

AP PSYCHOLOGY

Course Description

AP PSYCHOLOGY is an entry-level college psychology course. It will serve two practical foci: It is academic in orientation, culminating with an AP exam in mid-May. It is also functional in orientation, allowing students the opportunity to give personal application to the content of the course. By actively participating in the course, students will learn about the field of psychology through in-depth study, discussion, and hands-on activities.

Materials & Textbook

The materials needed are: your brain, a pen, paper, and a 3-ring binder to keep handouts, notes, research, experiments, quizzes and personal journals (responses to various topics, ideas, and personal insights). The textbook for this year is *Psychology: 8th Edition* by David G. Myers (Worth: 2007).



A word on note-taking and attention:

As this is a college-level class, I expect all assigned chapters to be read to completion *before* the scheduled lecture. In addition, you will take preliminary notes on the content as well as define the key concepts/terms. To encourage this behavior, I will periodically award homework grades for completion, as well as randomly allow you the use of your notes on your exams and free response quizzes.

Tentative Semester Schedule

We face quite an obstacle in this class: an enormous amount of material to cover in only one short semester. For this reason, this AP class will truly reflect a college-level course. For each of the units, I will expect you to have read the chapter completely before the start of its designated week, as well as **taken initial notes and defined the assigned key terms**. The week's instruction will be devoted to fully elaborating the central concepts of the unit, including additional readings, in-class activities, and video supplements.

Below is the tentative schedule of units, with a preview of some of the student objectives. The list is by no means exhaustive, nor a complete list of concepts students need to know; it serves primarily as a guidepost.

WEEK 1: HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY & SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

- Trace historical development of psychology
- Define and explain at least four approaches to psychology
- Compare/contrast psychological perspectives and how they explore and explain human behavior
- Identify famous psychologists and their contributions to the discipline

WEEK 2: METHODS AND ETHICS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- Discuss the advantage of scientific research over other ways of knowing
- Identify the elements of an experiment.
- Perform scientific research and apply the scientific method to that research
- Explain statistics and correlational studies
- Define standardization and norms and use spreadsheets to graph the results
- Discuss the ethics of animal and human research

WEEK 3: NEUROBIOLOGY & BIOLOGICAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR

- Explain the process of neural communication
- Define and explain the biological basis of behavior
- Identify the parts of the brain and their function
- Discuss the organization of the nervous system

WEEK 4: SENSATION & PERCEPTION

- Explain the processes of sensation and perception
- Explain the relationship between sensation and perception
- Discuss the operation of the sensory systems (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell)

WEEK 5: MEMORY

- Analyze how humans encode, store, and retrieve information in memory
- Explain the encoding process
- Distinguish between sensory, short-term, and long-term memory
- Contrast explicit and implicit memory
- Apply memory enhancement techniques to everyday life

WEEK 6: LEARNING

- Define and explain at least four different learning theories
- Describe the process of classical conditioning

- Describe the process of operant conditioning
- Identify reinforcers and different schedules of reinforcement
- Discuss the effects of punishment on behavior
- Explain observational learning

WEEK 7: LANGUAGE, THOUGHT, AND INTELLIGENCE

- Describe the structure of language
- Discuss how we use algorithms, heuristics, and insight
- Explain different theories of intelligence
- Distinguish between the reliability and validity of IQ tests
- Discuss evidence for both genetic and environmental influences on intelligence
- Explain cognition and how memory, language, and thinking are related

WEEK 8: STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- Define and explain the various states of consciousness
- Describe the cyclical nature and possible functions of sleep
- Identify major sleep disorders and their consequences
- Analyze the different theories of dreaming
- Discuss hypnosis and claims regarding its uses
- Discuss the nature of drug dependence
- Describe the physiological and psychological effects of depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens

WEEK 9: EMOTION & MOTIVATION

- Define motivation and motivational theories
- Define and explain at least four theories of motivation and emotion
- Discuss extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, and merits/drawbacks of both
- Identify the three theories of emotion
- Explain the physiological changes that occur during emotional arousal
- Determine the criteria for assessing gender differences in emotional expression

WEEK 10: DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Explain the developmental process from birth through death
- Discuss the course of prenatal development
- Analyze the cognitive development of infants and children
- Discuss the phenomenon of attachment
- Describe the theories of Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg
- Analyze how sex roles influence individual and social behavior throughout the lifespan
- Distinguish between longitudinal and cross-sectional studies

WEEK 11: PERSONALITY

- Define personality and discuss its various theories and assessment techniques
- Explain the advantages and drawbacks of each theory of personality
- Describe the interactions between the id, ego, and superego
- Explain defense mechanisms and their purpose
- Explain Maslow's focus on self-actualization and Rogers' emphasis on growth potential
- Describe the impact of individualism and collectivism on self-identity.

WEEK 12: ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Identify the criteria for judging whether behavior is psychologically disordered
- Describe the aims of the DSM-IV and the possible dangers of diagnostic labels
- Describe the characteristics of mood disorders
- Describe the characteristics of anxiety disorders
- Describe the characteristics of somatoform disorders
- Describe the characteristics of dissociative disorders
- Describe the characteristics of schizophrenia
- Describe the characteristics of personality disorders
- Describe the characteristics of brain-based disorders

WEEK 13: TREATMENT AND THERAPY

- Discuss the aims and methods of psychoanalysis
- Identify basic characteristics of humanistic therapies
- Identify the basic assumptions of behavior therapy
- Describe the goals of cognitive therapies
- Identify the common forms of drug therapy and the use of electroconvulsive therapy

WEEK 14: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Define social psychology and group dynamics
- Describe the importance of attribution in social behavior
- Discuss the results of Asch's experiment on conformity
- Describe Milgram's experiments on obedience
- Explain group polarization and groupthink
- Describe the social, emotional, and cognitive factors that contribute to the persistence of cultural, ethnic, and gender prejudice and discrimination

WEEKS 15 AND 16

Review and Practice Exams

Grading Policy

Class work	40%
Homework	10%
Quizzes	10%
Tests	40%
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	100%

Major Assignments

The following assignments constitute the major grades of the AP PSYCHOLOGY course. It is *your* responsibility to continually track these assignments and turn them in according to the proposed timeline. Failing to do so will have a negative impact on your grade. There is an Orientation to Psychology paper due by the end of the second week of school.

1. There will be *two* major research projects for this course.
 - a. **Paper 1** - select one of the major contributors to psychology from the list provided and follow instructions for APA format writing. The paper should be at least 750 words, typed, double-spaced, and 12-point Times New Roman. A form will be handed to you giving more detailed instructions.
 - b. **Paper 2** - As a concluding assignment, select any topic you find most interesting and engaging relating to psychology based on the subjects covered over the course of the semester. As above the format will be the same. Your topic must be approved by me.
 - c. Project papers are worth **200** points each.
 - d. There is a rubric to help you maximize your points.
2. **Current Psychology Articles:** Each 6 weeks, two current articles related to psychology must be turned in. These articles can originate from many sources: the newspaper, a scientific journal, or from a credible Internet news source. You must label the date, source, and title of the article and then summarize it and critique it. Attach the article to your summary. You will present one of these articles to the class. Be sure the article is psychology-related and scientifically based. Find articles that are of personal interest to you!
3. **Tests** - one test every other week, focused on material of the previous two units, but all covered material is fair game. Each test will reflect the style of the AP Exam and will be timed. It will consist of approximately 30 multiple-choice questions and 1 free response question. All tests are valued at 100 points each.
4. **Participation in class discussions and activities.** There will be various written assignments and in-class activities. Come prepared to discuss and interact with classmates on the topic at hand. Points will be deducted

for lack of response or engagement in the activity. Please come prepared to challenge your own thinking and self-discovery.

Homework & Make-up Policy

Assignments are due according to the assignment schedule. This course demands a lot of reading and note taking. Assignments are due on the due date. Late assignments will reduce your grade dramatically. As this is a college-level course, late work is unacceptable. Assignments are considered late after called for at the beginning of the class period. An assignment loses 10% for every class period it is late, and will no longer be accepted after 3 class periods past due date. Therefore, an assignment due on Monday will no longer be accepted after the end of class on Wednesday.

Make-up is only available for excused absences, and the student must present an excused absence slip from the Attendance Office. Please be sure to communicate about sickness or extended leaves if they are known in advance. This is a student responsibility, **NOT** the instructor's. For excused absences, you have an equal number of days to make up an assignment. In the case of unexcused absences, there will be no opportunity for make-up.

Extra Credit Policy

Extra credit is available on request for special circumstances. It is up to the discretion of the instructor whether a student qualifies for extra credit, and what the work will entail. Extra credit is a privilege, not a right.

Please note: extra credit does not replace normal assignments. They help the student who may be bordering between a B+ and an A- or C+ and a B- to achieve the higher grade.

Citizenship Expectations

I expect each student to be in class with a positive mental attitude ready for the activities of the class.

Citizenship Grade

- E** Excellent -- On task, assists others, interactive discussion and a true asset to the class
- S** Good -- On task (though may take some prodding), non-disruptive to class, shares with class, 1-2 tardies
- P** Poor -- Usually not on task, disruptive, habitual tardiness
- U** Unsatisfactory -- A disruptive influence on the class and/or attendance problems; office referral.

General Policies and Procedures

Respect for Diversity is essential in my class. I do not personally agree with everyone's ideas or values, but I respect your right to hold those views and values. You can challenge ideas but you *cannot* attack the owners of those ideas. Please be mindful of your words. Though you may use certain names and words as meaningless jabs, know that your words have power, and while a word may be meaningless to you, it can be a hateful word to someone listening. This will be a very open class, let's make it safe to share.

Communicating with your Instructor

I am readily available for my students. When away from school, you can reach me by email. Tutorials/conferences may be arranged after school.

If you have any questions regarding course material, assignment expectations, or any other general concerns, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME! I cannot help you if I do not know there is a problem.

The National AP Psychology Examination

will be given

Monday, May 6

Afternoon Session

12 noon

All students are expected to sign up and take the exam.

The AP Psychology Exam includes a 70-minute multiple-choice section that accounts for two-thirds of the exam grade and a 50-minute free-response section made up of two questions that accounts for one-third of the exam grade.

Multiple-choice scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly.

Points are not deducted for incorrect answers, and no points are awarded for unanswered questions. Because points are not deducted for incorrect answers, students are encouraged to answer all multiple-choice questions. On any questions students do not know the answer to, students should eliminate as many choices as they can, and then select the best answer among the remaining choices.

Free-response questions are an appropriate tool for evaluating a student's mastery of scientific research principles and ability to make connections among constructs from different psychological domains (e.g., development, personality, learning).

Students may be asked to analyze a general problem in psychology (e.g., depression, adaptation) using concepts from different theoretical frameworks or subdomains in the field, or to design, analyze, or critique a research study.