Psychology 424

Child and Family Psychopathology

Fall 2025

***Where and When:*** Monday and Wednesday 10:20-11:40am in Kresge Arts Center, Room 108

***Professor:*** Alytia Levendosky, 107C Psychology Bldg, 353-6396, levendo1@msu.edu

***Teaching Assistant:*** Joohee Lee, Room 44 Psychology Bldg, jhlee93@msu.edu

**For all emails to either Professor Levendosky or Joohee Lee, TA, please put Psy 424 in the subject line.**

***Office Hours:***

Prof. Levendosky: Mon 3-4pm (in-person: 107C Psych Bldg)

Thurs 11am-12pm (Zoom: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/8017573892>)

Passcode: psy424

TA: Joohee Lee: Tue 1-2pm (Zoom: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/93235020125>)

 Passcode: psy424

Thurs 2-3pm (in-person: 44 Psych Bldg)

***Technical Assistance:*** If you need D2L technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem, you can:

* Visit the [D2L Help Site](https://help.d2l.msu.edu/)
* Call the D2L Help Line – (517) 432-6200 or (844) 678-6200
* Visit the [MSU Tech Support Site](https://tech.msu.edu/support/help/)
* Call the Tech Support Line – (517) 432-6200 or toll free (844) 678-6200

***E-Mail Policy:*** E-mail is the best way to get a hold of your TA, Joohee Lee or Professor Levendosky. However, please use the following guidelines when communicating via email:

* **First, ask yourself this question: “Can this question be answered by looking in the syllabus or looking on the D2L course site?”**
	+ We have spent a lot of time preparing the course materials so you have all the information you need to succeed in this course. It is your responsibility to read that information.
* Decide if email is the best option before you send. If your question is complicated or will need further discussion, do not just automatically send off an email. Come to office hours instead. Some things are better discussed face to face!
* Use PSY 424 in the subject line. That makes it clear you are a student in this course asking a question. This helps to prevent e-mails from going directly to the junk folder.
* When **using your phone to send an email**, remember you are writing to a professional person who is doing their job, not sending a text to a friend. Treat every email as professional communication. We are in a place of work.
* Use the appropriate salutation. Please address every email properly.
	+ For your professor, you should say “Hi/Hello Dr. Levendosky” or “Hi/Hello Professor Levendosky”.
	+ For one of the TAs, you should say “Hi/Hello [First Name]”.
* Always sign off your e-mails with your full name, so we know who you are. Include a sign off like “Thanks”, or “Best wishes” with your name. This is a sign of courtesy.
* Proofread your e-mail. Is your question clearly conveyed?
* Be polite.
	+ Please do not use abusive email behaviors.
		- For example, do not use abusive subject line behavior like typing the word “URGENT” in the subject line. You may think you are highlighting the actionable items in your email, but the perception from the receiver is that you are implying that your message is more important than any other correspondence the receiver might have received. This may be viewed as a sign that you do not respect or value the receivers’ right to manage their own workload and time. This guidance is adapted from [Forbes](https://www.forbes.com/pictures/egfj45ili/abusive-subject-line-behavior/?sh=21f183a3662d).
	+ When a TA or professor responds to help you via email, it is good practice to respond and thank them for their help.
* Finally, emergencies can arise in life, but it is unlikely that a true emergency will arise in relation to this course (i.e., a situation that requires immediate action to be resolved - and cannot be resolved any other way). Again, please do not use the 'urgent' flag in your emails.
	+ Most solutions to academic problems cannot be put in place immediately, and all emails will be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner regardless of how they are flagged.
	+ See again the [Forbes guidance](https://www.forbes.com/pictures/egfj45ili/over-use-of-the-priority-flag/?sh=bc4d76069f6), this time on issues with overusing the priority flag.
* More guidance on **email communication in the academic context** is provided in [this link](https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/email-etiquette-in-college/) and [this link](https://medium.com/%40lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087).

**Check your e-mail and course site regularly! During the course, we will e-mail you occasionally and post announcements on the course site often with important information and reminders. Please read these e-mails and announcements as soon as you receive them, and please set up D2L to forward course emails and announcements to your email address. See D2L for information on how to do this.**

***Course Overview:*** Psychology 424 is an advanced undergraduate Tier II writing course. This course covers child and adolescent psychopathology. A developmental psychopathology framework is emphasized in the class. Theoretical models, research paradigms and findings, and clinical assessment and interventions with children and families are reviewed. The course uses a descriptive psychopathology approach to clinical syndromes with an additional focus on research and theory, including psychobiological models, about the etiology of these syndromes.

***Prerequisites:*** Psychology 295 and a Tier 1 writing course are required. Additionally, it is helpful to have taken Psychological Disorders (Psy 280) and Developmental Psychology (Psy 244) as knowledge about those topics will enhance your understanding of the content of this course.

***Course Objectives:***

1. Understand a developmental psychopathology approach to understanding the etiology and risk factors for child psychopathology
2. Understand symptoms, course, and prevalence of childhood mental health disorders and how to do differential diagnosis
3. Understand use of assessment and treatment for childhood mental health disorders
4. Understand how to critically review research in field of child psychopathology
5. Gain skills in scientific writing, making a scientific argument, and communicating your ideas through writing.
6. Gain skills in the use of APA 7th edition style format

***Class format:*** Lecture, class discussion, in-class exercises, hand-written exams

***Expectations:*** Be in class and ready to fully engage from 10:20-11:40 on Mondays and Wednesdays from the beginning to the end of the semester. Read the assigned readings **prior to class** and be prepared to ask and answer questions about the reading. As a 3-credit, 16-week course, **you should plan to spend about 8-10 hours each week on course material**.

***Attention:***  It is expected that students will not be answering emails, texting, engaging in social media, shopping, or doing anything that is unrelated to the class during class time. We will use a “screens-up” and “screens-down” and phones put-away approach to class and will expect that students will follow these instructions. Screens-up time will be when we are engaging in looking at an article together. Screens-down time will be most of the class period as notes should ideally be handwritten on paper. Phones need to stay away (i.e. in bags or not in class at all) throughout every class period. *Please expect to give your* ***full*** *attention to your fellow students, to me, and to the activities of PSY 424.* If your behavior is anything less than respectful and engaged, there is a reasonably good chance that I will draw your attention to your problematic level of respect and engagement. This feedback process will be awkward and uncomfortable for me and it may be aversive to you as well. (If there is some type of health-related emergency underway for someone important to you and you are expecting important messages concerning this emergency during class, please inform me of that circumstance prior to the start of class.)

***Course Materials:***

1. **Textbook:** Child Psychopathology, 8th Edition, by Mash & Wolfe, 2024 **CP**
2. **Book on childhood trauma –** Choose 1 of 3 possibilities:

Chbosky, S. (2012). *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Simon & Schuster. New York, NY. ISBN-13: 978-1451696196.

Green, J. (2017). *Turtles All the Way Down*. Dutton Books. ISBN-13: 978-0-525-55536-0

Haddon, M. (2003). *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. Vintage Contemporaries/Random House. New York, NY. ISBN: 978-1400032716.

1. **Articles (All Available on D2L):**

Balalle, H., & Pannilage, S. (2025). Reassessing academic integrity in the age of AI: A systematic literature review on AI and academic integrity. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *11*, 101299.

Bogat, G. A., Levendosky, A. A., & Cochran, K. A. (2023). Developmental consequences of intimate partner violence for children. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 19*, 303–329

Levendosky, A. A., Bogat, G. A., Lonstein, J. S., Martinez-Torteya, C., Muzik, M., Granger, D. A., & von Eye, A. (2016). Infant adrenocortical reactivity and behavioral functioning: Relation to early exposure to maternal intimate partner violence. *Stress, 19(1),* 37-44.

Margolis, A. E., Dranovsky, A., Pagliaccio, D., Azad, G., Rauh, V., & Herbstman, J. (2025). Annual research review: Exposure to environmental chemicals and psychosocial stress and the development of children's learning difficulties. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 66*(4), 547–568.

Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological Science, 25*(6), 1159–1168.

O'Connor, T. G., Humayun, S., Briskman, J. A., & Scott, S. (2016). Sensitivity to parenting in adolescents with callous/unemotional traits: Observational and experimental findings. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 125*(4), 502-513.

Singh, M. (2024, May 13). Why we’re turning psychiatric labels into identities. *The New Yorker: Annals of Inquiry*. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/05/13/why-were-turning-psychiatric-labels-into-identities>

**Group of articles on Social Media and Mental Health:**

Blackwell, C. K., Mansolf, M., Rose, T., Pila, S., Cella, D., Cohen, A., ... & Ganiban, J. M. (2025). Adolescent social media use and mental health in the environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *76*(4), 647-656.

Fassi, L., Ferguson, A. M., Przybylski, A. K., Ford, T. J., & Orben, A. (2025). Social media use in adolescents with and without mental health conditions. *Nature: Human Behaviour*, *9*(6), 1283–1299.

Nagata, J. M., Otmar, C. D., Shim, J., Balasubramanian, P., Cheng, C. M., Li, E. J., ... & Baker, F. C. (2025). Social media use and depressive symptoms during early adolescence. *JAMA Network Open*, *8*(5), e2511704-e2511704.

**Group of articles on AI in Mental Health Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment:**

Andrew, J., Rudra, M., Eunice, J., & Belfin, R. V. (2023). Artificial intelligence in adolescents’ mental health disorder diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment. *Frontiers in Public Health, 11*, 1110088.

Elyoseph, Z., & Levkovich, I. (2023). Beyond human expertise: the promise and limitations of ChatGPT in suicide risk assessment. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *14*, 1213141.

Kellogg, K. C., & Sadeh-Sharvit, S. (2022). Pragmatic AI-augmentation in mental healthcare: Key technologies, potential benefits, and real-world challenges and solutions for frontline clinicians. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *13*, 990370.

***Course Requirements:***

**Attendance:** You are expected to attend each class period as valuable material will be presented each day in class. If you have a family emergency, death, or you are too ill to attend class, you will need to let me know in writing. Not attending class will result in doing poorly as much of the material relevant to the papers and exams will be discussed in class and not available elsewhere.

**Class Discussions**: Based on Group participation: Each is 5% for a total of 10%. There are two discussion days: Wednesday, October 22 and Monday, November 10 where you will be assigned to a group and each group will be assigned an article to read and then present/discuss in class. If you are not in class, you will automatically not receive the 5% for each discussion.

**In-class Exams:** Each is 15% for total of 30%. There are 2 in-class exams: Monday, October 6 and Monday, November 17. These will be a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions. These will cover the material up to the exam or between the 2 exams and will include material from the text, articles, book of your choice, and from class lectures. **NOTE: These will not be done on your computer. Instead, the essays will be hand-written and the multiple choice questions will be done on a printed exam.**

**Paper on Book of Choice:** 10% This is a 3-page double-spaced paper on the book that you chose and is due on Friday, October 24. You must submit your choice of which book you will read for the paper on Wednesday, September 24. You must choose a character in the book who appears with mental health problems. Then, the paper should briefly describe the overall story, the main storyline of the character you chose, the main qualities/characteristics/personality of the character, the mental health problems of the character and then conduct a differential diagnosis, using the DSM-5 criteria to support the diagnosis. More information on this paper will be on D2L.

**Group Presentation:** 10% You will be grouped with 4-5 other students who have chosen the same book. Your grouping assignment will happen on Monday, September 29 in class. Each group will be expected to work together outside of class to develop a PowerPoint presentation, focusing on the descriptive psychopathology and differential diagnosis. These presentations will be given on Monday, October 27. More information will be on D2L.

**Final Paper:** Rough draft is worth 5% and final paper is 15% for a total of 20%. This is a 9-11 page paper. The Rough draft is due Tuesday, November 11. It will receive full credit if it is a full rough draft. The description of this will be given early in the semester and posted in D2L. Partial rough drafts will receive zero to ½ credit, depending on how long they are. The final paper is due on Friday, December 5. This is a research paper on a topic relevant to child psychopathology. You must have your topic submitted to me for approval by Wednesday, October 1. Joohee or I will email you either an approval or recommendations for a revision of your topic by Wednesday, October 8. More information about both choosing a topic and the guidelines for the paper will be available on D2L. Approval of the paper topic is required in order to turn in the paper.

**Peer Review:** 5% credit will be given for participating in the peer review process as a reviewer. If you are not in class, you will automatically NOT receive the 5% for the peer review process. You are also required to have submitted a rough draft by Tuesday, Nov. 11 in order to participate in the peer review process.

**Final Exam:** 15% The final exam will be during the scheduled exam time for this course on Friday, December 12 from 7:45-9:45am in 108 Kresge Art Center. The final exam will be comprehensive and will consist of 3 essay questions that you will choose to answer out of 5 possible questions. This will also be hand-written.

**Grading Scale:**

90-100%: 4.0

85-89%: 3.5

80-84%: 3.0

75-79%: 2.5

70-74%: 2.0

65-69%:1.5

Below 65%: 1.0 Failing

***Submission of Work:*** All written work (except exams) will be submitted through D2L, including paper topic and book of choice.

### ***Late work:*** I will not accept any late work unless you have informed me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due that you will miss the deadline and why you will miss the deadline. For late work you be penalized 10% of the points you earned for the assignment for each day (24 hour period after the due date, or portion of a day that your assignment is late).

***Policy on Religious Observations:*** If you anticipate being unable to complete a graded portion of the course due to a major religious observance, please provide notice of the date(s) to Professor Levendosky, via email, by 9/15/25.

***Note taking and recording:*** As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials presented to students are the copyrighted property of the course instructor and are subject to the following conditions of use:

* Students may not post recordings or other course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in the class without the advance written permission of the course instructor and, if applicable, any students whose voice or image is included in the recordings.
* Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.
* Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions, including receiving a penalty grade in the course.

***Academic Honesty and Integrity****:* MSU has strict guidelines regarding academic honesty and integrity. These rules will be followed in this class, and no student is exempt for any reason. Refer to your Student Handbook to see details of these guidelines. Academic Honesty Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states, “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards. In addition, the Psychology Department adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0 - Protection of Scholarship and Grades, the all University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades, and Ordinance 17.00 - Examinations (www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/RegsOrdsPolicies.html). Therefore, unless authorized by me, you are expected to complete all course assignments without assistance from each other or any other source. You are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com website to complete any work in this course. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course and have an Academic Dishonesty report filed. If you have any questions or concerns about whether any particular activity is permitted in carrying out the work for this course are urged to see the very useful website prepared by the University Ombudsman at www.msu.edu/unit/ombud, especially the section on Academic Honesty. The Ombudsman has some very specific information about the kinds of activities that are or are not appropriate. Also, please do not hesitate to discuss concerns or questions about these issues with me.

Furthermore, consistent with MSU’s efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student’s work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student’s work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a ‘similarity score’. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, I will make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student’s work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool. Students should submit papers to Turnitin Dropboxes without identifying information included in the paper (e.g., name or student number), the system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.Student submissions will be retained in the global Turnitin repository.

In choosing to use Turnitin in our class, I have agreed to the following five guidelines. They are:

* I will use Turnitin as part of a balanced approach to encourage academic integrity and foster student success.
* I will openly disclose use of Turnitin in this course on the syllabus and at the time assignments are announced.
* For a given assignment, I will use Turnitin for all papers.
* I will make the final determination of originality and integrity.
* To ensure privacy, I will ask students to remove identification (e.g., names and student numbers) from submissions.

If you have any questions about the use of Turnitin in this course, please bring them to my attention.

***AI policy for this course: Limited Use Policy***

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

* + Brainstorming and refining your topic for your final paper ONLY
	+ Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts for your final paper ONLY
	+ Checking grammar for your Book of Choice paper.
	+ Checking grammar and APA 7th edition style for your final paper

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

* + Completing group work for your class presentation and/or class discussions.
	+ Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
	+ Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.
	+ Course materials may not be placed in Gen AI

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on[academic integrity](https://ombud.msu.edu/resources-self-help/academic-integrity)and the [Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge](https://spartanexperiences.msu.edu/about/handbook/spartan-code-of-honor-academic-pledge/index.html). If a student completes an assignment using generative AI tools in unauthorized ways will receive a failing grade on the assignment and an Academic Dishonesty report will be filed <https://spartanexperiences.msu.edu/about/handbook/regulations/student-group-regs-rulings-policies-ordinances/integrity-of-scholarship-and-grades.html>

If you are in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.

***Limits to confidentiality:***Papers and exams submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies.  However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with me:

--Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,

--Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and

--Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

***Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:*** [from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)]: Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CTim%5CDocuments%5CMSU%5CCourses%5CPrevious%20courses%5C493%20-%20Spring%202016%5C493%20-%20Spring%202016%5Crcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

***Course Schedule***

***Note: All readings are to be completed prior to the day of class they are listed.***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Day** | **Date** | **Reading** | **Topic**  | **Assignment Due** |
| 1 | M  | 8/25 | CP Chapter 1 | Intro to child and adolescent psychopathology |  |
|  | W | 8/27 | Balalle & Pannilage, 2025 Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014 | Academic Integrity, AI, and Best Practices for Learning | Sign Contract and Spartan Code |
| 2 | W | 9/3 | CP Chapter 2 | Theories and Causes |  |
| 3 | M | 9/8 | Bogat et al., 2023 | Theories and Causes |  |
|  | W | 9/10 | O’Connor et al., 2016 | How to read a research paper  |  |
| 4 | M | 9/15 | CP Chapter 3 | Research |  |
|  | W | 9/17 | Margolis et al., 2025 | Research |  |
| 5 | M  | 9/22 |  | Designing and Conducting Research: Case Study on IPV and Child Stress Reactivity  |  |
|  | W | 9/24 |  | How to do a literature search  |  |
|  | W | 9/2411:59pm |  |  | Choose Book of choice |
| 6 | M  | 9/29 | CP Chapter 4 | Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment | Assigned group for book of choice presentation |
|  | W  | 10/1 | CP Chapter 4 | Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment |  |
|  | W | 10/111:59pm |  |  | Topic for final paper due |
| 7 | M  | 10/6 |  |  | Exam #1 |
|  | W | 10/8 |  | Plagiarism and other pitfalls to avoid in writing a paper | Response to students on topic for final paper  |
| 8 | M | 10/13 |  | Writing a research paper, including citation, etc… |  |
|  | W | 10/15 | CP Chapter 10 &11 | Mood & Anxiety Disorders |  |
|  | Fri | 10/1711:59pm |  |  | References for Final paper (at least 10) due |
| 9 | M | 10/20 | NO CLASS  |  | FALL BREAK |
|  | W  | 10/22 | Groups will be assigned one of 3 articles to read and present/discuss | Social Media and Mental Health | Discussion of articles |
|  | Fri | 10/2411:59pm |  |  | Paper on book of choice due |
|  | Fri | 10/24 |  |  | Response to students on references for final paper |
| 10 | M  | 10/27 |  | Group presentations on book of choice | Group Presentations |
|  | W | 10/29 | CP Chapter 8 | ADHD  |  |
| 11 | M | 11/3 | CP Chapters 9 & 13 | Conduct Disorders & Substance Use Disorders |  |
|  | W  | 11/5 | CP Chapter 12 | Trauma Disorders |  |
| 12 | M  | 11/10 | Groups will be assigned one of 4 articles to read and present/discuss | AI for use in mental health assessment, diagnosis, and treatment | Discussion of articles |
|  | Tu | 11/1111:59pm |  |  | Rough Draft of Final Paper due |
|  | W  | 11/12 |  | Preparation for and Conducting peer review | Peer Review  |
| 13 | M  | 11/17 |  |  | Exam #2  |
|  | W | 11/19 | Levendosky et al., 2016 | Trauma special topic: Intimate Partner Violence Research |  |
|  | Sun | 11/2311:59pm |  |  | Return Rough Drafts to students |
| 14 | M | 11/24 | CP Chapter 14 | Feeding and Eating Disorders |  |
|  | W | 11/26 | Singh, 2024 *New Yorker* article | Discussion of Critique of our diagnostic system |  |
| 15 | M | 12/1 | CP Chapter 6 | Autism Spectrum Disorders |  |
|  | W | 12/3 |  | Case Presentation for Differential diagnosis  |  |
|  | Fri | 12/511:59pm |  |  | Final Paper due |
| 16 | Fri | 12/127:45-9:45am |  |  | Final Exam |

Red indicates dates that you are engaged in activities that are graded and/or days assignments are due.

Green indicates dates that you will receive responses/feedback.