tues, 9/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexism and Stereotypes Prejudice and Discrimination Language as a Source of Power 	Sayed & Hotait (2024)

	Thurs, 9/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotypes of Women and Violations of Norms • Mothering & unrealistic expectations of mothers • Financial privilege and abuse 	<p>McCormack & Graham</p> <p>Goldberg, A. <i>Billy Ray Cyrus reportedly called ex Tish a 'skank.'</i> <i>We need to talk about slut-shaming.</i></p>
5	Tues, 9/16	Sexualization of Girls and Girlhood	<p><i>Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls</i></p> <p>(2007), pages 1-41</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexualization of Girls and Girlhood Con't 	<p>Lerum & Dworkin (2009)</p> <p>Mercier (2024)</p>
	Thurs, 9/18	Exam 1	Exam 1
6	Tues, 9/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film 	<p>Duque et al. (2023)</p> <p>Last day to add courses and register late</p> <p>Last day to drop the course without an entry on the student's permanent record</p>
	Thurs, 9/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film • Discussion 	Daniels & Zurbriggen (2016)
7	Tues, 9/30	Sex and Sexuality	<p>Monto & Neuweiler (2024)</p> <p><i>Dating app cover-up: how Tinder, Hinge, and their corporate owner keep rape under wraps</i></p>
	Thurs, 10/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex and Sexuality 	Hawkins (2023)

8	Tues, 10/7	Gender Expectations and Socialization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toys, parenting, schools, media • Cyberbullying • Enemies and frenemies (Liss) 	Walsh & Leaper (2019) <i>Girls can be anything when they grow up – until they start playing with Barbie</i>
	Thurs, 10/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online dating and hooking up • Committed relationships and compulsory heteronormativity • Marriage and wedding industrial complex; trad wives • Power dynamics and division of labor 	Mary et al. (2025)
9	Tues, 10/14	Women's Bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty matters • Beauty norms • Role of internalization • Consequences of self-objectification 	Shah & Abdullah (2025) <i>"They used my photos to talk about my body on WhatsApp." Women fighting against fatphobia</i> Weightism & Lookism Focus Areas
	Thurs, 10/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menstruation • Pregnancy (experiences by social class, race, age) • Miscarriage and stillbirth • Childbirth and post-pregnancy 	<i>Period poverty: Why it should be everybody's business</i> Cardoso et al. (2021) Quiz #2
10	Tues, 10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IVF and repro tech 	Thorpe et al. (2024)
	Thurs, 10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelvic disorders (PCOS, endo, adenomyosis, etc.) • Pink Tax 	Eder & Roomaney (2024)
11	Tues, 10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving Birth in America (California) • Discussion 	Dove-Meadows et al. (2021) Garcia (2025)
	Thurs, 10/30	Exam 2	Exam 2

12	Tues, 11/4	Reproductive Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race and the Criminalization of Motherhood • Attacks on abortion, surveillance of abortion seekers, and IVF 	Hasstedt et al. (2018) <i>Birth control under threat: How birth control rights and access are being undermined since Roe v. Wade was overturned</i>
	Thurs 11/6	Violence Against Women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape • Sexual Assault • Harassment and Stalking 	Neilson et al. (2023) Truong (2020)
13	Tues, 11/11	Letter Workshop Day	Blake et al. (2021) <i>My Story of Trauma and Reproductive Health</i>
	Thurs, 11/13	Film: Calling the Ghosts (Description: Taken to the notorious Serb concentration camp of Omarska, two women successfully lobby to have rape included in the international lexicon of war crimes by the UN Tribunal at the Hague).	Singh & Bullock (2020)
14	Tues, 11/18	Men and Masculinity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incel culture, Reddit, Andrew Tate 	Vallerga & Zurbruggen (2022) <i>Adolescence is a technical masterpiece that exposes the darkest corners of incel culture and male rage</i> Quiz #3
	Thurs, 11/20	Sexualized Torture (and Hazing)	Zurbruggen (2008)

15	Tues, 11/25	Beyond the Gender Binary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans & Non-binary identities • Androgyny 	Morgenroth et al. (2024) <i>Human Toll of Trump's Anti-Trans Crusade</i> Letter or Op-Ed due Wed, 11/26 by 11:59 via Canvas.
	Thurs, 11/27	No class/Thanksgiving	
16	Tues, 12/2	Tensions, Actions, Hope for the Future	Bullock (2013) <i>'Our existence is resistance.' The powerful idea at the heart of Palestinian women's perseverance</i>
	Thurs, 12/4	Course Wrap-up	
17	Tues, 12/9	No class/Campus Study Day	
	Thurs, 12/11	Exam 3	8:30 am - 10:30 am (in our regular classroom)