

Advanced Placement Psychology

Course Syllabus

Purpose of the Course

The purpose of the Advanced Placement course in Psychology is to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of behavior and mental processes of human beings and animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about the methods psychologists use in their science and practice. (Taken from the Advanced Placement Course Description in Psychology by the College Board)

Course Objectives

1. Students will prepare to do acceptable work on the Advanced Placement Examination in Psychology.
2. Students will study the major core concepts and theories of psychology. They will be able to define key terms and use these terms in their everyday vocabulary.
3. Students will learn the basic skills of psychological research. They will be able to devise simple research projects, interpret and generalize from results and evaluate the validity of research reports.
4. Students will be able to apply psychological concepts to their own lives. They should be able to recognize psychological principles when they are encountered in everyday situations.
5. Students will develop critical thinking skills. They will become aware of the danger of blindly accepting or rejecting any psychological theory without careful, objective evaluation.
6. Students will build their reading, writing, and discussion skills.
7. Students will learn about psychology as a profession, and become aware of the educational requirements which must be met to pursue such careers. They will learn about the ethical standards governing the work of psychologists.

Questions to Think About Before We Begin

1. Why are you taking this class? Do you want to learn about psychology? Are you ready for a “college level” class? Are you serious about preparing for and taking the AP Exam in May?
2. What are your priorities? Are academics near the top of the list, or are you more concerned with athletics, social life, a part-time job, television, and so on?
3. How much time will you need to devote to this class? This will depend on your own strengths and weaknesses. A rule of thumb suggested by many colleges is to spend two to three hours working outside of class for every hour you spend in class. Since most college courses meet three hours a week, this translates to about six to nine out of class hours per week. Are you willing to make this commitment?
4. Are you a strong reader? In terms of course assignments, nothing will occupy more of your time than reading and studying the text. Research has shown that the strongest prediction of success in high school AP classes is reading ability. If you are a good reader, you have a distinct advantage. If you are not a good reader, know that it is going to require extra time and effort to compensate for that weakness.
5. What is your motivation level? Your level of motivation is much more important than your ability level. If you want to succeed in AP Psychology and you are willing to put in the necessary effort, you will succeed. Attitude, study skills, determination, and discipline count for more than intelligence toward your success in this class.

After considering the above, if you have any questions, concerns, etc. as to whether AP Psychology is the course for you, please see me ASAP, preferably today!

Textbook

Myers, David (2010) *Psychology (9th edition)* New York, NY; Worth Publishers.

Each student will be issued a copy of the Myers' *Psychology* text. This text is used at many colleges and universities throughout the country for their Introductory Psychology course. If you were taking this course in college and had to purchase the text, it would cost you well over \$95. Use the book, get the most information about psychology from it you can, but please handle it with extra care. **I would strongly recommend putting some type of cover on the text. Any damage to the text will be the responsibility of the student.** Some helpful hints in reading the text include:

1. Keep up with the reading assignments! Don't fall behind! Set a schedule for yourself and be disciplined enough to stick to it. Be prepared in class to discuss the reading assigned for that day and/or take a quiz on the material.
2. Learn to read more effectively.
 - a. Read actively; don't just look at the words. If you spend a half hour "reading" but are unable to recall anything when you are done, you have wasted your time. Reading a college level text requires a great deal more effort and concentration than the latest novel does.
 - b. Do not try to read the entire chapter at once. Each chapter of your text is divided into several major sections. Limit your reading to one of these sections at a sitting.
 - c. Do NOT ignore pictures, diagrams, tables, sidebars, etc. in your textbook. These features were added to your text for a reason. They make the text more interesting and usually provide important information.
 - d. Preview the chapter before you start reading. Read the chapter summary when you finish.
 - e. Take notes as you read. If you can condense a 30 page chapter to a few pages of good notes, it's going to be much easier to review.

Additionally you may want to purchase the following supplemental book to help with your preparation for the AP Test. You can pick one up at local bookstores or online for under \$20.

McEntarffer, R. and A.J. Weseley. (2007) *Barron's AP Psychology*, Third Edition. Hauppauge, New York: Barron's Educational Series

Grading Procedure

Your grade in this class will depend on your performance in 5 areas: exams, quizzes, Connections assignments, in-class/homework assignments, and class participation. Each exam, quiz, etc. will be worth a specified number of points. At the end of each quarter, the number of points you earn will be divided by the total number of possible points to calculate your grade percentage. Letter grades will be determined according to the traditional scale below.

92.5-100%	A	82.5-86.49%	B	72.5-76.49%	C	62.5-66.49%	D
89.5-92.49%	A-	79.5-82.49%	B-	69.5-72.49%	C-	59.5-62.49%	D-
86.5-89.49%	B+	76.5-79.49%	C+	66.5-69.49%	D+	0-59.49%	E

Extra credit may be given at the teacher's discretion and will be offered to the entire class. Absolutely no individual extra credit will be assigned or accepted. Take advantage of the bonus points as they are offered throughout the quarter rather than begging for points at the end of the quarter.

Homework Expectations

At the beginning of each unit students will receive a unit syllabus. The syllabus will include the reading schedule listing assigned pages for homework every night. Also, additional information that will be covered in class, assignments, tests, quizzes and projects will be listed with their respective due dates.

Tests and Quizzes

Unit Tests

There typically will be a test after every two units we cover in class, covering only those two units. The precise exam dates will be announced at least 3 days in advance, and will include material from the textbook, lectures, assignments, films, and class discussions. Exams will consist primarily of multiple-choice and free-response essay questions (mirroring the AP exam), but some exams may have other sections. Every exam will have at least one question from the textbook that was not covered in class.

Tests (excluding the Cumulative exams) are worth 100 points each.

Cumulative Exams

To help prepare for the AP Exam in May, a cumulative test will be given near the end of each quarter. Each test will cover all the material from the beginning of the school year to that point. **Cumulative Exams are worth 200 points.**

Semester Final Exam

At the end of each semester a final exam will be given. The questions will be taken from previous cumulative tests from that semester.

Quizzes

Announced or unannounced quizzes (aka Quick Quizzes) may be given at anytime during the year. Usually quizzes are based on the activities of the previous day or the assigned reading for the day. There will be at least one quiz on each unit and some of the longer units will have two quizzes. Quizzes will be on material covered in class and the textbook, and will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions. You will take quizzes on the scheduled date regardless of attendance. Every quiz will have at least one question from the textbook that was not covered in class.

Quizzes are worth 20 points each, regardless of the number of questions.

Connections Assignments

Please see Connections Assignments handout.

Connections Assignments are worth 10 points each.

Class Participation

Student participation is critical to the success of this class. Being a good participant means not only engaging in class discussions, but also being an attentive and respectful member of the class.

Keeping up with the reading is another key element of participation. It will be impossible for me to cover every possible AP test topic in class, so you will need to read to supplement your knowledge. Other than Connections Assignments, your only regular homework assignment in this class is to be diligent about reading.

At the end of each quarter, each student will be assigned up to 20% of the quarter's total points for class participation.

Late papers

In most cases students are given more than adequate time, at minimum of 24- 48 hours, to finish assignments so there should be few possible reasons for late papers. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Since I realize emergencies or problems do come up, once a quarter, students will be allowed one extra day to hand in work late without penalty. Please indicate on the assignment that you are taking advantage of this option. To encourage students to make it through the quarter without using the "day late option", I will give extra credit to every student who completes *all work on time (including Connections Assignments)*.

Content Outline

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Myers Textbook</i>	<i>Percentage goal for AP Exam</i>
1.	History and Approaches	Prologue	2-4%
2.	Research Methods	Ch. 1	8-10%
3.	Biological Bases of Behavior	Ch. 2	8-10%
4.	Sensation and Perception	Ch. 6	6-8%
5.	States of Consciousness	Ch. 3	2-4%
6.	Learning	Ch. 7	7-9%
7.	Cognition	Ch. 8 & 9	8-10%
8.	Motivation and Emotion	Ch. 11 & 12	6-8%
9.	Developmental Psychology	Ch. 5	7-9%
10.	Personality	Ch. 13	5-7%
11.	Testing and Individual Differences	Ch. 10	5-7%
12.	Abnormal Psychology	Ch. 14	7-9%
13.	Treatment of Psychological Disorders	Ch. 15	5-7%
14.	Social Psychology	Ch. 16	8-10%

Class Policies

A copy of this syllabus will be available on my website.

Please be aware of the accepted Laptop Norms (attached).

Please be respectful of your classmates by keeping talk during class to a minimum. There will not be assigned seats to begin the year, but this policy will change if students abuse the privilege.

Remember, this is an Advanced Placement class—act as if.

Please note that I will not change your class grade as a result of your score on the AP Psychology exam.

Missed Work/ Absences

- Keep up with class. It is YOUR responsibility to be up-to-date with course material, whether you are here or not. Be sure to get notes from a classmate for any classes you miss.
- If you anticipate missing a quiz or exam, please let me know in advance so we can schedule a make-up.
- You may not schedule a make-up on the day of an exam or quiz, you must do so in advance.
- If you miss any quizzes, exams, or other assignments due to an unexpected absence, you are to schedule a make-up on the first day you are back at school.
- This class covers a lot of material, some of it quite technical and specific. I am available throughout the school year to address any questions or concerns that you may have. Please do not ever hesitate to come talk to me before or after class.

This syllabus is subject to change!

Want more information on testing? Contact your College Board website at: <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>

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www.mrburkholder.com

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