

AP Psychology Course Syllabus

Purpose of the Course

The purpose of Advanced Placement Psychology is to introduce the students to the systematic and scientific study of behaviors and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles and phenomena associated with the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about methods psychologists use in their science and practice.

Overall Class Objectives

1. Students will be prepared to do acceptable work on the AP Psychology exam.
2. Students will study the major core concepts and theories of psychology.
3. Students will learn the basic skills of psychological research.
4. Students will be able to apply basic psychological concepts to their lives.
5. Students will learn about psychology as a profession.
6. Students will develop critical thinking skills.
7. Students will build their reading, writing and discussion skills.

Questions to Consider

1. Why are you taking this class? Do you want to learn about Psychology? Are you serious about taking the AP Exam in May? If not, this is probably not the class for you.

2. What are your priorities? Are academics at or near the top of the list? Are you more concerned with your social life, athletics, job, TV, family responsibilities and so on? You can have any or all of the things on this list, in addition to AP Psychology, but if your ultimate goal is to take a college level course and get credit for college level work, then some sacrifices must be made. If academics are not near the top of your list, this may not be the class for you.

3. How much time do you have to devote to this class? It will depend on your own strengths and weaknesses, but you should expect several hours each week, outside of class, to study and prepare. Do you have the time and are you willing to commit it to this class? If not, this may not be the right class.

4. Are you a strong reader? In terms of course assignments, nothing will occupy your time more than reading and studying your textbook. Research has shown that the strongest correlation of success in high school AP courses is reading ability. If you are not a strong reader, you can compensate but you need to be aware of the reading requirements. If you are not ready to read a great deal, then this may not be the class for you.

KEEP IN MIND THAT MOTIVATION IS OF MUCH GREATER IMPORTANCE TO YOUR SUCCESS THAN YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF ABILITY! If you want

to succeed in this class and are willing to put forth the necessary effort, you can do it. Attitude, study skills, determination and discipline count for more than intelligence.

What you can do to help yourself.

1. Don't miss class!
2. Don't be afraid to seek help if needed.
3. Keep up! Set a schedule and keep it!
4. Half the battle is vocabulary. Learn the terms!
5. Take notes in class regularly. Put them into your own words.
6. Learn to read a textbook more effectively.

Textbook

Myers, David G. *Psychology* 7th edition. New York: Worth Publishers, 2003.

Chapters referenced within the syllabus refer to this book.

Supplementary Resources

Books

Hock, Roger R. *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995

Honeck, Richard P. *Introductory Readings of Cognitive Psychology*. Guilford, Connecticut: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 1998

Sacks, Oliver. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. New York: Touchstone, 1985

Films/Videos

The Brain: Teaching Modules series. Produced by Colorado State University. Boston: Annenberg/CPB, 1997.

The Mind: Teaching Modules series. Produced by Colorado State University. Boston: Annenberg/CPB, 1999.

Discovering Psychology. Updated ed. Produced by WGBH Boston with the American Psychological Association. Boston: WGBH, 2001

Grading Proportions

Classwork	30%
Homework	20%
Tests and Quizzes	50%

Assignments

Classwork assignments will be discussions, presentations, participation in experiments, reflection and response papers, etc.

Homework assignments will primarily be reading and notes. For each unit of study, students are required to submit a notebook with notes taken while reading the various chapters. Specific reading assignments from the supplementary resources will be periodically assigned as well. In addition, there will be surveys, experiments and other homework assignments that will occasionally be given as homework.

Tests will all be cumulative and will be given at the conclusion of each unit. Every test will be given over two class periods with 80 Multiple Choice questions on one day and two Free Response questions on the other day. The test will be graded along the same lines as the AP Psychology Test, with the Free Response Questions making up 1/3 of the total test grade and the Multiple Choice accounting for the other 2/3. Quizzes will be given periodically over specific topics, from the textbook and from the supplementary materials.

The frequency of any assignment will be determined by the topic being taught and the nature of the topic. For example, while studying Research Methodology, several different research methods will be utilized (experiments, naturalistic observations, surveys) as assignments, but while studying Consciousness, the course may focus more on discussion.

Course Syllabus

These are the major content areas covered by the AP Exam and will, therefore, form the primary units of this class.

- I. History and Approaches/Research Methodology and Statistics
 - A. History and Approaches – Prologue of the Textbook (1 Week) – CR1
 - 1. Logic, Philosophy and the History of Science
 - 2. Approaches
 - a. Biological
 - b. Behavioral
 - c. Cognitive
 - d. Humanistic
 - e. Psychodynamic
 - f. Sociocultural
 - g. Evolutionary/Sociobiological
 - B. Research Methods – Ch. 1 (2 ½ Weeks) – CR2
 - 1. Experimental, Correlational and Clinical Research
 - 2. Statistics
 - 3. Ethics in Research
- II. Biological Bases of Behavior - Ch. 2 (3 Weeks) – CR3
 - A. Physiological Techniques
 - B. Neuroanatomy
 - C. Functional Organization of the Nervous System
 - D. Neural Transmission
 - E. Endocrine System
 - F. Genetics
- III. Sensation and Perception - Ch. 5+6 (2 Weeks) – CR4
 - A. Thresholds
 - B. Sensory Mechanisms
 - C. Sensory Adaptation
 - D. Attention
 - E. Perceptual Processes
- IV. Motivation and Emotion - Ch. 12+13 (2 Weeks) – CR8
 - A. Biological Bases
 - B. Theories of Motivation
 - C. Hunger, Thirst, Sex and Pain
 - D. Social Motives
 - E. Theories of Emotion
 - F. Stress
- V. Learning - Ch. 8 (2 Weeks) – CR6
 - A. Classical Conditioning
 - B. Operant Conditioning
 - C. Cognitive Processes in Learning

- D. Biological Factors
- E. Social Learning
- VI. Cognition - Ch. 9+10 (2 Weeks) – CR7
 - A. Memory
 - B. Language
 - C. Thinking
 - D. Problem Solving and Creativity
- VII. States of Consciousness - Ch. 7 (1 Week) – CR5
 - A. Sleep and Dreaming
 - B. Hypnosis
 - C. Psychoactive Drug Effects
- VIII. 1st Semester Final
- IX. Developmental Psychology - Ch. 3+4 (1 ½ Weeks) – CR9
 - A. Life-Span Approach
 - B. Research Methods
 - C. Heredity-Environment Issues
 - D. Developmental Theories
 - E. Dimensions of Development - Physical, Cognitive, Social, Moral
 - F. Sex Roles, Sex Differences
- X. Personality, Stress and Health - Ch. 14+15 (1 ½ Weeks) – CR10
 - A. Personality Theories and Approaches
 - B. Assessment techniques
 - C. Self-concept, Self-esteem
 - D. Growth and Adjustment
- XI. Testing and Individual Differences - Ch. 11 (1 ½ Weeks) – CR11
 - A. Standardization and Norms
 - B. Reliability and Validity
 - C. Types of Tests
 - D. Ethics and Standards in Testing
 - E. Intelligence
 - F. Heredity/Environment and Intelligence
 - G. Human Diversity
- XII. Abnormal Psychology - Ch. 16 (3 Weeks) – CR12
 - A. Definitions of Abnormality
 - B. Theories of Psychopathology
 - C. Diagnosis of Psychopathology
 - D. Anxiety Disorders
 - E. Somatoform Disorders
 - F. Mood Disorders

- G. Schizophrenic Disorders
- H. Organic Disorders
- I. Personality Disorders
- J. Dissociative Disorders
- XIII. Treatment of Psychological Disorders - Ch. 17 (2 Weeks) – CR13
 - A. Treatment Approaches
 - 1. Insight Therapies - Humanistic/Psychodynamic Approaches
 - 2. Behavioral Approaches
 - 3. Cognitive Approaches
 - 4. Biological Approaches
 - B. Modes of Therapy
 - C. Community and Preventative Approaches
- XIV. Social Psychology - Ch. 18 (3 Weeks) – CR14
 - 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
- XV. Projects in Psychology – (1 Week)
- XVI. Review and AP Test – (1 Week)

It is my hope that you enjoy this year in AP Psychology. It will be a challenge, but will also be a source of pride when you have accomplished a college level course and gotten college credit by scoring well on the AP Exam. This is a great topic of study. I hope you enjoy it.