

## **PSY 367 | Inside Clinical Psychology: From Questions to Evidence Fall 2026**

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### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to clinical psychology through an evidence-centered exploration of mental health, diagnosis, risk, and treatment. Using a project-based approach, students select a mental health topic of personal or disciplinary interest and work with real data to investigate questions relevant to practice, policy, and public understanding. The course emphasizes how evidence is generated, interpreted, and used to guide real-world decisions. Students examine evidence drawn from epidemiological studies to evaluate risk factors, and targets of intervention, while considering the policy implications of mental health research. Throughout the course, students develop skills in evidence-based reasoning and research literacy. By engaging with data, not just reading about it, students learn how psychological science informs decisions that shape mental health care and public policy, and how those decisions affect individuals and communities.

### **Course Approach**

Class sessions will function as hands-on workshops. This course offers a student-centered approach to learning clinical psychology and mental health science. Course topics are explored through presentations, guided data analysis, scholarly readings, and class discussions. The central component of the course is an individualized project in which students examine psychological evidence and use it to support conclusions and recommendations related to mental health practice and policy. Students will interpret research findings, work both independently and collaboratively, and communicate their reasoning through written and oral work. Emphasis is placed on critical evaluation of evidence, thoughtful interpretation of data, and the responsible use of scientific information in real-world decision-making.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain core concepts in clinical psychology, including mental health, diagnosis, risk, and treatment.
- Interpret and evaluate psychological evidence drawn from epidemiological studies.
- Use empirical evidence to assess risk factors, and consider implications for mental health policy and practice
- Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of psychological research and data
- Communicate evidence-based conclusions clearly and responsibly to academic and non-academic audiences
- Apply psychological evidence to real-world decisions affecting individuals, institutions, and communities

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Attendance and Participation**

Active and consistent participation is essential in this course. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, arrive prepared, and contribute thoughtfully and respectfully to discussions, activities, and collaborative work. This course is not designed for passive listening; most class sessions will involve applied activities, discussion of findings, and instructor-guided work on individual projects. Students are encouraged to maintain open communication with the instructor regarding questions, concerns, or challenges related to course content or assignments. All participation should align with CYA academic policies and community standards.

#### **Course Materials and Readings**

There is no required textbook for this course. All course materials, including readings, data sources, lesson content, and supporting resources, will be made available through Moodle. Assigned materials will include scholarly journal articles, video lessons, and curated online resources. Free software (**SAS Studio 9.4**) will be used during class to work with, examine, and visualize data. SAS Studio runs on your web browser, so no installation is needed.

#### **Lessons and Skill Development**

Rather than relying on a traditional lecture format, the course includes a series of structured lessons designed to prepare students conceptually and practically for different stages of their project. Lessons focus on topics such as interpreting evidence, working with data, and communicating findings responsibly. Lessons are delivered through a combination of short videos, written materials, demonstrations, and in-class guidance. These lessons are intended to directly support students' ongoing project work.

## Evaluation Criteria - Course Assignments

### Journal and Component Assignments

Students will submit regular journal entries. The journal serves two primary purposes:

- **Reflective entries**, in which students document how they are applying course concepts, lessons, and evidence to their own project.
- **Component assignments**, which represent concrete steps in the development of the project (e.g., refining a research question, interpreting findings, outlining next steps).

Together, journal entries and component assignments support steady progress and encourage thoughtful engagement rather than last-minute completion.

### Final Project and Presentation

Journal entries and component assignments will culminate in an individual project focused on a mental health topic selected by the student. Students will synthesize evidence, analyze data, and articulate conclusions relevant to mental health practice, policy, or public understanding.

Each student will present their project through:

- A **research poster or equivalent visual summary**, and
- A **5-minute oral presentation**, followed by a brief question-and-answer period.

Presentations should clearly communicate the question addressed, the evidence examined, key findings, and the implications of those findings. Attention should be paid to clarity, organization, and appropriate use of evidence.

### Writing and Communication Standards

Clear communication is a central goal of this course. Written work should be well-organized, carefully edited, and grounded in evidence. APA style is used for citations and references when appropriate. Students are expected to work toward improving their academic writing and communication skills throughout the course. Instructor feedback is intended to support growth in these areas.

### Evaluation and Grading

There are no exams in this course. Grades will be based on the following:

- **Journal and component assignments:** 60%
- **Final project poster and oral presentation:** 30%
- **Participation and engagement** (positive, constructive, and prepared contributions that support the learning community): 10%

In evaluating student work, emphasis will be placed on:

- Engagement with evidence
- Quality of analysis and reasoning
- Clarity of communication
- Thoughtful interpretation of findings
- Consistent effort and progress over time

Your grade for this course will be based on the following distribution:

A 95-100%; A- 91-94%; B+ 88-90%; B 85-87%; B- 81-84%; C+ 78-80%; C 75-77%; C- 71-74%; D+ 68-70%; D 65-67%; D- 60-64%

### CYA Regulations and Accommodations

#### Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Athens or during field study trips) as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately to the Student Affairs Office.

#### Academic Accommodations

If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the Office of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

#### Policy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own original work. Any ideas taken from the work of others must be clearly identified as quotations, paraphrases, summaries, figures etc., and accurate internal citations and/or captions (for visuals) as well as an accompanying bibliography must be provided.

### Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted as it facilitates course-related activities. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.

### Class Schedule

| Class Day | Date   | Topic / Readings / Assignments Due  |
|-----------|--------|---|
| 1         | Sep 8  | <b>Course Introduction</b><br>Understanding Mental Health Evidence<br>Pre course survey<br><i>Reading:</i><br>Cuthbert, B. N. (2022). Research Domain Criteria (RDoC): Progress and potential. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 31(2), 107–114. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214211059675">https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214211059675</a> |
| 2         | Sep 10 | Mental Health Literature Review<br>Assignment 1 due: Choose a survey and research question (journal entry)  |
| 3         | Sep 15 | Writing about Mental Health Research<br><i>Reading:</i><br>Carson, S. H., Fama, J., Clancy, K., Ebert, J., & Tierney, A. (2012). <i>Writing for psychology: A guide for psychology concentrators</i> . Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences.  |
| 4         | Sep 22 | Making Sense of Mental Health Evidence<br>Assignment 2 due: Literature review (journal entry)   |
| 5         | Sep 24 | Organizing Mental Health Data<br>Assignment 3 due: Working with data (journal entry)  |
| 6         | Sep 25 | Organizing Mental Health Data (continued)   |
| 7         | Sep 29 | Visualizing Mental Health Data<br>Schwabish, J. A. (2021). Five Guidelines for Better Data Visualizations. <i>Better data visualizations: A guide for scholars, researchers, and works</i> . <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , 35(3), 221–244.<br>Assignment 4 due: Data Management (journal entry)   |
| 8         | Oct 1  | Visualizing Relationships in Mental Health Data<br>Schwabish, J. A. (2021). Comparing Categories. In <i>Better data visualizations: A guide for scholars, researchers, and works</i> . <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , 35(3), 221–244.  |
| 9         | Oct 6  | Connecting Evidence to Questions<br>Assignment 5 due: Visualizing relationships (journal entry)   |
| 10        | Oct 7  | Connecting Evidence to Questions (continued)  |
| 11        | Oct 13 | Connecting Evidence to Questions (continued)  |
| 12        | Oct 15 | Drawing Conclusions from Mental Health Evidence<br>Assignment 6 due: Connecting Evidence to Questions (journal entry)   |
| 13        | Oct 20 | Drawing Conclusions from Mental Health Evidence (continued)   |
| 14        | Oct 22 | Modeling Risk and Outcomes in Mental Health   |
| 15        | Nov 3  | Modeling Risk and Outcomes in Mental Health (continued)<br>Assignment 7 due: Drawing Conclusions (journal entry)  |
| 16        | Nov 5  | Midterm feedback<br><i>Reading:</i><br>Galea, S., Riddle, M., & Kaplan, G. A. (2010). <i>Causal thinking and complex system approaches in epidemiology</i> . <i>International Journal of Epidemiology</i> , 39(1), 97–106.  |

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyp296>

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| 17 | Nov 10 | Assignment 8 due: Mental Health Modelling (journal entry)<br><i>Reading:</i><br>Newnham, E. A., & Page, A. C. (2010). Bridging the gap between best evidence and best practice in mental health. <i>Clinical Psychology Review</i> , 30(2), 127–142. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.10.004">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.10.004</a>  |
| 18 | Nov 17 | Mental Health in Children and Adolescents<br><i>Readings:</i><br>Cosma, A., Stevens, G. W. J. M., Martin, G., Duinhof, E. L., Walsh, S. D., García-Moya, I., ... Morgan, A. (2025). The changing epidemiology of child and adolescent mental health requires an immediate policy response. <i>The Lancet Child &amp; Adolescent Health</i> . <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(25)00074-6">https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(25)00074-6</a><br>Peters-Corbett, A., Parke, S., Bear, H., & Clarke, T. (2024). Barriers and facilitators of implementation of evidence-based interventions in children and young people’s mental health care: A systematic review. <i>Child and Adolescent Mental Health</i> , 29(3), 242–265. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12672">https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12672</a> |
| 19 | Nov 19 | Mental Health Treatment<br><i>Readings:</i><br>Cuijpers, P., Karyotaki, E., Reijnders, M., & Ebert, D. D. (2020). Psychological treatments for mental disorders in adults: A meta-analytic overview of the evidence. <i>World Psychiatry</i> , 19(2), 173–191. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20773">https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20773</a><br>Insel, T. R., Cuthbert, B. N., Garvey, M. A., Heinssen, R., Pine, D. S., Quinn, K. J., ... Wang, P. (2020). Precision clinical trials: A framework for getting to precision medicine for neurobehavioral disorders. <i>Nature Reviews Drug Discovery</i> , 19(10), 743–754. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1038/s41573-020-0077-3">https://doi.org/10.1038/s41573-020-0077-3</a>   |
| 20 | Nov 24 | Communicating Mental Health Evidence  |
| 21 | Dec 1  | Communicating Mental Health Evidence (continued)<br>Assignment 9 due: Draft of project poster   |
| 22 | Dec 3  | Communicating Mental Health Evidence (continued)  |
| 23 | Dec 8  | Poster Presentations  |
| 24 | Dec 10 | Poster Presentations (continued)  |

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- Passion-Driven Statistics E-book, <https://ldierker1.github.io/passiondrivenstatistics/>
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