



AP[®] Psychology

Syllabus

Course Description

The AP Psychology Course will introduce students to the systematic study of the behavior and mental processes of human means and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles and phenomena associated with the major fields within psychology. Students will also learn about the methods psychologists use in their science and practice. The major aim of this course is to provide each student with a learning experience equivalent to that obtained in most introductory college psychology courses. In addition, this course has been designed to help students successfully achieve a passing score on the AP Exam.

Course Objectives

Students should be able to demonstrate:

- Comprehension of psychology as a broad field of study and the ability to identify the major subdivisions in the field as they facilitate our understanding of human behavior, cooperation, and conflict in human relationships.
- Understanding of the main theories and concepts of psychology such as the biological perspective, the psychosocial theories and the scientific method.
- An increased understanding of the self and others and how the self functions in an Interdependent world.
- An analysis of the nature of being human and examining relationships, both individually and collectively, from a psychological point of view.

Course Materials

Course Textbook and Resources:

- Weiten, Wayne. (2006) Themes and Variations, 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Hock, Roger, ed. (2005) 40 Studies, 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Discovering Psychology, Updated Edition. Annenberg Media/Learner.org
- <http://www.learner.org/resources/series138.html>
- The Brain: Teaching Modules. Updated Edition, Annenberg/Lerner
- <http://www.learner.org/resources/series142.html>

Course Outline

Unit 1 - History and Research Methods (2 weeks)

Video lectures and supporting activities:

What is Psychology? Psychological Research Methods and Statistics

- I. History
 - A. History and Philosophy of Psychology
 - B. Different Approaches
- II. Research Methods
 - A. Scientific Approach to Behavior
 - 1. Goals of Scientific Enterprise
 - 2. Scientific Method
 - B. Experimental Research
 - 1. Independent and Dependent Variables
 - 2. Experimental and Control Groups
 - 3. Extraneous Variables
 - 4. Designing Experiments
 - C. Descriptive/Correlation Research
 - 1. Naturalistic/Observational Studies
 - 2. Case Studies
 - 3. Survey
 - D. Statistics
 - 1. Central Tendency
 - 2. Measure of Variation
 - 3. Significance
 - 4. Correlation
- III. Ethics in Research
 - A. Human
 - B. Animal

Unit 2 - Biological Bases of Behavior (3 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Your Mind and Body

- I. Nervous System Communication
 - A. Neural Impulse
 - B. Neural Synapse
 - C. Neurotransmitters
- II. Organization of the Nervous System
 - A. Peripheral Nervous System
 - B. Central Nervous System
- III. Brain Research
 - A. Neuroscience
 - B. Research Methods and Measurement
 - C. Recent Findings in Neural Development
- IV. Brain and Behavior
 - A. Hindbrain
 - B. Midbrain
 - C. Forebrain
 - D. Plasticity of the Brain
- V. Cerebral Laterality
 - A. Split-brain Research
 - B. Hemispheric Specialization
- VI. Endocrine System
 - A. Glands
 - B. Hormones
- VII. Heredity and Behavior
 - A. Genetics
 - B. Hereditary Influence
 - C. Hereditary and Environment
- VIII. Evolutionary Bases of Behavior
 - A. Evolutionary Theory
 - B. Adaptive Traits
- IX. The Teen Brain
 - A. Recent Research on Teen Brain Development
 - B. Teen Brain and Behavior

Unit 3 - Sense and Perception (2 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Sensation and Perception

I. Basic Concepts and Issues

A. Basic Concepts and Issues

1. Sensation vs. Perception
2. Thresholds
3. Just Noticeable Difference
4. Signal Detection Theory
5. Sensory Adaptation

B. Perception and Awareness

II. Senses

A. Sight

1. Parts of the eye
2. Vision and the brain
3. Color Vision Theories
4. Gestalt Principles
5. Depth and Processing Activity

B. Hearing

1. Parts of the ear
2. Place and Frequency Theories of Pitch
3. Deafness

C. Chemical Senses

1. Gustatory Sense
2. Olfactory Sense

D. Touch

E. Kinesthetic and Vestibular

Unit 4 - States of Consciousness (2 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Consciousness

- I. States of Consciousness
- II. Biological Rhythms
 - A. Circadian Rhythms
- III. Sleep and Waking Cycles
 - A. Stages of Sleep
 - B. Neural Basis of Sleep
 - C. Sleep Deprivation
 - D. Sleep Disorders
 - E. Evolution and Sleep
- IV. Dreams
 - A. Content of Dreams
 - B. Theory of Dreams
- V. Hypnosis
 - A. Theories of Hypnosis
 - B. Susceptibility
- VI. Altered Consciousness and Drugs
 - A. Types of Drugs and their Effects
 - B. Drug Dependency
 - C. Neurotransmitters

Unit 5 - Learning (2 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Learning and Cognition-Learning

I. Classical Conditioning

- A. Pavlov
- B. Watson
- C. Terminology
- D. Research and Procedure

II. Operant Conditioning

- A. Thorndike's Law
- B. Skinner's Research
- C. Processes and Procedure
- D. Schedules and Reinforcement
- E. Reinforcement
- F. Punishment

III. Observational Learning

- A. Processes
- B. Acquisition vs. Performance
- C. Bandura's Research
- D. Child Abuse
- E. Media Violence Controversy

IV. Behavior Modification

V. Classical Conditioning and Persuasion in Advertising

Unit 6 - Cognition (3 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Learning and Cognition-Memory, Thinking and Language

I. Memory

A. Levels of Processing

1. Encoding
2. Storage
3. Retrieval

B. Types of Memory

1. Sensory
2. Working/Short Term Memory
3. Long Term Memory

C. Forgetting

1. Ebbinghaus
2. Retrograde vs. Anterograde Interference
3. Repressed Memories
4. Memory Disorders (i.e. Amnesia)

D. Physiology of Memory

E. Systems and Types of Memory

1. Explicit vs. Implicit
2. Semantic vs. Episodic
3. Declarative vs. Procedural

II. Language

A. Structure

B. Language Development

C. Theories of Language Acquisition

D. Culture and Language

III. Thought

A. Problem Solving

1. Types of Problems
2. Barriers to Problem Solving

B. Decision Making

1. Heuristics
2. Algorithms

Unit 7 - Testing and Individual Differences (2 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Learning and Cognition-Intelligence

- I. Concepts in Psychological Testing
 - A. Standardization and Norms
 - B. Reliability and Validity
- II. Types of Tests
 - A. Aptitude
 - B. Achievement
- III. Assessments of Intelligence Testing
 - A. Testing Standardization
 - B. Validity and Reliability
 - C. Measurement and Statistics
 - D. Cultural Controversies
- IV. Extremes of Intelligence
 - A. Mental Retardation
 - B. Giftedness
- V. Heredity and Environment in Intelligence
 - A. Evidence for Hereditary Influence
 - B. Evidence for Environmental Influence
 - C. Cultural Differences and IQ Scores

Unit 8 - Motivation and Emotion (1 week)

Video lecture and supporting activities:

Personality and Individuality-Motivation and Emotion

Health and Adjustment-Stress and Health

I. Motivational Theories and Concepts

- A. Drive Theories
- B. Incentive Theories
- C. Maslow's Hierarchy

II. Motivation of Hunger and Eating

- A. Biological Factors in the Regulation of Hunger
- B. Psychological and Cultural Influences on Hunger

III. Sexual Motivation and Behavior

- A. Determinants of Sexual Desire
- B. Evolutionary Analysis of Sexual Behavior
- C. Human Sexual Response
- D. Sex Sexuality and Sexual Orientation

IV. Theories of Emotion

- A. Elements of Emotional Experience
 - 1. Cognitive Component
 - 2. Physiological Component
 - 3. Behavioral Component
- B. Theories
 - 1. James Lange Theory
 - 2. Cannon Bard Theory
 - 3. Schacter's Two Factor Theory

V. Theories of Stress

- A. Types of Stress
- B. Effects of Stress
- C. Adaptation to Stress

Unit 9 - Developmental Psychology (3 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Life Span Development

- I. Prenatal Development Stages
 - A. Environmental Factors
- II. Childhood
 - A. Motor Development
 - B. Differences in Temperament
 - C. Emotional Development
 - D. Personality Development
 - E. Cognitive Development
- III. Adolescence
 - A. Physiological and Neural Changes
 - B. Reality vs. Perception of Teen Years
 - C. Search for Identity
 - D. Current Research on the Teen Brain (NIMH)
- IV. Adulthood
 - A. Personality Development
 - B. Transitions in Family Life
 - C. Aging and Physical Changes
 - D. Aging and Cognitive Changes

Unit 10 - Personality (2 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Personality and Individuality-Theories of Personality, Psychological Tests

I. Personality Theories and Approaches

- A. Humanistic
- B. Behaviorist
- C. Social Cognitive
- D. Biological
- E. Trait Theory

II. Assessment

- A. Self report
- B. Projective Tests
- C. Behavioral Tests

III. Self concept and Self esteem

- A. Individualism
- B. Collectivism

Unit 11 - Abnormal Psychology (3 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Health and Adjustment-Psychological Disorders, Therapy and Change

I. Abnormal Psychology

- A. Abnormal Behaviors
- B. DSMIV
- C. Anxiety Disorders
- D. Somatoform Disorders
- E. Dissociative Disorders
- F. Mood Disorders
- G. Schizophrenic Disorders
- H. Personality Disorders
- I. Culture and Pathology
- J. Disorders and the Law

II. Treatment of Abnormal Psychology

- A. Treatment Process and Approaches
- B. Insight Therapies
- C. Behavior Therapies
- D. Biomedical Therapies
- E. Current Trends and Issues in Treatment

Unit 12 - Social Psychology (3 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Social Psychology

I. Impression Person Perceptions

- A. Physical Appearance
- B. Cognitive Schemas
- C. Stereotypes and Prejudice

II. Attribution

- A. Internal vs. External Attribution
- B. Biases
- C. Culture

III. Relationships

- A. Liking and loving
- B. Attraction
- C. Culture

IV. Attitudes

- A. Behaviors
- B. Change
- C. Persuasion

V. Conformity and Obedience

- A. Asch
- B. Milgram

VI. Groups

- A. Behaviors
- B. Groupthink
- C. Bystander Effect
- D. Decision making

VII. Altruistic Behavior

- A. Social Exchange
- B. Social Norms

Unit 13 - AP Exam Review (3 weeks)

Video lecture and supporting activities: Cumulative Exam

Additional Course Information

Projects: 25% of the overall grade

The students will be given several projects throughout the year. The first project deals with the unit on consciousness. The students will be asked to record their dreams for a week and then will spend two days in the library doing research on their dreams using dream analysis books. Students will then be asked to write a five page APA style paper.

The second project will consist of the students being assigned one chapter to create notes on key objectives and people. They will also be asked to generate a quiz pertaining to that chapter that they can administer to their peers. They will also be asked to present this information and submit a recording for evaluation. This project will be done during the time that the students spend reviewing and preparing for their AP exam.

A third project will consist of designing an experiment, labeling all components such as variables and the various control and experimental groups. They will then submit their proposal as if it were for review by the IRB as well as evaluate an experiment of another class mate. Finally, they will write a one page review and summary as if the experiment were carried out and ties to other studies and findings within Psychology.

Weekly Activities: 25% of their overall grade

Weekly Activities are assigned for completion either daily or multiple times throughout the week. Some examples of weekly activities include: sensation labs to test their five senses, stories; write-ups from 40 Studies That Changed Psychology; taking key personality tests; and writing about their scores.

Notes/Journals: 20% of their overall grade

Students can expect nightly journal questions over material presented in online content and class lectures. They will be expected to read set pages from the textbook chapter and then outline that reading. Their notes will be collected and graded, at a time coinciding with each chapter test.

Tests: 20% of their overall grade

Students will have a test after each unit. The test will consist of 50+ multiple questions that are formatted to the AP style of questions. Questions will be taken from the textbook test resource and AP practice review books such as Barron's and Maitland's.

Essays: 10% of their overall grade

Students will periodically throughout the year be given sample essay questions from past AP exams. They will learn how to write according to the AP psychology format and how to score their essays.

Grading Scale:

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-79
- D 60-69
- F 59 and below