

AP Psychology

Grade 11–12, Full Year, 5.00 credits



Course Description: This is a full year, intensive college level course in Psychology designed to prepare highly motivated students in Psychology to take the Advanced Placement test in May. Upon completion of the course the student should be able to demonstrate a solid background in the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of human beings. Specific areas of study include: consciousness and dreaming, biological bases of behavior, personality theory, mental illness, treatment, learning cognition and social psychology. The curriculum is guided by the College Board® standards for advanced placement. Students enrolled are expected to take the Advanced Placement Psychology exam in May.

[Link to DESE Curriculum Guide in English for other languages](#) [click here for translations](#)

Unit	Timeframe	Goals	Major Learning Experiences
Unit 0: Foundations of Psychology	Week 1-3 (Quarter 1)	● Explain the varied perspectives on Psychology ● Explore Descriptive Method, Experimental Method, and Correlational Method of research ● Review statistic and apply to Psychology research <i>Note: Some of Unit 0 will be addressed through a summer assignment</i>	Students will: ● Apply their knowledge of research to create a fictional research experiment
Unit 1: Biological Bases of Behavior	Week 4-10 (Quarter 1)	Part I: Heredity and Environment, The Nervous System, Neural Communication, and the Brain ● Compare the impact of heredity and environment on human behavior ● Develop a basic knowledge of the divisions of the Nervous System ● Explain the process of neural transmission ● Identify parts and functions of the brain	Students will: ● Differentiate between nature and nurture and their impact on behavior and mental process ● Trace the steps of neural communication

		Part 2: Sleep, Dreams, and Drugs • Explain what happens to the body and brain while in different sleep stages • Evaluate the various theories on Sleep and why we sleep • Compare and evaluate the theories on Dreaming • Explain the three major categories of Psychoactive drugs and their impact on the body and brain Part 3: Sensation • Discuss how each vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and kinesthetic sense function and impact human behavior and mental processes <i>Note: This unit has three major topics and each topic will be tested on separately</i>	• Compare the different theories on sleep and dreams • Summarize how each of the senses impact behavior and mental process
Unit 2: Cognition	Week 11-18 (Quarter 2)	Part 1: Perception • Describe factors that influence perceptions, such as, schemas, perceptual sets, Gestalt principles. • Understand attention and the processes that can interfere with it; cocktail party effect, inattention, change blindness • Discuss cues that are used in visual perception. Part 2: Thinking, Problem Solving, Judgments, & Decision Making • Understand the difference between schemas, concepts, and prototypes • Contrast Algorithms and Heuristics and apply to	Students will: • Analyze perceptions impact of behavior and mental process • Differentiate between perception and sensation • Apply knowledge of Thinking, Problem Solving, Judgments, & Decision Making to their own lives • Diagram the different types of memory

		everyday life • Explain obstacles to problem solving • Investigate concepts that influence our judgments and decision making Part 3: Memory and Forgetting • Describe the different types of memory; especially long term memory • Explain the neural process of making memories • Compare/Contrast the different theories on memory • Discuss the encoding, storage and retrieval process • Investigate the different causes of memory failure Part 4: Intelligence and Testing • Describe the history of intelligence theories and testing. • Discuss the construction of assessments and forms of assessments used to measure intelligence • Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative and evaluate them for issues in assessing intelligence • Explain achievement in relation to intelligence	• Identify what makes a good exam
Unit 3: Development and Learning	Week 19-24 (Quarter 3)	Part 1: Human Development, Gender and Sexual Orientation, and Language • Explain the physical developments and its impact on the behavioral and mental processes of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and	Students will: • Evaluate parenting styles and their impact on attachment

		adulthood • Explain the cognitive developments and its impact on the behavioral and mental processes of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood • Explain the social-emotional developments and its impact on the behavioral and mental processes of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood • Discuss sex and gender and the biological and social-cultural influences. • Explain the components/structure of language and how it develops in humans Part 2: Learning • Discuss the foundation on Classical Conditioning • Explain and Apply the process of Classical Conditioning to everyday life • Explain and apply the concepts of Operant Conditioning and their connection to the real world • Discuss observation /social learning and its application to our lives	• Differentiate between gender roles and gender norms. • Examine the developmental milestones of each stage of life • Diagram a classical conditioning scenario • Differentiate between the different schedules of reinforcement • Identify types of reinforcement and compare with punishment
Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality	Week 25-30 (Quarter 3)	Part 1: Social Psychology • Explain Explain how Attribution theory and Person perception applies to behavior and mental process • Discuss mere exposure effect, self-fulfilling prophecy, and social comparisons can influence attribution theory and person perception	Students will: • Apply Social Psychology to their own lives • Compare and contrast what a healthy

		● Explain the influences on attitude formation and attitude change ● Discuss the roots of prejudice ● Explain behavioral and mental process involved in social situations ● Discuss studies on conformity and obedience and apply it to real life(past and present) ● Describe how being a group can influence one's behavior and mental process. ● Apply altruism and bystander effect to one's own life Part 2: Personality, Motivation, and Emotion ● Compare and Contrast the Psychodynamic, Humanistic, Social-Cognitive, and Trait theories view on personality ● Examine the different theories on motivation and how they apply to behavior and mental process ● Discuss what motivates people to eat and belong ● Compare and contrast the theories on emotion ● Explain how culture influences emotion	personality is based on different theories ● Judge the the different emotion theories ● Understand what motivates their own actions and thoughts
Unit 5: Mental and Physical Health	Week 31-34 (Quarter 4)	Part 1: Health Psychology ● Discuss how health psychology examines and addresses the issues of physical health and wellness ● Describe how stress and stress reactions impacts behavior and mental processes Part 2: Disorders	Students will ● Examine how stress impacts their own lives ● Differentiate the different types of disorders ● Judge therapies for the effectiveness

		• Explain the meaning of “disordered” and how disorders are classified using the DSM 5 • Compare and contrast the different approaches/perspectives to defining psychological disorders • Describe the symptoms and causes of, neurodevelopmental disorders, schizophrenic spectrum disorders, depressive disorders, bipolar disorders, anxiety disorders, and other selected disorders Part 3: Therapy • Investigate research and trends in psychotherapy and biological therapies • Explain ethical concerns/principles of treatment of disorders • Describe and compare different forms of psychotherapies. • Explain and compare different forms of biological therapies.	
AP Exam	Week 34-35	• Students will choose to sit for the AP exam which will be administered during the first two weeks of May	Students will: • Apply their knowledge of basic psychology
Post AP Exam	Week 36	Final Project • Apply knowledge of AP Psychology to complete a final project that demonstrates their knowledge of selected areas of the course	Students will: • Produce a project displaying their knowledge of

		• The topic of project may vary from year to year	psychological concepts
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