

FALL 2026: AP PSYCHOLOGY - SYLLABUS

Mr. Cummings
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Room _____

*"The only normal people are the ones you don't know very well."
~ [Alfred Adler](#) (1870-1937), Austrian psychologist.*

Course Description - Psychology is the science that studies behavior and mental processes. Through the study of Psychology, students will acquire an understanding and appreciation for human behavior, behavior interaction, and the progressive development of individuals. This will better prepare the student to understand their behavior and the behavior of others.

Class Format: Lectures, discussion, group and individual projects, issue analysis, critical writing, cooperative learning, panels, journals, case studies, debates, tests, and quizzes. *Unlike most studies, active and consistent participation is a MUST in this course.*

Course Texts:

- Laura Brandt: *Multiple-Choice and Free-Response Questions in Preparation for the AP Psychology Examination* (4th Edition) - Paperback, 2019.
- Michael Sullivan, Michael Hamilton: *Multiple-Choice and Free-Response Questions in Preparation for the AP Psychology Examination* (3rd Edition) - Paperback, 2011
- David G. Myers: *Psychology for AP*, 2nd Edition, 2014 - [Online PDF](#)
- Roger R. Hock - *Forty Studies That Changed Psychology: Explorations into the History of Psychological Research* - [Online PDF](#)

Reading Expectations - It is not feasible to address every single concept in class; therefore, to be prepared for the AP Exam, the responsibility falls significantly on the student as well as the teacher.

- Therefore, in each unit, you will be assigned a chapter reading from our textbook, *AP Psychology* (Brandt, 4th Edition). Take notes on each chapter's associated graphic organizer!

Coursework:

Students will learn about the following content areas:

- Psychology as a Science,
- Biological Underpinnings of Psychology,
- Sensation and Perception,
- Learning,
- Cognitive Processes,
- Human Development,
- Motivation, Emotion, and Personality,
- Clinical Psychology,
- and Social Psychology.

Course Content and Units of Instruction - As per AP's Course and Exam Description ([CED](#))

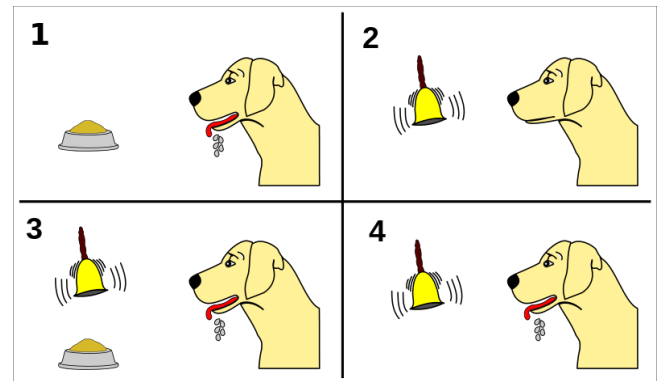
Unit 1: Biological Bases of Behavior (15-25%)

Unit 2: Cognition (15-25%)

Unit 3: Development and Learning (15-25%)

Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality (15-25%)

Unit 5: Mental and Physical Health (15-25%)



JTH Fall 2026 AP Psychology Unit Progressions, Pacing, and Weights on AP Exam: *(Subject to evolve throughout semester)*

AP Psychology Semester Pacing (~87 Days)

Unit 1 – Biological Bases of Behavior

CED weight: 15–25%

🕒 ~18 days

- Day 1: Intro to Psychology / course overview; Science Practices preview (concept application, research methods & design, data interpretation, argumentation — embedded throughout the course)
- Research methods & statistics: IV/DV, controls, ethics, correlation vs. causation, descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, SD)
- Nervous and endocrine systems, neurons, neurotransmitters
- Brain structures, neuroimaging, case studies (Phineas Gage, split-brain research)
- Genetics and the interaction of heredity and environment; twin/adoption studies
- States of consciousness: sleep, dreams, drugs
- Sensation & perception: thresholds, signal detection theory, vision and audition, other senses, Gestalt principles, depth, perceptual set, illusions
- Unit practice + Assessment

Unit 2 – Cognition

CED weight: 15–25%

🕒 ~15 days

- Memory: encoding, storage, retrieval, forgetting, amnesia, interference
- Thinking, problem solving, and decision making: heuristics and biases
- Language: acquisition and structure
- Intelligence: theories, testing, reliability/validity, bias, multiple intelligences
- Practice FRQs on memory and intelligence
- Unit practice + Assessment

Unit 3 – Development and Learning

CED weight: 15–25%

🕒 ~18 days

- Prenatal development and newborn reflexes
- Cognitive development (Piaget, Vygotsky)
- Social/emotional development (Erikson, Harlow, Ainsworth, parenting styles)
- Moral development (Kohlberg, Gilligan); adolescence and adulthood
- Classical conditioning (Pavlov, Watson, Little Albert)
- Operant conditioning (Skinner, reinforcement/punishment schedules)
- Observational learning (Bandura) and applications to behavior modification
- Applied practice + Assessment

Unit 4 – Social Psychology and Personality

CED weight: 15–25%

🕒 ~16 days

- Attribution theory, fundamental attribution error, attitudes and persuasion
- Conformity and obedience (Asch, Milgram, Zimbardo); group processes (polarization, social loafing, bystander effect)
- Prejudice, aggression, altruism, and attraction
- Motivation: drives, incentives, hunger and sexual motivation
- Emotion: theories (James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Schachter-Singer), physiology, expression
- Personality: Freud, trait theories, social-cognitive, humanistic, assessments
- Unit practice + Assessment

Unit 5 – Mental and Physical Health

CED weight: 15–25%

🕒 ~13 days

- Stress and health psychology: general adaptation syndrome, coping, positive psychology
- Defining abnormality: DSM-5-TR criteria, biopsychosocial and diathesis-stress models
- Major disorder categories (anxiety, mood, schizophrenia, personality, neurodevelopmental)
- Treatment approaches: biomedical, psychodynamic, CBT, humanistic, group/family therapy
- Treatment evaluation and ethics
- Practice FRQs
- Unit practice + Assessment

Review & Exam Prep

🕒 ~7–8 days

- Practice multiple-choice exams (timed)
- FRQ practice with rubric debriefs
- Thematic review games (Jeopardy, Kahoot, etc.)

- Student-led review presentations
- Final comprehensive review day before the exam

Important Days & Events:

- **AP Psychology Exam** - Friday, May 14, 2027 (Session 2, 12:00 p.m. local time for most schools)
 - Start Reviewing - April, 2027
 - After-School Review Sessions - TBD
 - Saturday 'Psych + Pizza' Reviews - TBD
- **Midterm** - October 29, 2026 (estimated — confirm against the official 2026–2027 NHCS/JTH calendar) – Timed assessment half the size and scope of the AP Exam: 50 multiple-choice (35 min) + 1 FRQ (25 min).
- **Final** - January 15, 2027 (estimated — confirm against the official 2026–2027 NHCS/JTH calendar) – Timed assessment matching the AP Exam: 100 multiple-choice (70 min) + 2 FRQs (50 min). Could take place over two days (Jan 14–15).

More Information About the AP Psychology Exam - Friday, May 14, 2027, 12:00 p.m. local time (2 hours, 40 minutes) - Administered digitally in Bluebook

- The AP Psychology Exam assesses students' understanding of the skills and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 2 hours and 40 minutes long and includes 75 multiple-choice questions and 2 free-response questions, each weighted equally. The details of the exam, including exam weighting and timing, can be found below:
 - **Section 1 = Multiple-Choice Questions - 90 minutes**
 - 75 questions with 4 multiple-choice answer choices
 - Questions in random order, not by unit
 - 90 minutes total (72 seconds per question)
 - Write down the end time as your start
 - $\frac{2}{3}$ of the overall exam credit
 - **Section 2 = Free-Response Questions - 70 Minutes**
 - Two equally-weighted FRQs
 - **Question 1: Article Analysis Question (AAQ)** - The Article Analysis Question (AAQ) is the first of two FRQs in Section II. It presents students with one summarized, peer-reviewed source.
 - Students will identify research design elements (methodology, variables, and ethical guidelines) and interpret basic statistics used in the source.
 - Students will explain how well the findings can be generalized and how the article supports or refutes the psychological concept being explored in the study.
 - Students will have 25 minutes, including 10 minutes of reading time, to complete this task.
 - **Question 2: Evidence-Based Question (EBQ)** - The Evidence-Based Question (EBQ) is the second of two FRQs in Section II. It presents students with three summarized, peer-reviewed studies on a common topic.
 - Students will make a claim about the topic and use evidence from the sources to support their claim.
 - Students will also explain why the evidence supports the claim and apply related content from AP Psychology to help justify their response.
 - Students will have 45 minutes, including 15 minutes of reading time, to complete this task.
 - 70 minutes (35 minutes/question)
 - $\frac{1}{3}$ of the overall exam credit
 - **Scoring Scale**
 - **5 = Extremely well qualified**
 - **4 = Well qualified**
 - **3 = Qualified**
 - 2 = Possibly qualified
 - 1 = not qualified

Samples of Course Activities:

- **Course Activity 1:** Using a split-brain patient research, students will identify the stages through which a visual stimulus is recognized in the human brain. (Skill 1)
- **Course Activity 2:** Provide students with various scenarios of physiological changes in the body related to the endocrine system. Students should read the scenario, identify the hormone, and explain why the change is occurring. At the end of the unit, or after Topic 2.3 of the AP Course and Exam Description, have students compare and contrast neurotransmitters and hormones. (Skill 1)
- **Course Activity 3:** Activity involves providing students with graphed data. Students will interpret data related to a unit topic, using the data to develop a strategy for application to resolve a problem or address a stated situation. (Skill 2)
- **Course Activity 4:** Students will be presented with hypotheses from a research study and must articulate an appropriate analytic strategy to test those hypotheses. (Skill 2)
- **Course Activity 5:** Students are provided with a research study related to a specific unit topic. Students are required to analyze the report and then explain the concept and apply the concept through a description of behavior, theories, and/or perspective specific to a situation. (Skill 3)
- **Course Activity 6:** Students will generate operational definitions of various psychological constructs throughout the course. Students are asked to analyze research studies within a specific content area. (Skill 3)

Sample of Course Activities re: Science Practices:

SP4 Activity: Experimental Design and Argumentation in Psychological Research

In this activity, students will engage in a debate-style discussion where they propose a claim about the effectiveness of a psychological intervention (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy for anxiety). Students will be divided into two groups: one supporting the intervention's effectiveness and one refuting it.

Steps:

1. **Research Phase:** Students will begin by reviewing a selection of empirical studies on the chosen psychological intervention, focusing on variables such as the population studied, research methods, and outcomes.
2. **Claim Proposal:** Each group will develop a claim either supporting or refuting the intervention's effectiveness based on the research they've reviewed.
3. **Argumentation:**
 - o The supporting group will present evidence from the studies to argue that the intervention is effective.
 - o The refuting group will present counter-evidence, emphasizing study limitations or conflicting findings.
4. **Class Discussion:** Following the debate, the class will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each argument. Students will evaluate the validity of the evidence and how it supports or refutes each claim.

Learning Objective: Students will use evidence from empirical research to propose and defend claims or to refute existing claims, developing their argumentation skills within the context of psychological science.

Supplies

- A. One binder that includes sections for notes, homework, handouts, returned assignments, and warm-up
- B. Writing utensils (blue or black pens and pencils)
- C. Loose-leaf paper
- D. Colored pencils

Evaluation

ASSIGNMENT TYPES and VALUES	GRADING SCALE	TERM WEIGHTS
A. Minor Assignment – 30% (Classwork, HW, Warm Ups)	A (100-90) B (89-80) C (79-70)	Quarter 1 - 40% Quarter 2 - 40% Final Exam - 20%
B. Major Assignment – 70% (Tests, Quizzes, Projects)	D (69-60) F (59-0)	

Attendance and Make-up Work

In the student's absence, each student is responsible for making up their own work. If you are absent, the day you return, you are to turn in the work from the last day you were present. In an absence, a student can make up work under the conditions listed in the *JTH Student/Parent Handbook*.

Each student is responsible for getting his or her missed assignments from the instructor.

Late Work

Late homework will be accepted until the unit test from which it was assigned. Late work will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late.

Website

Many of our assignments, vocabulary lists, and handouts will be available on the “Weebly” website from a home or school computer with internet access. <https://tcsocialstudies.weebly.com>

Basic Expectations

Concerning the learning environment and the advancement of each day’s lesson, students are expected to meet the JTH Basic Expectations:

1. Be present and on time.
2. Be prepared for and engaged in learning.
3. Be a person of character.
4. Be safe and comply with JTH and NHCS policies.

Success Strategies

For a successful completion of the course, students should:

1. Take notes from lectures and assigned readings.
2. Ask course-related questions.
3. Turn in assignments on time.
4. Rationally discuss issues.
5. Seek extra help when needed.

Important Dates

See the course calendar found on my Weebly Important Documents tab.



Cell Phone & Device Policy (Per New NC Law)

In alignment with North Carolina’s new state law on student devices, **all wireless communication devices—including cell phones—must be turned off and put away during instructional time.** This includes class lectures, discussions, group work, activities, and assessments. Devices should not be visible on desks or in laps.



Permitted Exceptions

- **Teacher-approved use** for specific instructional purposes.
- **IEP or 504 plan accommodations** that require technology access.
- **Health-related needs** (e.g., monitoring medical devices, communication with parents in emergencies).
- **Emergencies** as directed by staff.



Not Permitted

- Texting, calling, or using apps/social media during class.
- Having earbuds/AirPods in during instruction unless specifically approved.



Consequences

Violations of this policy will result in:

1. **First offense** – Verbal warning.
2. **Second offense** – Device confiscation until the end of class.
3. **Repeated offenses** – Referral in accordance with school discipline policy and parent/guardian contact.



Why This Policy Matters

This policy is designed to:

- Protect focus and attention during class time.
- Support a healthy learning environment, free from digital distraction.
- Ensure fairness by applying the same expectations across all classrooms.

Webpage

<https://tcsocialstudies.weebly.com>

Remind - text @appjth to the number 81010

Text # - 81010

Text Field - @appjth

Thank you for your time and attention. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Mr. Cummings