

## **AP Psychology Course Outline**

### **Statement Of Purpose**

The Advanced Placement Psychology course introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. While considering the psychologists and studies that have shaped the field, students explore and apply psychological theories, key concepts, and phenomena associated with such topics as the biological bases of behavior, sensation and perception, learning and cognition, motivation, developmental psychology, testing and individual differences, treatment of abnormal behavior, and social psychology. Throughout the course, students employ psychological research methods, including ethical considerations, as they use the scientific method, analyze bias, evaluate claims and evidence, and effectively communicate ideas.

### **Course Overview**

Throughout this course, students will have the opportunity to explore various essential questions to the field of psychology, such as:

1. What are the primary psychological approaches for the explanation of human behavior?
2. What are appropriate responses and interventions to psychological behaviors?
3. How does psychology provide an understanding of self and community?

Students will complete a learning experience equivalent to that obtained in most college introductory psychology courses. Students should be able to achieve the following goals within each unit:

1. Recognize how philosophical and physiological perspectives shaped the development of psychological thought;
2. Differentiate types of research with regard to purpose, strengths, and weaknesses;
3. Identify basic processes and systems in the biological bases of behavior;
4. Describe general principles of organizing and integrating sensation to promote stable awareness of the external world;
5. Describe various states of consciousness and their impact on behavior;
6. Distinguish general differences between principles of classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning;
7. Describe and differentiate psychological and physiological systems of memory;
8. Identify and apply basic motivational concepts to understand the behavior of humans and other animals;
9. Discuss the interaction of nature and nurture;
10. Compare and contrast the major theories and approaches to explaining personality;
11. Define intelligence and list characteristics of how psychologists measure intelligence;
12. Describe contemporary and historical conceptions of what constitutes psychological disorders;
13. Describe the central characteristics of psychotherapeutic intervention; and
14. Describe the structure and function of different kinds of group behavior.

## **Expectations for Learning**

- Fulfill individual academic potential
- Develop and apply critical and/or creative thinking skills
- Analyze and interpret data
- Demonstrate an understanding of Psychology and major concepts
- Create and express ideas in effective presentations
- Effective reading, speaking, writing and listening skills
- Participate in cooperative and collaborative learning
- Demonstrate self-discipline and personal responsibility for learning

**Class Requirements:** Each day students are required to bring their notebook, writing instruments, and any other materials necessary for the particular class period. Students are expected to come to class with all of the necessary outside work completed. When reading is due, students should come to class prepared to apply them to the various activities and assignments. The day a reading is due students should expect a multiple choice quiz, consisting of 5 practice AP questions. This will ensure students are keeping up with the reading, preparing for the AP exam, and the quiz can serve as a check on their understanding of the material. Students will work on Free-Response questions as homework as well as on unit exams.

If a student is absent during a class, it is his responsibility to come and get the missing work. Work must be completed in the same amount of class periods that were missed. Students who miss class un-excused will forfeit their right to make up missing work and the work due on the day they were not in class. If a student misses a test he or she must contact the teacher via email before returning to school to set up an alternative test date.

**Grading:** The class is designed to give students a college course experience in a high school setting. Grading therefore will be determined by a blend of traditional college standards (tests, papers and discussions), and more typical high school assignments (quizzes and daily assignments). Tests contain AP multiple choice questions and FRQs; quizzes are a combination of multiple choice questions and FRQs for every chapter.

Quarter Grades are determined by the following:

Summative -70%

- Unit Tests
- Projects, Presentations
- Quizzes

Formative-20%

- Daily Work
- Homework
- Reading Annotations
- Participation

Behavior-10%

- Organization
- Required materials present on daily basis
- Collaboration

## **Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014)

## **Supplementary Texts and Resources:**

- Roger R. Hock, Forty Studies That Changed Psychology, seventh edition (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2013)
- NY Times Articles
- TIMES Magazine
- David N. Sattler, Psychology in Context, Voices and Perspectives, second edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000)

## **Units of Study**

- I. **Introducing Psychology-3 weeks**
  - a. **History and Approaches 2-4 %**
    - i. **History of Psychology**
    - ii. **Approaches**
    - iii. **Subfields in Psychology**
  - b. **Research Methods 8-10 %**
    - i. **Experimental, Correlational, and Clinical Research**
    - ii. **Statistics**
    - iii. **Ethics in Research**

### **Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014); pgs.1-74

### **Sources:**

- **Video on the Milgram Study**
- **Myth Busters Episode**

### **Projects/Assignments:**

- **M&M statistical experiment**
- **Applying psychological approaches to celebrity case studies**
- **Stay or Switch activity highlighting probability and statistical significance**
- **Students analyze experimental designs and methods**

### **Essential questions:**

1. What are the primary psychological approaches for the explanation of human behavior?
2. How do psychologists use the scientific method to study behavior and mental processes?
3. How do psychologists make ethical decisions about researching behavior with human and animal subjects?

- II. Biological Bases of Behavior-3 weeks 8-10%**
- a. Physiological techniques (imagining, surgical)**
  - b. Neuroanatomy**
  - c. Functional organization of the nervous system**
  - d. Neural transmission**
  - e. Neural plasticity**
  - f. Endocrine System**
  - g. Genetics**
  - h. Evolutionary Psychology**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014);  
pgs.75-149

**Sources:**

- Discovering Psych Phineas Gage video
- PBS The Teen Brain Video
- New York Times article: What Makes Teens Tick
- *More Experience Equals Bigger Brain*, from 40 Case Studies

**Projects/Assignments:**

- **House brain project where students craft patient profiles demonstrating damage to regions within the brain**
- **Brain Diagram identifying parts of the brain, their functions, and image association.**
- **Neural chain simulation**

**Essential questions:**

1. How does biology influence psychological behaviors and characteristics?
2. How does damage to a biological process or part affect behavior?
3. What methods do researchers use to study the brain?
4. To what extent do both nature and nurture play a role in shaping human behavior?

- III. Sensation and Perception-2 weeks 6-8%**
- a. Thresholds and Signal Detection Theory**
  - b. Sensory Mechanisms**
  - c. Attention**
  - d. Perceptual Processes**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014);  
pgs.150-216

**Sources:**

- Ryan Knighton Article: Seeing the World Through My Wife's Eyes

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Blind walk experiment
- Olfactory and Taste Stations
- Optical Illusions

**Essential questions:**

1. How do our senses influence our perceptions?
2. How do the five senses receive and translate signals to the brain for processing?

**IV. The Developing Person-2 weeks 7-9%**

- a. Life Span Approach
- b. Research Methods (Longitudinal, cross-sectional)
- c. Heredity-environment issues
- d. Developmental Theories
- e. Dimensions of Development
- f. Sex and Gender Development

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014); pgs.460-553

**Sources:**

- The Visual Cliff Article
- *In Control and Glad of It* From 40 Case Studies
- Harlow Monkey Experiment Article
- Video clips on the following:
  - Conservation
  - Egocentrism
  - Immediate vs. delayed gratification (Marshmallow Test)
  - Theory of Mind

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Letter to parents
- Developing Symbols for each stage of Piaget's Cognitive stages
- Kohlberg's Moral Dilemma game

**Essential questions:**

1. How do people grow and develop physically/intellectually/socially/morally throughout the life span?

**V. Personality-1.5 weeks 5-7%**  
**a. Theories and Approaches**  
**b. Assessment Techniques**  
**c. Growth and Adjustment**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014); pgs.554-605

**Sources:**

- *The Upside of Being an Introvert (and Why Extroverts are Overrated)* Time Magazine

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Applying personality theory to television characters
- Case study of personality
- Personal Personality tests and interpretation
- Defense mechanism skits

**Essential questions:**

1. How do psychologists define and study personality?
2. How have personality theories and assessment of personalities changed over time?

**Cognition 8-10%**

**VI. Memory-1week and 1 day**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014); pgs. 316-355

**VII. Thinking and Language-1.5 weeks**

**a. Problem Solving and Creativity**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014); pgs.356-388

**Sources:**

- *Thanks for the Memories*, from the 40 Case Studies
- *Maps in your Mind*, from the 40 Case Studies

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Create a Bill Persuasion activity
- The Rumor Chain Constructing Memories activity
- Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Recall/Recognition activity
- School Language Specialist guest speaker

**Essential questions:**

1. How do humans encode, store, and retrieve information from memory?
2. How do humans think? In what ways is thinking flawed or constrained?
3. How do humans use language to communicate ideas?

**VIII. States of Consciousness-1.5 weeks 2-4%**

- a. Sleep and Dreaming
- b. Hypnosis
- c. Psychoactive Drug Effects

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014);  
pgs.217-261

**Sources:**

- *What Dreams Are Made Of*, US News and World Report
- *Killing In Your Sleep* Video Clip
- *Dreammoods.com*

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Sleep/Dream Log
- Dream Analysis
- Hypnosis guest speaker
- Hypnotic susceptibility activity
- Intervention skit

**Essential questions:**

1. How do psychologists define states of consciousness?
2. What happens during the sleep cycle?
3. How do psychoactive drugs affect behavior?

**IX. Testing and Individual Differences-1.5 week 5-7%**

- a. Standardization and Norms**
- b. Reliability and Validity**
- c. Types of Tests**
- d. Ethics and Standards in Testing**
- e. Intelligence**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014);  
pgs.606-648

**Sources:**

- *What Animals Think*, Time Magazine Article
- *Just how are you intelligent?* From 40 Case Studies

**Projects/Assignments:**

- **Creating an intelligence test**
- **Analysis of Arne from Gilbert Grape**
- **Evaluations of varying intelligence tests**

**Essential questions:**

1. How do psychologists define, measure, and study intelligence?

**Midterm Review and Testing**

**X. Learning-2 weeks 7-9%**

- a. Classical Conditioning**
- b. Operant Conditioning**
- c. Cognitive Processes**
- d. Biological Factors**
- e. Social Learning**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014);  
pgs.262-315

**Sources:**

- Little Albert Experiment
- Bandura BoBo Doll Experiment BBC video clip
- *Knock Wood*, 40 Case Studies
- *Not Just About Salivating Dogs*, 40 Case Studies

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Classical Conditioning Air Puff Simulation
- Operant Conditioning Scenarios
- Scheduled Reinforcement analysis
- Debate on how we learn and how classrooms are set up

**Essential questions:**

1. How do psychologists define and measure learning?
2. How are the various principles of learning different?

**XI. Motivation and Emotion-2 week 6-8 %****f. Biological Bases****g. Theories of Motivation****h. Hunger, Thirst, Sex and Pain****i. Social Motives****j. Theories of Emotion****k. Stress****Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014);  
pgs.389-459

**Sources:**

- Mental Toughness Training clip
- Mr. Holland's Opus Video clip
- The Office video clip on motivation
- *I Can See It All Over Your Face*, 40 Case Studies

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Analysis of commercial advertisements applying motivational concepts
- Yerks-Dodson Law scenarios
- Analysis of motivation in Mr. Holland's Opus clip
- Analysis of motivation in The Office clip

**Essential questions:**

1. What are the psychological theories of motivation and emotion that influence and explain human behavior?

**XII. Psychological Disorders-2.5 weeks 7-9%**

**l. Definitions of Abnormality**

**m. Theories of Psychopathology**

**n. Diagnosis of Psychopathology**

**o. Types of Disorders**

**i. Anxiety**

**ii. Somatoform**

**iii. Mood**

**iv. Schizophrenic**

**v. Organic**

**vi. Personality**

**vii. Dissociative**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014);  
pgs.649-706

**Sources:**

- A Beautiful Mind video clips
- The Awakening video clips
- Sybil video clips
- *Sybil Exposed: A Look at Dissociative Identity Disorder*, from Psychiatric Times
- DSM 5

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Abnormal Psychology Presentations
- Abnormal Psychology mini research
- Diagnosing Winnie the Pooh characters

**Essential questions:**

1. How do psychologists define, diagnose, evaluate psychological disorders and how has it changed over time?

**XIII. Therapy-1.5 week 5-7%**

**p. Treatment Approaches**

**q. Modes of Therapy**

**r. Community and Preventative Approaches**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014); pgs.707-752

**Sources:**

- *Choosing Your Psychotherapist*, 40 Case Studies
- *Group Therapy, Persons with Schizophrenia*, Psychology in Context

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Therapy jigsaw
- Analysis of therapy within the media
- Therapy role-play

**Essential questions:**

1. What are the approaches psychologists take in the treatment of psychological disorders and how has it changed over time?

**XIV. Social Psychology-3 weeks 8-10% 3/18-4/10**

**s. Group Dynamics**

**t. Attribution Processes**

**u. Interpersonal Perceptions**

**v. Conformity, Compliance, Obedience**

**w. Attitudes and Attitude Change**

**x. Organizational Behavior**

**y. Aggression/Anti-Social Behavior**

**z. Cultural Influences**

**Text:**

David G. Myers, Psychology for AP, second edition (New York: Worth, 2014); pgs.753-820

**Sources:**

- Kitty Genovese Case Study
- *A Prison By Any Other Name*, 40 Case Study
- *Black Men in Public Space*, Psychology in Context
- Mean Girls video clip

**Projects/Assignments:**

- Mean Girls application of terms
- Violation of a social norms
- Asch simulation
- Application of the fundamental attribution error scenarios

**Essential questions:**

1. How do we think about and explain our own and others behaviors, and how does that impact our perceptions on individuals in society?