



AP Psychology
Instructor: Ms. Anderson
Room B204
anderson_mischell@asdk12.org

Course Description: The course is designed for those students who wish to experience a college level introductory course in psychology, and prepare for the very rigorous AP exam in May. This introductory course will expose students to many of the fields of interest within psychology as well as the methods used in psychological research. In addition, students are expected to develop their critical thinking skills throughout the course, while building their reading, writing and discussion skills.

As required by the AP Program, the course provides instruction in each of the following 14 content areas:

- History and approaches
- Research methods
- Biological bases of behavior
- Sensation and perception
- States of consciousness
- Learning and Memory
- Cognition
- Motivation and emotion
- Developmental psychology
- Personality
- Testing and individual differences
- Abnormal psychology
- Treatment of psychological disorders
- Social psychology

Course Objectives: This course is taught at the college level and student study habits should reflect this fact. The basic objective of this course is to introduce students to the methods, research, and theory of psychology and their application in the real world. In addition:

- Students will successfully prepare to take the AP exam in May.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of theoretical perspectives in psychology, research methods, key terms, concepts and principles associated with the major topics in psychology.
- Students will complete written work and receive written and/or oral feedback on both psychological content and technical aspects of writing.
- Students will critically evaluate psychological issues presented to them in class.
- Students will develop an awareness of human similarities and apply psychological concepts to their own lives.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills.

Required Text: *Psychology*, 7th Edition by David G. Myers

Your ability to do well in this class is predicated on your keeping up with reading assignments, primarily from, but not limited to, this text. I highly recommend that you purchase an AP study guide as well, (Barrons and McGraw Hill are both good) as it will help you prepare for unit tests. It will not be possible to cover every single topic potentially on the AP exam, and you will be responsible for filling in any gaps that exist between what we learn in class and what is in your AP study guide.

Required Materials:

3-ring binder – at least 2 inches in size, for AP Psych only

Binder dividers – 12 for the year

Index Cards for Vocabulary, if that works best for you.

Colored Pens or Highlighters for note-taking

Grading: Grades will be based on points in the following categories. A standard grading scale will be followed.

Exams/Quizzes: 45%
Projects: 25%
Homework/Class work: 25%
Participation: 5%

Course Expectations

Assignments: All assignments are due on the date specified, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Ample notice will be given for any assignment, quiz, or exam. *No late work will be accepted.*

The amount of homework depends on the unit being covered in class. There are assigned pages to read in the textbook, or other readings, provided every night. You are expected to take notes on all reading by using a color-coded note system that will be discussed later in class. Additionally, there will be periodic projects and research that will need to be completed outside of class.

Note Taking: You are required to take notes during all class lectures, in addition to those taken for assigned readings. Notes for each chapter will be taken in the QTDASC form. A handout will be provided on this note taking technique. Chapter notes will be turned in on the day of each test. Keep all notes for each unit in the correct section of your binder. Moreover, as a studying skill, it is important to review your class notes while they are still fresh in your mind. *Please note that if you are absent it is your responsibility to obtain any notes you may have missed.*

Participation: Psychology is a very hands-on course, with plenty of class experiments, activities and discussions. Participation in these is vital, as it directly impacts your full understanding of the material. You will also be expected to come to class having done assigned reading in order to best prepare you to participate in discussions.

Tests and Quizzes: Tests will be scheduled on a regular basis at the end of each unit and will aid in the development of skills necessary for success on the AP Psychology exam. These tests are modeled on the AP Exam, with several multiple-choice questions and an essay or short answers. Each test will contain up to 15 review questions from earlier units. Please note that if you are absent on the day of a test it is your responsibility to schedule a make-up time for the exam. Quizzes are randomly scheduled at least once each unit and range from using fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and/or multiple-choice questions. Furthermore, we will have a comprehensive final exam at the end of first semester.

Psychology Book Critique: Students will read one of the books from the provided reading list and complete a critical review, relating the book to psychology and the topics of study at the time. Students will identify and analyze the role of psychology and real life through fiction and non-fiction literature. Examples of books include: *A Child Called It & The Lost Boy* by David Pelzer, and *Murphy's Boy* by Torey Hayden. A complete book list and critique guidelines will be provided.

Additional Assignments: Given to students are class presentations, group projects, and papers. These assignments vary with the unit being covered. You can expect at least one per unit.

Exam Review: You will be required to engage in review for the AP exam during the three weeks before the test. This will include vocabulary work, practice exams and class review sessions.

The Psychology AP Exam will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2009.

AP Psychology Course Outline

Unit I: Introduction, History, and Approaches (2-4%) and Research Methods (8-10%)

Reading: Prologue, Careers in Psychology, Chapter 1

- A. Psychology's roots, pre-scientific and scientific
- B. Approaches/Perspectives: psychodynamic, behaviorist, cognitive, humanistic, and neurobiological
- C. Major issues in contemporary psychology
- D. Research methods: Experimental, Correlation, Observation, and Clinical Research
- E. Statistics: Measures of central tendency, variance, correlation, etc.
- F. Research Methods and Ethics: Human participants, animal subjects
- G. Nature vs. nurture

Objectives

- Define psychology and trace its historical development.
- Describe how the different perspectives explore and explain human behavior.
- Identify famous psychologists and describe their contributions to the discipline.
- Explore different career options for people who earn degrees in psychology
- Compare and contrast the psychological perspectives.
- Identify basic and applied research subfields of psychology.
- Identify basic elements of an experiment (variables, groups, sampling, population, etc.).
- Compare and contrast research methods (case, survey, naturalistic observation).
- Explain correlational studies and evaluate why correlational research does not yield causal conclusions.
- Describe the three measures of central tendency and measures of variation.
- Explain how inferential statistics are used to evaluate the results of the scientific process in psychology.
- Discuss the ethics of animal and human research.

Unit II: Biological Basis of Behavior (8-10%)

Reading: Chapter 2 and 3

- A. Physiological Techniques (e.g., imagining, surgical)
- B. Brain: research, methodology, development, hemispheric specialization
- C. Neuroanatomy and neural transmission, psychopharmacology
- D. Functional Organization of Nervous System
- E. Endocrine System
- F. Genetics and heritability
- G. Nature vs. Nurture
- H. Nature of Gender

Objectives

- Explore the relationship between biology and behavior.
- Describe the structure of a neuron and explain neural impulses.
- Describe neuron communication and discuss the impact of neurotransmitters.
- Classify and explain major divisions of the nervous system.
- Describe the functions of the brain structures (thalamus, cerebellum, limbic system, etc.).
- Identify the four lobes of the cerebral cortex and their functions.
- Discuss the association areas.
- Explain the split-brain studies.
- Describe the nature of the endocrine system and its interaction with the nervous system.
- Explore the influences of both behavior genetics and environmental influence.

Unit III: Sensation & Perception (6-8%)

Reading: Chapters 5 and 6

- A. Thresholds: Absolute, difference, Weber's constants
- B. Sensory organs and transduction: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and proprioceptive
- C. Sensory Adaptation

D. Perception: Attention, processing, illusions (Gestalt psychology)

Objectives

- Contrast the processes of sensation and perception.
- Distinguish between absolute and difference thresholds.
- Label a diagram of the parts of the eye and ear.
- Describe the operation of the sensory systems (five senses).
- Explain the Young-Helmholtz and opponent-process theories of color vision.
- Explore sensory disorders such as deafness and color blindness.
- Explain the place and frequency theories of pitch perception.
- Discuss Gestalt psychology's contribution to our understanding of perception.
- Discuss research on depth perception and cues.

Unit IV: States of Consciousness (2-4%)

Reading: Chapter 7

- A. Difference states of consciousness – both common and atypical.
- B. Sleep: NREM and REM
- C. Variations in consciousness: hypnosis, meditation, daydreaming
- D. Effects of drugs on consciousness

Objectives

- Explain consciousness and its various states
- Distinguish between NREM sleep and REM sleep
- Describe the various stages of sleep and its functions/disfunctions
- Explore various theories of sleep and major disorders
- Discuss the content and possible functions of dreams
- Examine the effects on consciousness of such drugs as narcotics, depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens.
- Discuss the nature of drug dependency.

Unit V: Learning (7-9%)

Reading: Chapter 8

- A. Learned vs. unlearned behavior
- B. Classical Conditioning
- C. Operant Conditioning
- D. Social Learning (Observational Learning)
- E. Independent variables in learning

Objectives

- Describe the process of classical conditioning (Pavlov's experiments).
- Explain the processes of acquisition, extinction, spontaneous recovery, generalization and discrimination.
- Describe the process of operant conditioning, including the procedure of shaping, as demonstrated by Skinner's experiments.
- Identify the different types of reinforcers and describe the schedules of reinforcement.
- Discuss the importance of cognitive processes and biological predispositions in conditioning.
- Discuss the effects of punishment on behavior.
- Describe the process of observational learning (Bandura's experiments).

Unit VI: Memory and Cognition (8-10%)

Reading: Chapters 9 and 10

- A. Memory: Information processing, storage, retrieval
- B. Language: Skinner, Chomsky and Whorf
- C. Thinking
- D. Problem Solving, Heuristics and Creativity

Objectives

- Describe memory in terms of information processing, and distinguish among sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory.
- Distinguish between automatic and effortful processing.

- Explain the encoding process (including imagery, organization, etc.).
- Describe the capacity and duration of long-term memory.
- Distinguish between implicit and explicit memory.
- Discuss the effects of interference and motivated forgetting on retrieval.
- Describe the evidence for the constructive nature of memory.
- Describe the nature of concepts and the role of prototypes in concept formation.
- Discuss how we use trial and error, algorithms, heuristics, and insight to solve problems.
- Explain how the representativeness and availability heuristics influence our judgments.
- Describe the structure of language (phonemes, morphemes, grammar).
- Identify the stages of language development (babbling, one word, etc.).
- Explain how the nature-nurture debate is illustrated in the theories of language development.
- Discuss Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis.
-

Unit VII: Motivation and Emotion (6-8%)

Reading: Chapters 12, 13 and 14

- Concepts of Motivation: Instincts, drives, optimal arousal, Maslow's hierarchy
- Hunger, Thirst, Sex, Pain and Aggression
- Eating Disorders
- Achievement Motivation
- Social Motives
- Theories of Emotion: James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Schachter-Singer
- Stress as a concept: Selye

Objectives

- Define motivation and identify motivational theories.
- Describe the physiological determinants of hunger.
- Discuss psychological and cultural influences on hunger.
- Define achievement motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
- Identify the three theories of emotion (James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Schachter-Singer).
- Describe the physiological changes that occur during emotional arousal.
- Explain the complex interaction between cognition and physiological mechanisms associated with feelings.
- Discuss the catharsis hypothesis.
- Describe the biological response to stress and useful coping strategies.

Unit VIII: Developmental Psychology (7-9%)

Reading: Chapter 4

- Life-Span Approach: Infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood
- Research Methods: longitudinal and cross-sectional
- Heredity-Environment Issues (nature vs. nurture)
- Developmental Theories: Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, Vygotsky
- Dimensions of Development

Objectives

- Discuss the course of prenatal development.
- Illustrate development changes in physical, social, and cognitive areas.
- Discuss the effect of body contact, familiarity, and responsive parenting on attachments.
- Describe the benefits of a secure attachment and the impact of parental neglect and separation as well as day care on childhood development.
- Describe the theories of Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg.
- Describe the early development of a self-concept.
- Distinguish between longitudinal and cross-sectional studies.
- Explore the effects of culture on development

Unit IX: Personality (5-7%)

Reading: Chapter 15

- A. Personality Theories and Approaches: Freud, Jung, Adler, Erikson, Horney, Allport, Maslow, Rogers, Cattell, Eysenck, Mischel.
- B. Assessment Techniques: Myers-Briggs, MMPI, CPI
- C. Growth and Adjustment
- D. Self-concept and self-esteem

Objectives

- Describe personality structure in terms of the interactions of the id, ego, and superego.
- Explain how defense mechanisms protect the individual from anxiety.
- Describe the contributions of the neo-Freudians.
- Explain how personality inventories are used to assess traits.
- Describe the humanistic perspective on personality in terms of Maslow's focus on self-actualization and Rogers' emphasis on people's potential for growth.
- Describe the impact of individualism and collectivism on self-identity.
- Describe the social-cognitive perspective on personality.
- Discuss the consequences of personal control, learned helplessness, and optimism.
- Discuss the issue of self and the related ideas of self-concept and self-esteem.

Unit X: Testing and Individual Differences (5-7%)

Reading: Chapter 11

- A. Standardization and Norms
- B. Reliability and Validity
- C. Types of Tests: Stanford-Binet, Wechsler
- D. Ethics and Standards in Testing
- E. Intelligence and aptitude
- F. Heredity/Environment and Intelligence (nature vs. nurture)
- G. Human Diversity

Objectives

- Trace the origins of intelligence testing.
- Describe the nature of intelligence.
- Identify the factors associated with creativity.
- Distinguish between aptitude and achievement tests.
- Describe test standardization.
- Distinguish between the reliability and validity of intelligence tests.
- Describe the two extremes of the normal distribution of intelligence.
- Discuss evidence for both genetic and environmental influences.
- Discuss whether intelligence tests are culturally biased.
- Explore the ethical issues raised with intelligence testing.

Unit XI: Psychological Disorders (7-9%) and Treatment (5-7%)

Reading: Chapter 16

- A. Definitions of Abnormality
- B. Theories of Psychopathology
- C. Diagnosis and Classification of Psychopathology
- D. Major Categories of Disorders: Anxiety, Somatoform, Mood, Schizophrenic, Organic, Personality, Dissociative, Impulse
- E. Societal Impact of Mental Illness: Healthcare, Homelessness, Crime, etc.
- F. Treatment Approaches (humanistic, cognitive-behavioral, psychoanalytic, etc.)
- G. Modes of Therapy (e.g., individual, group)
- H. Community and Preventive Approaches
- I. Does Therapy Work?

Objectives

- Identify the criteria for judging whether behavior is psychologically disordered.
- Describe the medical model of psychological disorders.
- Describe the aims of DSM-IV, and discuss the potential dangers of diagnostic labels.
- Describe the symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder.
- Describe and explain the development of somatoform and mood disorders.
- Describe the various symptoms and types of schizophrenia.
- Describe the nature of organic and personality disorders.
- Describe the characteristics and possible causes of dissociative disorders.
- Discuss the aims and methods of psychoanalysis.
- Identify the basic characteristics of the humanistic therapies.
- Identify the basic assumptions of behavior therapy.
- Describe the assumptions and goals of the cognitive therapies.
- Discuss the benefits of group therapy and family therapy.
- Discuss the findings regarding the effectiveness of the psychotherapies.
- Discuss the role of values and cultural differences in the therapeutic process.
- Identify the common forms of drug therapy and the use of electroconvulsive therapy.

Unit XII: Social Psychology (8-10%)

Reading: Chapter 18

- A. Group Dynamics: Asch and conformity, Milgram and Obedience, Facilitation, Loafing, Groupthink and Compliance
- B. Attitudes and Behavior: Fundamental Attribution Error, Roles, Festinger, Cognitive Dissonance, Zimbardo and the Stanford Prison Experiment
- C. Interpersonal Perception
- D. Organizational Behavior
- E. Aggression/Antisocial Behavior
- F. Altruism
- G. Prejudice and scapegoating

Objectives

- Describe the importance of attribution in social behavior.
- Explain the effect of role-playing on attitudes in terms of cognitive dissonance theory.
- Discuss the results of Asch's experiment on conformity.
- Describe Milgram's controversial experiments on obedience.
- Describe the Stanford Prison Experiment and explain why it ended early.
- Discuss how group interaction can facilitate group polarization and groupthink.
- Describe the social, emotional, and cognitive factors that contribute to the persistence of cultural, ethnic, and gender prejudice and discrimination.
- Discuss the issues related to aggression and attraction.
- Explain altruistic behavior in terms of social exchange theory and social norms.

AP Psychology: Commitment Contract

Please initial after each statement to which you commit. Sign and date the contract at the bottom. Please share this syllabus and contract with your parent or guardian. They need to sign it as well. Please turn this form in.

1. I understand that AP Psychology is a college level course, and as such, requires that I undertake college level work. _____
2. I will come on time, and prepared, to class every day. _____
3. I will not skip the class and all my absences will be excused: _____
4. I will study physics for at least 1 hour every day, 6 days a week, or enough to earn an A, whichever is least. _____
5. I will ask questions or get help with any topic that I do not fully understand. _____
6. I will work hard to keep a good attitude and smile as often as I can. _____
7. I will take the AP Psychology exam in May. _____

I have read Ms. Anderson's AP Psychology Syllabus.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

Parent Name

Parent Signature

Date