



AP Psychology



Mrs. Wilson

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Course Description

AP Psychology is a rigorous, college-level course that is designed to “introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students [will be] exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about the ethics and methods psychologists use in their science and practice” (AP Course Description in Psychology). At the end of the year, you will have the opportunity to attempt college credit at participating universities by taking the AP exam.

In order to be successful with this advanced curriculum, it is expected that students take responsibility for their own learning opportunities. It is the student’s job to keep up with reading and written assignments as well as allotting extra time for reviewing information and consolidating knowledge. In order to facilitate this learning, it is the instructor will provide enriching learning situations and additional materials in support of subject content.

Course Objectives

- Introduce students to the scientific study of behavior.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the strengths and limits of various research techniques.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of general psychology principles.
- Students will learn to view human behavior from the behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, sociocultural and biological perspectives.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the strengths and limits of individual perspectives and know the major research studies that support these perspectives.
- Students will develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills
- Students will be prepared to take the AP Exam.

Textbook

Meyers, David G. *Psychology*. New York: Worth Publishers. 2007.

Recommended Materials

- Three ring binder with paper and dividers – for notes and maintaining all handouts and returned assignments)
- Writing supplies and highlighters
- Composition book – for journaling

Classroom Expectations

As exceptional students who are willing to dedicate themselves to academic excellence, I am confident you will demonstrate equal excellence in your conduct. Some reminders:

- Be on time. Be prepared.
- Be responsible – Do your homework, have great attendance, be neat and tidy in your work, own your mistakes.
- Be respectful – don’t talk over others (especially me, it hurts my feelings), stay focused on your work not work from other classes or electronic devices, take care of our classroom, address your peers with kindness and respect.
- Be excellent – do your best work, engage with the material, participate in class, be positive and enthusiastic.

Coursework

- Daily reading of the text. I cannot cover everything! Periodic quizzes will be given to check on reading comprehension and completion.
- Vocabulary—psychology is very much a termed based subject. Knowing the vocabulary is essential for success in class. Terms should be defined in such a way that you understand them. You may create a card file of terms or create a notebook of terms.
- To remain current, reviews of current research and articles regarding hot topics will be assigned periodically.
- Individual and group projects will be assigned at various times during the year to research topics pertinent to the study of psychology.
- We will conduct in-class and out-of-class labs/experiments which will provide hands-on understanding of the subject matter.
- As time allows, we will watch videos clips to enhance our understanding of the course. You will be asked to critique the video/clip or answers questions related to it.

Grading Policy

Each assignment will be worth points based on its complexity. Your grade will be determined by point accumulation. Grades will be totaled using the following scale:

$$\begin{aligned} 89.5-100\% &= A, & 79.5-89.49\% &= B, \\ 69.5-79.49\% &= C, & 59.5-69.49\% &= D, & 0-59.49\% &= F \end{aligned}$$

In addition to assignments and exams, you will be awarded points for participation monthly for attentiveness and engagement in the classroom. Participation will be reduced significantly for unexcused absences, being disruptive, sleeping in class, and working on assignments from other classes. Grades will be updated on Aries frequently throughout each semester, so you should always be aware of your progress. Little to no extra credit will be offered for this course.

Missing/Late Work

Once again, this is a college level course. It expected that you perform accordingly. Assignments are to be turned in, typed, stapled, and properly headed at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Late work for full credit is only accepted in the case of excused absence. You will have two days for every day missed to make up missing work. If you are on campus at any time on the day an assignment is due, even if you are not present in our psychology class, the work must be turned in. In the event of technical difficulties, it is your responsibility to figure out a solution and complete the assignment by the due date.

In regards to tests, make up exams will only be provided in the case of excused absence. If you are present on the day of the test review, you will make up your exam on the day following your return to class. In the event of a longer absence, you have one week to make up the exam. Students who are at school on the day of the exam but fail to show up the period of the test will not be permitted to make up the test. If you will be absent due to a school sponsored event, it is your responsibility to set up a time to take the test before you go.

Plagiarism/Cheating

“Students may not reproduce either the words or thoughts of another individual without citation. This is considered plagiarism, and it will result in strict disciplinary action. Students may not copy the work of their classmates; if the actions of both students in such cases are willing, both students are guilty of cheating. Students may not use notes during tests and quizzes, nor are they permitted to acquire the answers to questions on tests or quizzes from students in earlier classes. Such behavior is also considered cheating.” A student who is found to have done any of the above is in violation of Troy’s academy honesty policy. He/she will receive zero credit for the assignment and will be referred to administration for disciplinary action, which **may** result in suspension, or, in the case of students on inter-district transfers, in the revocation of the permit to attend Troy High School.” (Platt, G.)

Note how I cite the fact that Mr. Platt wrote this, not me – See how easy academic honesty is? (this doesn’t mean you can copy homework as long as you cite it☺)

Course Outline

The following is an overview of the units of study we will be covering as well as the essential questions for each topic. In addition, you will find information on the amount of time that will be devoted to each unit and the percentage of the AP Exam that will focus on the content from that chapter. Timeframes are subject to change as need dictates.

I. History and Approaches – One Week—2-4% of AP Exam Multiple Choice section

** The History and Approaches Section is woven throughout all units but is formally covered in this section.*

- A. Logic, Philosophy, and History of Science
- B. Approaches
 - 1. Biological
 - 2. Behavioral
 - 3. Cognitive
 - 4. Humanistic
 - 5. Psychodynamic
 - 6. Socio-cultural
 - 7. Evolutionary

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do the different perspectives in psychology compare and contrast?
- ❖ Who were the movers and shakers in the evolution of psychology as a science?

II. Research Methods – One Week—8-10%

** The Research Methods Section is woven throughout all units but is formally covered in this section.*

- A. Experimental, Correlational, and Clinical Research
- B. Statistics
 - 1. Descriptive
 - 2. Inferential
- C. Ethics in Research

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do psychologists use the scientific method to study behavior and mental processes?
- ❖ Which methods of research are appropriate for the study of different behaviors?
- ❖ How do psychologists draw appropriate conclusions about behavior from research?
- ❖ How do psychologists make ethical decisions about researching behavior with human and animal subjects?

III. Biological Bases of Behavior – Three Weeks—8-10%

- A. Physiological Techniques (e.g., imaging, surgical)
- B. Neuroanatomy
- C. Functional Organization of Nervous System
- D. Neural Transmission
- E. Endocrine System
- F. Genetics
- G. Evolutionary Psychology

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do biological processes relate to behavior?
- ❖ How do the biological processes work to create and sustain behavior?
- ❖ How does damage to a biological process or part affect behavior?

IV. Sensation and Perception – Two Weeks—6-8%

- A. Thresholds and Signal Detection Theory
- B. Sensory Mechanisms
- C. Attention

D. Perceptual Processes

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do the five senses receive and translate signals to the brain for processing?
- ❖ How do sensation and perception differ?
- ❖ How does the brain process sensory signals accurately? Inaccurately?

V. Developmental Psychology – Two Weeks—7-9%

- A. Life-Span Approach
- B. Research Methods (e.g., longitudinal, cross-sectional)
- C. Heredity – Environment Issues
- D. Developmental Theories
- E. Dimensions of Development
 1. Physical
 2. Cognitive
 3. Social
 4. Moral
- F. Sex Roles and Gender Roles

Essential Question:

- ❖ How do people grow and develop physically, cognitively, socially and morally throughout the lifespan?

VI. States of Consciousness – Two Weeks—2-4%

- A. Sleep and Dreaming
- B. Hypnosis
- C. Psychoactive Drug Effects

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do psychologists define consciousness?
- ❖ What happens during the sleep cycle?
- ❖ How do psychoactive drugs affect behavior?
- ❖ How do we know whether hypnosis is a real psychological phenomenon?

VII. Learning – Two Weeks—7-9%

- A. Classical Conditioning
- B. Operant Conditioning
- C. Cognitive Processes
- D. Biological Processes
- E. Social Learning

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do psychologists define learning?
- ❖ How do principles of classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning work to create learning?
- ❖ What is the importance of cognitive processes and biological predispositions in conditioning and learning?

VIII. Cognition – Three Weeks—8-10%

- A. Memory
- B. Language
- C. Thinking
- D. Problem Solving and Creativity

Essential Questions:

- ❖ What are the processes involved in encoding, storage, and retrieval of sensory input?
- ❖ What are the various forms of memory (i.e., episodic, semantic)? Describe each.
- ❖ How are heuristics and algorithms used to solve problems?
- ❖ Describe the development and structure of language.
- ❖ What role does language play in the thought process?

IX. Testing and Individual Differences – Two Weeks—5-7%

- A. Standardization and Norms
- B. Reliability and Validity
- C. Types of Tests
- D. Ethics and Standards in Testing
- E. Intelligence

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do psychologists define and study intelligence?
- ❖ How do psychologists know whether a test is reliable and/or valid? Why are these qualities of tests important?
- ❖ How do testing scores differ between group and individual administrations of intelligence tests? Between genders? Races? Socioeconomic groups?

X. Motivation and Emotion – Two Weeks—6-8%

- A. Biological Bases
- B. Theories of Motivation
- C. Hunger, Thirst, Sex, and Pain
- D. Social Motives
- E. Theories of Emotion
- F. Stress

Essential Questions:

- ❖ In what ways are humans motivated to behave?
- ❖ What methods of motivation are more effective than others?
- ❖ How does hunger operate?
- ❖ How do maladaptive eating patterns affect behavior?
- ❖ What role do emotions play in behavior?
- ❖ How does physical arousal and cognition affect emotions?
- ❖ How does stress influence health and behavior?

XI. Personality – Two Weeks—5-7%

- A. Personality Theories and Approaches
- B. Assessment Techniques
- C. Growth and Adjustment

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do psychologists define and study personality?
- ❖ What advantages and limitations exist for each theory's description of personality?
- ❖ How do psychologists reliably measure personality?

XII. Abnormal Psychology – Three Weeks—7-9%

- A. Definitions of Abnormality
- B. Theories of Psychopathology
- C. Diagnosis of Psychopathology
- D. Types of Disorders
 1. Anxiety
 2. Somatoform
 3. Mood
 4. Schizophrenic
 5. Organic
 6. Personality
 7. Dissociative

Essential Questions:

- ❖ What are the criteria for determining and diagnosing abnormal behavior?
- ❖ Describe the use of the DSM-V.

- ❖ What are the symptoms and origins of mood, personality, and dissociative disorders?
- ❖ Compare and contrast various approaches (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, biological) on the origins of depression.
- ❖ Discuss the characteristics of recent research on the origins of schizophrenia.

XIII. Treatment of Psychological Disorders – Two Weeks—5-7%

A. Treatment Approaches

1. Psychodynamic
2. Humanistic
3. Behavioral
4. Cognitive
5. Biological

B. Modes of Therapy (i.e., individual, group)

C. Community and Preventative Approaches

Essential Questions:

- ❖ What are the various approaches to the treatment of disorders?
- ❖ What are the goals and methods of psychoanalysis?
- ❖ What is the approach to treatment of humanist psychologists?
- ❖ Synthesize the assumptions and goals of cognitive psychology.
- ❖ What are the various biological treatments for psychological disorders?
- ❖ Differentiate among various modes of therapy such as one-on-one, group counseling, and family therapy.

XIV. Social Psychology – Three Weeks—8-10%

A. Group Dynamics

B. Attribution Processes

C. Interpersonal Perception

D. Conformity, Compliance, Obedience

E. Attitudes and Attitude Change

F. Organizational Behavior

G. Aggression/Antisocial Behavior

H. Cultural Influences

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How do people explain (or attribute) the behavior of others?
- ❖ How are individuals affected by groups?
- ❖ Under what conditions do people obey, conform, make friendships, find love, and help others?
- ❖ How do attitudes and actions influence individual and group behavior?

XV. Review for AP Psychology Exam – Two Weeks

- ❖ Projects/Experiments: Review of Psychology Theories and Principles
- ❖ Testing: Practice Exams (Multiple Choice and Essay)

Periodically, commercial movies will be used to illustrate and reinforce the psychological concepts discussed in class. Care is used in selecting material that will enrich our understanding of the material and spark critical thinking and discussion. In most instances, only portions of the film will be presented but on rare occasions an entire movie may be shown. Any commercial film clips shown in class will be selected from the following list. Connections to course content are indicated next to the movie listing. Not all will be used.

- *Awakenings (1990) PG13 – Neurobiology, abnormal psychology, treatment*
- *GATTACA (1997) PG13 - Genetics*
- *Inception(2010) PG13 – Consciousness, dreaming*
- *On Golden Pond (1984) PG – Developmental Psychology (issues in adolescence and late adulthood)*
- *As Good as it Gets (1997)PG13 – Abnormal psychology (OCD)*
- *Benny and Joon (1993) PG – Abnormal psychology, treatment, effects on caregivers*
- *A Beautiful Mind (2001) PG13 – Abnormal psychology (schizophrenia)*
- *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013) PG13 - Consciousness*

Students and parents should be aware that AP Psychology is an advanced course that requires a commitment of time and effort above and beyond that of normal high school classes. Additionally, this course covers sensitive topics including evolution, sexuality and sexual orientation.

Please sign to acknowledge that you have received this information and give permission for your student to participate in all course related work and activities.

Student Name _____

Guardian Name _____

Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Students

Please acknowledge that you have read and understand the course content and requirements

Student Signature _____ Date _____