

San José State University
College of Social Sciences/Department of Psychology
Psyc 102, Psychology of Childhood, Section 02, Fall 2025

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Sylvia Branca, Ph.D.
Office Location:	Sweeney Hall (SH) 236
Office Hours:	Mondays 1:45-2:45pm
Classroom:	Boccardo Business Complex (BBC) Room 125
Class Days/Time:	Monday 3:00-5:45pm
Telephone:	Psych Office (<i>messages only</i>) 408-924-5600
Email:	sylvia.branca@sjsu.edu (<i>preferred</i>)
Prerequisites:	Psyc 001 General Psychology

Course Description

This course covers the psychological development of children from conception to middle childhood emphasizing normative (typical) development in the context of cognitive, socioemotional, biological, and cultural processes. In this class, we will discuss key milestones during prenatal, infant, and child development. We will consider how development unfolds across social, emotional, physical, and cognitive domains and examine the ways in which children's socio-cultural contexts shape their well-being and outcomes.

Course Format

This class meets in person at the designated days and times noted on the Course Calendar. Office hours are available in person. Class time will be used to discuss and promote critical thinking regarding key issues related to child development. Class time is designed to be interactive – you will get the most out of our meetings by coming to class having completed our assigned readings and sharing your thinking!

Required Readings/Course Content

- Santrock, J.W. (2022). *Children*, 15th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill. ISBN 9781260726794
- Additional course readings/videos as noted on Canvas.

Note: The textbook is available at the University (Spartan) Bookstore. The publisher of this textbook has a supplementary learning resource called Connect. Any assignments provided in Connect are for your information only – they are NOT required and will NOT be included in your course grade. You may use Connect for your personal study if you wish, but I will NOT require anything from Connect.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

CLO 1 – Recognize normative (i.e., “average” or “typical”) and individual aspects of development.

CLO 2 – Identify and describe psychological theories and concepts of cognitive, social, and emotional development.

CLO 3 – Discuss the variety of factors that may influence the process of development, including the potential impact of such factors as genetics, ethnicity, culture, gender, and socioeconomic status on children’s development.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

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. PLOs for the Psychology BA degree are:

PLO 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.

PLO 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.

PLO 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.

PLO 4 – Applications of Psychology. Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO 5 – Values in Psychology. Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials (syllabus, handouts, assignment instructions, etc.) are on the [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](#) on [Spartan App Portal](#) <http://one.sjsu.edu> (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor) to learn of any updates. For help with Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](#) (http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources). Your Username is your SJSU 9-digit-ID and your password is your SJSU One Account password (MySJSU password)

Technology Requirements

Each student must have stable internet connection that can sustain video to be able to access all of our course content. Regular access to Canvas is required for this course. You will also need basic computer skills and software (word processing, email, file management), basic internet skills (use of browser, searches, uploading and downloading files), and familiarity with Canvas discussion boards.

If you need any technical support, please contact our IT Help Desk or eCampus.

IT Help Desk Contact; Phone: (408) 924-1530; Email: itservicedesk@sjsu.edu; or Submit a Ticket Request: <https://isupport.sjsu.edu/>. **eCampus Support Contact** - Email: ecampus@sjsu.edu; Phone: (408) 924-2337

Library Liaison

Our library liaison (Psychology) is Christa Perez Bailey. You can reach her at christa.bailey@sjsu.edu. Christa can help you find empirical research articles for class assignments and answer questions you may have related to accessing materials from the MLK Library for our course.

Classroom Protocol

In an effort to create an environment conducive to sharing one’s thoughts, I require the following etiquette when engaging in online discussions and during class sessions:

- Be polite and respectful to the other people in our class
- Do not use profanity in writing or speaking

During the semester, you will be asked to share personal stories and opinions and to comment on your classmates' personal stories and opinions. Whatever information is shared in the context of this class is to be used only for class purposes and others thoughts, opinions, and stories should not be shared with anyone outside of the class or on social media venues. This class is a safe space for all students and instructors and any violations of this policy will be taken seriously. Respect for the rights and opinions of others is required. The free and open exchange of ideas is the cornerstone of higher education, but we must always remain respectful of others, even if we disagree strongly with them. Disagreement is acceptable, but discourteousness is not. Behavior that creates a threatening or harassing environment will not be tolerated. Severe and pervasive disruptions of course activities are a violation of the **Student Code of Conduct** and will be reported to the **Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development**:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/Student%20Conduct%20Code%202013.pdf>

Assignments

This course includes several assignments that will help you think critically about the issues discussed in our text. A brief description of each assignment is provided below. More information and instructions for each assignment (including grading rubrics) will be available on Canvas. Assignment due dates are listed in the course schedule and on Canvas. University Policy S16-9 "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 practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

Late Policy/Make-up Policy

Assignments will be considered late if they are not submitted through Canvas by the submission deadline (usually by the start of class). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that assignments are uploaded correctly. Late assignments are subject to a penalty of 10% per day, including weekends and holidays, beginning the day the assignment is due. **I understand that life happens, and unforeseen circumstances may occur.** If you experience something that prevents you from submitting an assignment on time, please notify me as soon as possible via email and before the assignment is due so we may work together to support your success in our course! Assignments will not be accepted after the last day of classes.

Assignments	Points (%)
Exams (3 @ 50 points each) Multiple choice/short-answer questions assessing knowledge of textbook, course readings/videos, and lecture content. (CLOs 1-3, PLO 1)	150
Discussion Post & Reply (6 @ 10 points each, dropping lowest) Throughout the semester, you are required to post and respond to online discussion assignments. These will reflect the content we discuss in class and your course readings. Each student will post a response to the discussion reflection by the due date and also reply to at least one other student's post. See assignment details in Canvas. (CLOs 1-3, PLO 3-4)	50
In-Class Reflection Prompts (4 @ 5 points each) Throughout the semester, I will occasionally ask you to reflect on and share briefly in writing your experience of our class discussions and course content for a given lesson. The only requirement is that you think critically about your experience! You <u>must be in class</u> to receive credit. More information will be presented on Canvas and in class. (CLOs 1-3, PLO 3-4)	20

Group Presentation: Topic Selection Identify an appropriate topic (relevant for education/intervention/policy) including scholarly references that addresses a critical issue in child development. More information will be presented in class and on Canvas. (CLO 3, PLO 1, 3, 5)	20
Group Presentation: Class Presentation and Slide Deck Prepare and present information on a critical issue in child development (utilizing empirical research) and propose a program/policy to addresses the issue. More information will be presented in class and on Canvas. (CLO 3, PLO 1, 3, 5)	50
Critical Reflection: Peer & Self Review Provide substantive feedback on classmates' and your own group presentation process. More information will be presented in class and on Canvas. (CLO 3, PLO 3)	10
Total	300

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Course Policy

Research shows that critical thinking is best developed by doing (Quitadamo, 2007)! In this class, you will gain many opportunities to practice reading, writing, and analyzing critically information related to our course. Developing strong competencies in these areas will help you do well in college and prepare you for success in the workforce and beyond! All writing assignments must be each student's original work. **AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.** If you are found in violation of this policy, you may face penalties such as a reduction in grade, failure of the assignment or assessment, or even failure of the course. If you have any questions or concerns about our course AI policy, please see me and we can discuss - I'm here to help!

Quitadamo, I. J., & Kurtz, M. J. (2007). Learning to improve: using writing to increase critical thinking performance in general education biology. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, 6(2), 140–154.

Exams

If you are not present in class on the day an exam is given, you will receive 0 points for that exam. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from being present or on-time for an exam, you must let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss arrangements for a make-up exam. Please be prepared to show documentation regarding your extenuating circumstances.

Grading Information

All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades. See University Policy F13-1 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf> for more details. Questions and concerns regarding grades should be raised no more than two weeks after the grades for that particular assignment or exam are released. No grades changes will be made after the last day of classes. Grading rubrics for each assignment are included with the assignment prompt and are accessible via Canvas. A calculation of the total points earned divided by the number of possible points in the class will be used to determine your final grade in the course. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A plus	>100%
A	100-94%
A minus	93-90%
B plus	89-87%
B	86-84%
B minus	83-80%

C plus	79-77%
C	76-74%
C minus	73-70%
D plus	69-67%
D	66-64%
D minus	63-60%
F	59-00%

Credit Hour Policy and Attendance

“SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students 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](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.” Thus, students should spend approximately 9 hours a week on course activities and class.

Consent for Recording and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

As per [University Policy S127](#), 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 of class material. 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. Permission to record any part of class must be granted in writing by the professor and classmates, and is valid on a class by class basis. (In classes during which 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. See [University Policy S12-7](#) for more information.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>”, which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Correspondence

Please email me (sylvia.branca@sjsu.edu) if you have any questions about the course or course content. Include your name and the course title in all correspondence. I will make every attempt to respond within 24 hours during weekdays. I will respond to emails on the weekend if it is an urgent situation. Feel free to meet with me during my office hours when you have questions or need help. I have scheduled office hours (see page 1 of this document) and am also happy to talk with you in an individual appointment.

Writing Center <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists 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.

Peer Connections <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu>

Peer Connections strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. Check out their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

Counseling Services <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>

As students, you must all navigate our changing circumstances and the many demands on your time, resources, and interpersonal relationships. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide 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 (virtual appointments available) or learn more information, visit the Counseling Services website or call (408) 924-5910.

Psyc 102 / Psychology of Childhood, Fall 2025, Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. All changes will be announced via Canvas announcement and in class.

Please be sure to complete any readings prior to our class meeting!

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Day	What We'll Cover and Discuss	Read for Class	Due
1	8/25	Mon	Course Introduction / Our Class Community Developmental Science/Research Methods	Ch. 1 Syllabus	Discussion Post & Reply #1
2	9/1	Mon	*No Class* Labor Day - Campus Closed		
3	9/8	Mon	Biological Beginnings Prenatal Development	Ch. 2 Ch. 3	Discussion Post & Reply #2
4	9/15	Mon	Prenatal Development, cont. Birth	Ch. 3 Ch. 4	
5	9/22	Mon	Physical Development in Infancy *Class may transition to Zoom TBA*	Ch. 5	
6	9/29	Mon	EXAM 1 Exam and Critical Reflection	Ch. 1-5	
7	10/6	Mon	Cognitive Development in Infancy	Ch. 6	Discussion Post & Reply #3
8	10/13	Mon	Socioemotional Development in Infancy	Ch. 7	
9	10/20	Mon	Physical and Cognitive Development in Early Childhood	Ch. 8 Ch. 9	
10	10/27	Mon	EXAM 2 Exam and Critical Reflection	Ch. 6-9	
11	11/3	Mon	Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood In-Class Topic Selection Prep!	Ch. 10	Discussion Post & Reply #4
12	11/10	Mon	Physical Development in Middle and Late Childhood	Ch. 11	Topic Selection due Discussion Post & Reply #5

13	11/17	Mon	Cognitive Development in Middle and Late Childhood	Ch. 12	
14	11/24	Mon	Socioemotional Development in Middle and Late Childhood *Campus Closed: Nov 27-28 Thanksgiving Holiday*	Ch. 13	Discussion Post & Reply #6
15	12/1	Mon	EXAM 3 Exam and Critical Reflection Group Presentation Prep	Ch. 10-13	
16	12/8	Mon	*Last Day of SJSU Instruction* Group Presentation, Groups 1-4		ALL Group Presentations must be uploaded prior to start of class!
	12/12	Fri	*Course Final: Culminating Experience* Friday, Dec 12 @ 3:15-5:15pm Group Presentation, Groups 5-8 Wrap-Up, Course Reflection		Critical Reflection: Peer and Self-Review