

AP Psychology

Ms. Pizzo

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Course Description

The purpose of AP Psychology is to introduce the study of the mind and behavior from a scientific perspective. This course covers several schools of thought, (or several different techniques as to explaining why we do the things we do and think the things we think), including these 6 major perspectives: biological, behavioral, cognitive, sociological, psychoanalytical, and humanistic (and also others). These perspectives do not necessarily oppose each other, and they may not be mutually exclusive. They simply offer different explanations for the same behavior (meaning, they are all correct).

For example, let's say your friend Anna is an outgoing person. If you wanted to explain this behavior from a biological perspective, you might say that being outgoing is in Anna's genes (she was born that way). If you wanted to explain Anna's personality through a behavioral perspective, you might say that Anna learned to become an outgoing person through her experiences.

So this is what psychology is! In order to study and understand the scientific perspectives, students must also learn about the ethics and research methods psychologists use in their science and practice.

What is expected of me?

Students will produce original work based on their own research. Class participation is vital for this discussion-based course. Students will have frequent short quizzes, complete take home essays, complete class projects and research, and take rigorous tests covering large amounts of material. The aim of our AP psychology course is to provide a learning experience equivalent to that obtained in most college introductory psychology courses. Students successfully completing this course will be prepared for the College Board's Advanced Placement Psychology Exam.

The course is **demanding and fast-paced**, requiring students to work independently and thoroughly both during and **especially outside of class**. A large amount of technical reading, self-guided note taking and self-assessment is required. Writing is also an essential component of the course, as students will write free-response questions (Article Analysis Questions [AAQs] and Evidence-Based Questions [EBQs]), which is aimed to connect both scientific content and real-life situations to psychological concepts.

Class time will be devoted to reinforcing concepts, discussions, testing, writing and designing of experiments. Hand-outs and videos will be employed to help facilitate greater understanding of difficult topics. It is imperative that students possess good note-taking skills. Students, who are self-motivated, responsible, possess strong reading comprehension and writing skills and have an interest in psychology will succeed with flying colors. It is also **EXTREMELY** important that students **minimize absences** from class!

Course Objectives

- Students analyze and discuss the major studies in psychology, both past and present.
- Students analyze the different perspectives of psychology and apply their theories to both behavior and mental processes.
- Students will be familiar with all of the major figures in psychology and compare and contrast their scientific findings and applications of their theories to real life.

Course Outline

1. Approaches and Science Practices

- **Approaches of psychology: Biological, humanistic, psychodynamic, cognitive, sociocultural, and behavioral**
- **Research Methods:** experiments, types of studies
- Descriptive Statistics
- Inferential Statistics
- Statistics - objectivity, validity, and reliability
- Statistics and its Application: descriptive, inferential, correlation
- Ethics in Research: human and animal

2. Biological Bases of Behavior

- Neuroanatomy and Neurotransmitters: parts of the neuron, types and functions of neurotransmitters
- Central and Peripheral Nervous System: parts and functions of each
- Components of the Brain: parts and lobes, language areas
- Methods of Studying the Brain: EEG, CAT, MRI, PET, fMRI, accidents
- Endocrine System: glands and their functions
- Heritability
- States of Consciousness
- Levels of Consciousness: unconscious, preconscious, etc.
- Sleep Cycle: sleep waves, REM
- Sleep Disorders
- Dreams: manifest and latent content
- Altered States of Consciousness: sleep, intoxication

3. Sensation and Perception

- Parts of the Eye and Their Functions: parts and functions of the eye
- Process of Transduction: how information is taken from the eye to the brain
- Theories of Color Vision: Tri Chromatic Theory, Opponent Process Theory
- Auditory Functioning and Components of the Ear: parts and functions of the ear
- Pitch Theories: Frequency and Place Theories
- Touch and Pain: Gate Control Theory, different skin sensors
- The Chemical Senses: Taste and Smell
- Body Position Senses: Vestibular and Kinesthetic
- Perception and Perceptual Theories: false positives and negatives
- Gestalt and the Principles of Visual Perception: Law of Pragnanz, monocular and binocular cues

4. Cognition

- Models of Memory: Three Box, Levels of Processing
- Retrieval and Forgetting: interference
- Problem Solving and Errors in Judgment: algorithms and heuristics
- Creativity
- Language and Development
- Language Theories
- Testing and Individual Differences
- Standardization and Norms
- Reliability and Validity
- Types of Tests
- Theories of Intelligence
- EQ v IQ: formula for calculating IQ
- Intelligence Tests: bias in testing
- Nature v Nurture in Testing

5. Learning

- Classical Conditioning and Pavlov's Experiment
- Little Albert and the Watson Experiment
- Timing Schedules
- Learned Taste Aversion/Garcia Effect
- Edward Thorndike: Law of Effect
- Operant Conditioning and Skinner's Experiment
- Punishment and Reinforcement
- Reinforcement Schedules: fixed and variable
- Cognitive Learning and Bandura's Bobo Doll Experiment
- Learned Helplessness and Seligman's Experiment

6. Developmental Psychology

- Genetic Influences and the Critical Period: Study of Genie, video "*Secrets of a Wild Child*"
- Nature v Nurture, Continuity v Discontinuity, Stability v Change
- Motor Development: reflexes
- Attachment Theories and Parenting Styles: Ainsworth and Harlow's Experiment
- Erikson's Psychosocial Stage Theory
- Freud's Psychosexual Stage Theory
- Piaget's Cognitive Development: Experiment on Object Permanence
- Moral Development: Kohlberg's Study with the Heinz Dilemma
- Gender and Development

7. Motivation, Emotion, and Personality

- Theories of Motivation: Drive Reduction, Arousal Theory, Incentive Theory, Yerkes-Dodson Law
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Physiological Motives: hunger, set point, biological bases of behavior
- Social Motivation: Achievement Motivation, Extrinsic/Intrinsic Motivation
- Management Theories X and Y
- Social Conflict
- Theories of Emotion: James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Two Factor Theory
- Stress and the General Adaptation Theory: Hans Selye

8. Social Psychology and Personality

- Attitudes and Attitude Formation: mere exposure effect, cognitive dissonance
- Attribution and Attributional Biases
- Conformity and Asch's Study
- Social Norms and Compliance Strategies
- Obedience and Milgram's Study
- Group Dynamics
- Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination
- Aggression
- Attraction
- Altruism and Darley and Latane's Study
- Pygmalion Effect and Rosenthal's Experiment
- Freud's Psychosexual Stage Theory
- Id, Ego, Superego
- Psychoanalytic Perspective and Defense Mechanisms
- Psychodynamic Theories: Jung, Adler
- Trait and Biological Theorists: Eysenck, Cattell, Allport, Sheldon
- Social-Cognitive Theories: Bandura, Kelly and Rotter
- Humanistic Theories: Maslow and Rogers

- Assessment Techniques: projective tests, MMPI
- Halo Effect

9. **Clinical Psychology**

- Four Criteria of Abnormality: atypicality, maladaptivity, disturbing to others, irrational
- Six Main Categories of Disorders: Anxiety, Dissociative, Somatoform, Mood, Personality and Schizophrenia
- Application of Contemporary Perspectives to the Disorders
- Miscellaneous Disorders: Paraphilias, Eating Disorders, Fetishism
- Historical Methods of Therapy: Trephination, the Float Test
- Major Approaches to Therapy Based on the Contemporary Perspectives
- Determinism vs. Free Will
- Effective Therapy or Placebo Effect?
- Different Types of Therapists and Alternative Therapies: Light Therapy, psychiatrists, clinical and counseling psychologists

Assessment Practices

1. Chapter Tests - which use Multiple choice and writing portions
2. Flashback Quizzes – based on material from past chapters and quizzes
3. Practice essay writing - both as homework and group activities in class. Students write essays in a number of ways best suited for the AP exam. They take it home for homework, work in pairs in class, or work individually in class and have other students review and critique their essay answers.
4. Practice multiple choice, focusing on the POE process
5. Projects, either completely research based or using student generated experiments, keeping APA ethical guidelines in mind
6. Homework assignments other than essays are utilized, as well as in-class activities designed to apply the psychology concepts to real life situations and generate student interest and discussion.
7. Exit Slips based on what we learn during class discussion
8. Group and individual projects
9. **AP Exam date*** Friday, May 16th at 12pm**