

# AP Psychology

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Students have multiple reasons for taking this psychology class. This material should provide you with more class information in order to get the year off to a great start. More information on AP can be found at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

**Goals:** My goals for this class extend beyond the AP Psychology test. I want to model and help students attain many notetaking, reading, studying and writing skills that will help them have a successful and enjoyable college experience. I want students to understand the research process to help them evaluate information in their lives.

**Prerequisite:** Suggested 3.2 grade point average with strong English and biology grades.

**Course:** An introductory college course in psychology is generally one semester in length, with some variation among colleges. The Advanced Placement course in psychology at Fort Atkinson High School follows a two semester college curriculum. The aim is to provide the student with a learning experience equivalent to that obtained in most college introductory psychology courses. Course is intended for preparation of the AP Psychology Exam.

**Content:** This course introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students will be exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. Students will learn the methods psychologists use to explore the processes involved in normal and abnormal perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions. [CR 16]

**Textbook:** *Psychology, Seventh Edition* by David G. Meyers and *Psychology: Themes and Variations, Fifth Edition* by Wayne Weiten.

**Activities:** Students will design, implement, and critique psychological experiments. Other activities include related journal readings, brain dissections, and class experiments. [CR 16]

**The AP Exam:** The exam is approximately two hours long and is intended to cover an introductory college course in psychology. It includes a 70-minute multiple-choice section, and a 50-minute free-response section. The multiple-choice section accounts for two-thirds of the exam grade and the free-response section for the remaining one-third.

Multiple-Choice is designed to assess the breadth of a student's knowledge. The questions cover the 13 areas of scientific psychology covered in the course. In some questions, students are asked to demonstrate their understanding of a psychological term. In others, they are asked to apply concepts from a particular psychological theory, or to identify the theoretical framework with which of a given explanation. Other questions are designed to assess general understanding of the scientific method as well as knowledge of findings from major research studies or areas of study.

In the free-response section, students are asked to answer two essay questions. The questions may require them to analyze and evaluate psychological constructs and, more generally, theoretical perspectives. They are expected to use their analytical and organizational skills to formulate cogent answers in writing their essays.

**Grading:** Students will work throughout the year both independently and in groups on research projects of varying types and topics, culminating in a presentation near the end of the year. [CR 16] All tests are cumulative. The class is heavily weighted on tests to better prepare students for the AP exam. Grading scale is as follows: **100%-93%=A; 92%-90%=A-; 89%-87% = B+; 86%-83%=B; 82%-80%=B-; 79%-77%=C+; 76%-73%=C; 72%-70%=C-; 69%-67%=D+; 66%-63%=D; 62%-60%=D-; less than 60%=F.**

**Course Scope and Sequence:** The first unit of the course is on research methods. Reference is made back to the terminology as studies are discussed in each unit. [CR 15] Relevant sections of Hock, Roger, *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology: Explorations into the History of Psychological Research* 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Prentice Hall, 2004), PsychInfo, and the APA's Monitor on Psychology are used as an additional resource. Students must summarize and correctly identify the research methodology used in studies covered throughout the course. [CR 16]

**Instructor's Pet Peeves:** Cheating is inappropriate in any situation. It is an indicator of one's integrity and reputation. Therefore, the consequence is severe. You will receive a F for the course if you participate in this activity. I strongly encourage positive participation in class through active listening, positive comments, and active participation.

## **Course Plan: First Semester (Chapter references are to *Psychology, Seventh Edition* by David G. Meyers)**

**Unit 1—History, Approaches, and Research Methodology (Prologue and Chapter 1)**  
**[CR 1 & 2]**

**Essential Questions:**

How do we study human and animal behavior?

How has psychology changed the study of human and animal behavior?  
How do the different perspectives in psychology compare and contrast?  
Who were the important people in the formation of psychology as a science?  
How do psychologists use the scientific method to study behavior and mental processes?  
Which methods of research are appropriate for the study of different behaviors?  
How do psychologists draw appropriate conclusions about behavior?  
How do psychologists make ethical decisions about researching behavior with human and animal subjects?

### **History, Approaches, and Research Methodology Unit Objectives**

- Trace the historical and philosophical development of psychology as a science.
- Describe how the different perspectives explore and explain human behavior.
- Identify famous psychologists and describe their contributions to the discipline.
- Explore different career options for people who earn degrees in psychology.
- Discuss the advantage and disadvantages of different research methods (case study, naturalistic observation, survey, and experimental research).
- Evaluate why correlational research does not yield causal conclusions.
- Identify the elements of an experiment. [CR16]
- Apply elements of an experiment to different situations. [CR16]
- Evaluate the importance of ethics in research. [CR16]
- Evaluate the importance of statistics in research.

### **Unit 2—Neuroscience and Biological Processes (Chapter 2) [CR 3]**

#### **Essential Questions:**

How do biological processes relate to behavior?  
How do the biological processes work to create and sustain behavior?  
How does damage to a biological process or part affect behavior?

#### **Unit 2 Objectives**

- Explain the process of neural communication.
- Explain how neurotransmitters work.
- Analyze the difference between the neural and endocrine systems.
- Identify the parts of the brain and the functions of each.
- Describe the different types of brain examinations.
- Determine the role of genetics in influencing human behavior.
- Describe how nature and nurture affect behavior.

### **Unit 3—Developmental Psychology (Chapter 4) [CR9]**

#### **Essential Questions:**

How do people grow and develop physically throughout the lifespan?  
How do people grow and develop cognitively throughout the lifespan?  
How do people grow and develop socially throughout the lifespan?  
How do people grow and develop morally throughout the lifespan?

How do people grow and develop personality throughout the lifespan?  
How do people grow and develop sexually throughout the lifespan?

### **Developmental Psychology Unit Objectives**

- Describe the physical development of infants and children from conception to puberty.
- Analyze the cognitive development of infants and children.
- Evaluate the importance of social development in infants and children.
- Summarize the physical changes that occur during adolescence.
- Analyze how the reasoning ability of adolescents differs from that of children.
- Describe and analyze Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning.
- Describe how developmental psychologists research development over the lifespan.
- Analyze how sex roles influence individual and social behavior throughout the lifespan.

### **Unit 4—Sensation & Perception (Chapter 5 & 6) [CR 4]**

#### **Essential Questions:**

How do the senses receive and translate signals to the brain for processing?

How does each of the senses affect behavior?

What are the limitations of each sense and how do those limitations affect behavior?

How do sensation and perception differ?

How does the brain process sensory signals accurately?

#### **Sensation & Perception Unit Objectives**

- Determine the significance of signal detection theory in modern psychology.
- Identify the major components of the visual system and the function of each.
- Identify the major components of the auditory system and the function of each.
- Identify the five basic tastes.
- Discuss the differences among the senses of taste and smell.
- Identify the two body senses and contrast one with the other.
- Identify the views of the Gestalt psychologists related to perceptual phenomena.
- Analyze the effect of perceptual set on everyday sensory experience.

### **Unit 5—Variations of Consciousness (Chapter 7) [CR 5]**

#### **Essential Questions:**

How do psychologists define consciousness?

What happens during the sleep cycle?

What roles do REM and NREM sleep play in behavior?

How does lack of sleep affect behavior?

How do psychoactive drugs affect behavior?

How do we know whether hypnosis is a real psychological phenomenon?

#### **Variations of Consciousness Unit Objectives**

- Define consciousness.

- Describe the different stages of sleep.
- Analyze the different theories of dreaming.
- Recognize the common sleep disorders and their consequences.
- Differentiate between the different theories of hypnosis. Analyze why psychologists are suspicious of hypnotically enhanced memories.
- Describe psychoactive drugs and their effects.
- Differentiate among the different types of psychoactive drugs and their effects.
- Analyze the consequences of addiction, tolerance, and withdrawal.

## **Unit 6—Learning (Chapter 8) [CR 6]**

### **Essential Questions:**

How do psychologists define learning?

How do principles of classical conditioning work to create learning?

In what ways does classical conditioning work in human contexts?

How do principles of operant conditioning work to create learning?

In what ways does operant conditioning work in human contexts?

How do principles of observational learning work to create learning?

In what ways does observational learning work in human contexts?

How are the various principles discussed different and similar?

### **Learning Unit Objectives**

- Describe the elements of classical conditioning.
- Apply classical conditioning to different situations.
- Describe the elements of operant conditioning.
- Differentiate among the various forms of reinforcement and punishment.
- Apply elements of operant conditioning different situations.
- Describe observational learning.
- Describe how biology influences learning.
- Describe how cognition influences learning.

## **Unit 7—Cognition (Chapter 9 & 10) [CR 7]**

### **Essential Questions:**

How do humans encode, store, and retrieve information from memory?

How can humans enhance memory encoding, storage, and retrieval?

How do humans think?

In what ways is thinking flawed or constrained? How can people avoid falling for these errors in thinking?

How do humans acquire language?

How do humans use language to communicate ideas?

How is language flawed or constrained? How can people avoid falling for these errors in using language?

### **Cognition Unit Objectives**

- Analyze how humans encode, store, and retrieve information in memory.
- Apply memory enhancement techniques to everyday life.

- Describe the characteristics of language and evaluate the importance of language.
- Define a concept, explaining why it is useful to problem solving.
- Differentiate between algorithms and heuristics.
- Analyze how fixation, confirmation bias, heuristics, overconfidence, framing, and belief perseverance influence the ability to solve problems.

## **Unit 8—Testing and Individual Differences (Chapter 11) [CR 11]**

### **Essential Questions:**

How do psychologists define and study intelligence?

How did the use of intelligence tests evolve throughout the last two centuries?

How do testing scores differ between group administration and individual administrations of intelligence tests? Between genders? Races? Socioeconomic groups?

How do psychologists know whether a test is reliable and/or valid? Why are these qualities of tests important?

### **Testing and Individual Differences Unit Objectives**

- Compare and contrast Gardner's and Sternberg's theories of intelligence.
- Evaluate Alfred Binet's contribution to intelligence testing.
- Evaluate Lewis Terman's role in the development of intelligence testing.
- Describe David Wechsler's contribution to intelligence testing.
- Explain how group tests of intelligence differ from individual tests.
- Differentiate between an aptitude test and an achievement test.
- Explain the difference between reliability and validity.
- Analyze the reasons for the differences in test scores among people of different genders, races, and ethnic groups.

## **Second Semester**

## **Unit 9—Motivation and Emotion (Chapter 12 & 13) [CR 8]**

### **Essential Questions:**

In what ways are humans motivated to behave?

What methods of motivation are more effective than others?

How can one increase their motivation to behave in various ways?

What is the role of hunger in motivating behavior?

How do maladaptive eating patterns affect behavior?

What role do emotions play in behavior?

How do cognitions affect emotions?

### **Unit 9 Objectives**

- Discuss the similarities of instinct and drive theories.
- Discuss the difference between drive theory and homeostasis.
- Explain the reasons why intrinsic motivation is more beneficial than extrinsic motivation.
- Determine how psychologists measure achievement motivation.
- Identify ways we can motivate others to give their best efforts.

- Analyze how the body regulates weight so effectively.
- Differentiate between historical and modern cognitive theories of emotion.
- Identify the physiological changes that occur when people experience different emotions.
- Determine the criteria for assessing gender differences in emotional expression.

## **2 day unit that is review from Health Class-Stress, Coping, and Health (Chapter 14)**

### **Essential Questions:**

How does stress influence health and behavior?

How can people reduce stress?

In what ways can stress be beneficial?

How do social factors affect the influence of stress on health and behavior?

### **Stress Unit Objectives**

- Define stress, identifying the emotional and psychological responses to stress.
- Evaluate how outlook and feelings of control influence health.
- Evaluate how social support and positive emotional experiences contribute to health and well-being.

## **Unit 10—Personality (Chapter 15) [CR 10]**

### **Essential Questions:**

How do psychologists define and study personality?

What advantages and limitations exist for each theory's description of personality?

How do psychologists reliably measure personality and interpret personality's role in behavior?

### **Unit 10 Objectives**

- Explain how the different perspectives—psychodynamic, humanistic, trait, and socio-cultural—approach the study of personality.
- Evaluate the advantages and drawbacks of each theory of personality.
- Determine how psychologists assess personality according to the various perspectives.

## **Unit 11—Psychological Disorders and Treatment (Chapter 16-17) [CR 12 & 13]**

### **Essential Questions:**

How do psychologists measure and define abnormal behavior?

How are the various psychological disorders identified and studied?

What impact do these psychological disorders have on individuals, families, communities, and society?

### **Psychological Disorders and Treatment Unit Objectives**

- Identify the criteria psychologists use to diagnose psychological disorders.

- Differentiate among the different perspectives psychologists take to understand psychological disorders.
- Describe the characteristics of mood disorders.
- Describe the characteristics of anxiety disorders.
- Describe the characteristics of somatoform disorders.
- Describe the characteristics of dissociative disorders.
- Describe the characteristics of schizophrenia.
- Describe the characteristics of personality disorders.
- Describe the characteristics of brain-based disorders.
- Describe the different treatment options for the various types of psychological disorders.

## **Unit 12—Social Psychology (Chapter 18) [CR 14]**

### **Essential Questions:**

How do people explain (or attribute) the behavior of others?

What impact do these attributions have on individuals and society as a whole?

How are individuals affected by groups?

Under what conditions do people obey, conform, make friendships, find love, and help others?

How do attitudes and actions influence individual and group behavior?

How do psychologists define culture? What influence does culture have on individuals and groups?

### **Social Psychology Unit Objectives**

- Differentiate between situational and dispositional attribution.
- Identify the conditions in which people are more likely to conform and obey.
- Determine how the presence of others influences actions.
- Evaluate why people are attracted to each other.
- Describe the conditions under which people are more likely to help others.
- Differentiate among the terms prejudice, stereotype, and discrimination.
- Determine the biological and social contributors to aggressive behavior.
- Define culture and how it develops.

## **Review for the AP Exam**