San José State University
Department of Psychology
PSYC/PH 126-80,
Drugs, Brain, and Behavior (27951/29309), Spring 2026

Instructor:	Jill Citron, PhD
Email:	jill.citron@sjsu.edu
Drop-in Hours:	Tuesday & Thursday, 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm, and by appointment.
Office Location:	DMH 352
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday & Thursday, 4:30 pm – 5:45 pm
Classroom Location:	Online
Prerequisites:	Either (a) PSYC 30 or (b) 3 units of BIOL You must **complete** the prerequisites before taking this course.

CANVAS and MYSJSU Messaging
Copies of some course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on Canvas. Messages to the class may be sent through Canvas or MYSJSU.

Course Description
Survey of psychoactive drugs, including prescription and street drugs; social, behavioral, and physiological effects of drugs; neural mechanisms of drug action; history of drug use.

Warning: This class discusses drug use in detail. Those with prior or current drug problems should be aware of this and consider whether exposure to these discussions may serve as triggers for cravings for drug use and possible relapse. If so, you may wish to consider dropping the course. Your instructor is not responsible for any adverse reactions to the course material.

Communication with Instructor
Use email, drop-in hours, or class time to ask questions. I respond to email M-F, 9:00-5:00. Please allow 1-2 days for a response. **When emailing, include a relevant title and our course number (126-80).** If you have extensive questions about an assignment or classwork, please come to office hours. Do not hesitate to reach out to me during drop-in hours, after class, or via email. I welcome your questions.

Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, PSYC/PH 126 students will be able to:

1. Describe the history of drug regulation in the United States, including bringing a drug to the marketplace.
2. Be able to classify drugs according to their legal status and drug class.
3. Be proficient in describing the actions of drugs in the brain and body.
4. Be able to describe the behavioral and psychological effects of drug classes, in general, and specific drugs, in particular.
5. Be able to identify the genetic, personality, social, and environmental factors leading to substance abuse as well as effective drug abuse treatment options.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements, students will be able to:

PLO1: Knowledge Base of Psychology- Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2: Research Methods in Psychology- Design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

PLO3: Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology- 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.

PLO4: Application of Psychology- Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5: Values in Psychology- Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Our class meets on campus. We will use Canvas for discussions, assignment submissions, and to store articles we will use during the semester. Be sure to sign up for Canvas notifications, as I will send out announcements during the semester. Canvas is an important component of our class, but it does NOT replace class.

It is strongly recommended that students use the Chrome web browser when using Canvas. Using Chrome will reduce the number of glitches and errors you experience, as Canvas was developed on the Chrome platform. In addition, update your Canvas settings to receive messages from this course, as announcements are sent regularly. **Note:** clearing your cache may help if you have trouble logging into the site.

Accessing Course Canvas site

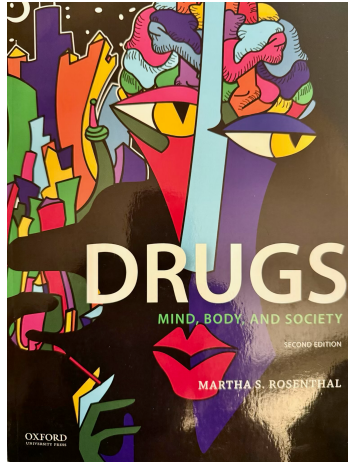To access the Canvas site go to http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/ and click on "Log in to Canvas."

Username = *SJSU 9-digit ID*

Password = *your current SJSUOne password*

For additional information or help with logging in: Canvas Student Tutorial:
http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/

Required Textbook
Our required textbook is

Martha Rosenthal, Oxford University Press. (2022). ISBN 978-0-19-758528-3. *IF YOU CAN LOCATE THE TEXT FOR A SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER PRICE, PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH THE CLASS!*

Library Liaison
The SJSU library has a librarian who specializes in psychology (and other social sciences), and this librarian can serve as a valuable resource for helping you develop research ideas and locate appropriate research materials. The library also has an abundance of resources for conducting psychology research:
Christa Bailey, 408-808-2422, christa.bailey@sjsu.edu, http://libguides.sjsu.edu/psychology

Classroom Protocol
As a member of this class, you are part of a community. Students are expected to maintain professional and courteous behavior. You are required to put your cell phone and other distractions away before the start of class. We will be respectful of our classmates and expect the same in return. Do not have side conversations, make unrelated comments in class, or look for deals on eBay during class. You may not realize that your actions are distracting to those around you. Students who do not abide by these policies (after being alerted to their behavior) will be asked to leave the class.

Diversity Statement
This class strives to be an inclusive community, learning from the many perspectives that arise from diverse backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful of all. We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including but not limited to those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Together, we can create an environment that supports inquiry and self-expression, and that respects diverse viewpoints.

Dropping and Adding
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures for add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's catalog, https://catalog.sjsu.edu/, policy section. The Late Drop Policy is available at https://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. It is the student's responsibility to ensure classes are dropped (https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S20-9.pdf). Visit the Advising Hub at https://www.sjsu.edu/advising/ for additional questions. This semester, the last day to add a class or drop a class without a "W" is February 17th.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled, as they are responsible for the material discussed therein, and active participation is often essential to ensure maximum benefit for all class members. Life happens. If you are going to miss class, please let me know as soon as you are able.

According to University Policy F15-12, "Students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled as they are responsible for material discussed therein and active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit to all class members. In some cases, attendance is fundamental to course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with others in the class. Attendance is the responsibility of the student. Participation may be used as a criterion for grading when the parameters and their evaluation are clearly defined in the course syllabus and the percentage of the overall grade is stated."

Definition of a Credit Hour

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the course of the course. For example, the expected workload for a 3-credit course is 150 minutes of direct faculty instruction and six hours of out-of-class student work each week.

Please review the following sources and policies, as well:

- University Syllabus Policy S16-9 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf
- Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San Jose State University. Familiarize yourself with the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that students are fairly graded. A reminder about academic integrity and Chat GPT: All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic Misconduct includes (but is not necessarily limited to) using ideas, words, images, or content in any other media that you did not create and presenting that content as if you were the creator.

Copying content you did not create–either directly or in a modified form–without properly acknowledging the creator constitutes academic misconduct. Likewise, using unauthorized digital tools, such as artificial intelligence, to create content constitutes academic misconduct. An assignment found to be plagiarized or to have used unauthorized tools will automatically receive a zero, and you will not be given an opportunity to repeat it for me.

University Policies: Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/.

Per University Policy S16-9 (PDF), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for the recording of the class, etc., and available student services (e.g., learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Syllabus Information web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

GRADING INFORMATION AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Your final grade will be based on the number of points you earn during the semester. The following table provides a breakdown of the points you can earn during the semester.

Assignment	How Many?	Points Per Assignment	Total Points	Approximate % of Final Grade
Chapter Quizzes	10	10	100	30%
Reading Reaction	10	5	50	15%
Documentary Analysis	1	25	25	7%
Literature Review	1	40	40	12%
Flash Talk & Peer Feedback	1	40	40	12%
Homework	4	5	20	6%
Final Exam	1	60	60	18%
Total:			335	100%

Grading Scale:

Percent	Grade
100 – 94	A
93-90	A-
89 – 87	B+
86-84	B
83-80	B-
79 – 77	C+
76-74	C
73-70	C-
69-67	D+
66 – 64	D
63 -60	D-
59 or below	F

Major Assignments

Reading Response
For each chapter, you will write a one-page (~250-word) reaction. You should focus on the 2-3 ideas that stood out most from the readings. Reading Responses are required for most of the chapters we cover, but not all; keep an eye on Canvas.

Literature Review Project: In the first half of the semester, you will choose a course-relevant topic you're curious about and use a recent review article to build a knowledge base. You will then write a 5-page literature review that synthesizes peer-reviewed research (5-6 articles) from the past 10 years and critically evaluates the evidence, including key strengths, limitations, and current approaches and protocols. Detailed instructions and grading criteria will be posted on Canvas.

Topic Flash Talk
You are to prepare a 3-minute flash talk based on your literature review. This assignment is designed to help you communicate research findings to a general audience using succinct,

accessible language. Your presentation will be an elevator pitch (4 slides) that introduces the research topic and summarizes your findings from your literature review. Your goal is to promote understanding and interest in this topic among individuals who may not be familiar with it. Therefore, being concise, clear, and accessible is essential for this presentation.

Documentary Review
You are to choose a documentary on a topic of interest relevant to [Kanopy Streaming](). You will need to sign in to your MySJSU account to access Kanopy. Your review will be a one-page response paper. What did the documentary get right? Was any misinformation presented? Did the documentary have an agenda? What did you learn? Wrap up your one-page review with a summary statement!

Test and Quizzes
There will be open-book, note quizzes on chapter content to be completed in Canvas. Quizzes are an opportunity to check your knowledge. All students will have two opportunities to take each quiz. There will be one cumulative test at the end of the semester. The test requires the use of Lock Down Respondus.

Homework
On four occasions during the semester, we will have an activity based on class material that will be completed and submitted on the Sunday of the activity week.

Student Resources

Student Computer Resources
Computer labs and other technological resources for students can be found in various places on campus:
• For information regarding the loan of laptops, tablets, and other computer materials; https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services
• For IT Support visit - https://www.sjsu.edu/it/support/service-desk/index.php
• For a list of software available to all SJSU students visit - https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/software-available

ACCESS Success Center
The Academic Counseling Center for Excellence in Social Sciences (ACCESS) Success Center "provides general education advising for undergraduate students majoring or intending to major in any of the departments in The College of Social Sciences." Visit their webpage for more information and to schedule an online appointment at https://www.sjsu.edu/education/studentsuccesscenter/advising-and-tutoring.php.

Accessible Education Center (AEC)
Ability Redefined - Please reach out to me as soon as possible in the beginning of the semester, for any support.
"If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with AEC to establish a record of their disability. **Academic Senate Policy F06-2 [pdf]."**

SJSU Peer Connections
Peer Connections website "offers free mentoring, tutoring, and supplemental instruction services for students at SJSU. Peer Educators are students just like you; they understand the triumphs and challenges of being a student at San José State University." If you have questions about services, contact Peer Connections at 408-924-2587, email peerconnections@sjsu.edu, or visit their webpage for more information at https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/programs/tutoring/index.html

SJSU Writing Center– Check for different ways to access these services.
The SJSU Writing Center "offers a variety of resources to help students become better writers, and all of our services are free for SJSU students." If you have questions about services, call the Writing Center at 408.924.2308 or email us at writingcenter@sjsu.edu, or visit their webpage to make an online appointment https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services invites "all students to come into Counseling and Psychological Services, located at the Student Wellness Center, room 300B, for any support.
If you have questions about services, contact CAPS at (408) 924-5910 or email counseling.services@sjsu.edu.
or visit their webpage, https://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/

Student Support Services
Housing Assistance for students that lack stable and adequate housing
https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/get-assistance/housing.php
Spartan Food Pantry is a walk-in, full-service food assistance program for qualifying students.
https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/get-assistance/spartan-food-pantry/index.html

CalFresh Foods offers monthly cash assistance to buy groceries. CalFresh has supported many students who are experiencing budget constraints. https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/get-assistance/calfresh.php

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to modification (with fair warning, no surprises, promise) as necessary to accommodate flexibility in our class schedule.

Week	Date	Topic Covered in Class	Reading Due Before Class	Assignment
1	R-1/22	Course Introduction Syllabus Retrieval Practice	You are not expected to have the text for our first class meeting.	
2	T- 2/03 R- 2/05	Thinking Critically about Drugs Drugs, Mind, Body, and Society	Chapter 0 Chapter 1	RR Chapter 1 Quiz 1
3	T- 2/10 R- 2/12	Drug Laws and Policy	Chapter 2	*RR Chapter 2* Quiz 2
4	T- 2/17 R- 2/19	The Nervous System	Chapter 3	*RR Chapter 3* Quiz 3
5	T-2/24 R-2/26	Pharmacology: How Drugs Work	Chapter 4	*RR Chapter 4* Quiz 4
6	T-3/03 R-3/05	Stimulants	Chapter 5	*RR Chapter 5* Quiz 5
7	T-3/10 R-3/12	Hallucinogens	Chapter 6	*RR Chapter 6* Quiz 6 Documentary Reaction Paper
8	T-3/17 R-3/19	Opioids	Chapter 7	*RR Chapter 7* Quiz 7
9	T-3/24 R-3/26	Sedatives, Hypnotics, and Inhalants	Chapter 8	*RR Chapter 8* Quiz 8
10	T- 3/30 R- 4/02	SPRING BREAK!		
11	T-4/07 R-4/09	Cannabis	*Chapter 9*	*RR Chapter 9* Quiz 9 Literature Review
12	T- 4/14 R- 4/16	Tobacco & Nicotine Caffeine	Chapter 10 Chapter 11	
13	T-4/21 R-4/23	Alcohol	Chapter 12	*RR Chapter 10* Quiz 10 (On chapter 12)
14	T- 4/28 R-4/30	Over-the-Counter Sex and Reproductive Drugs	Chapter 15 Chapter 16	
15	T- 5/05 R- 5/07	Problematic Drug Use & Addiction Prevention and Treatment of Drug Use and Abuse	Chapter 17 Chapter 18	
Test	R- 5/14	Final Exam Period 3:15 to 5:15 PM		