

## Advanced Placement Psychology Syllabus 2015-2016

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*At Deering High School, our goal is to graduate students who are globally competent and college and career-ready.*

### Welcome to AP Psychology!

The purpose of the AP Psychology course is to introduce the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Included is a consideration of the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. Students also learn about the ethics and methods psychologists use in their science and practice. (College Board 2012)

In keeping with the principles of **ISSN** and focusing on developing **global competence**, students will investigate the world through the study of human behavior, examine psychological concepts from various perspectives, communicate ideas in writing and discussion, and propose ways to take action on different issues.

### Course Objectives

The main objective of this AP psychology course is to provide you with a strong understanding of the discipline of psychology and to help you understand and engage in thinking as psychologists do.

- You will be introduced to the history and methodologies of the study of mental processes and human behavior.
- You will learn about the evolution of this discipline and various approaches used in the field, including cognitive, behavioral, psychodynamic, humanistic, biological, and social.
- You will learn about major psychological experiments and findings.
- You will learn about and understand the process through which psychologists create questions, conduct research, perform experiments, and analyze data. You will learn how to think like psychologists and understand what makes this discipline unique and useful.
- You will apply your knowledge through various in-class activities, discussions, and assessments.

## **What I want you to know about this course...**

--This course is modeled on a college level introduction to psychology course. It is fast paced and requires a lot of work outside of class. You will read a lot and need to be critical readers, i.e., you will need to be aware of what you understand and don't understand and bring your insights and questions to class. You will have homework every night (primarily reading and notes).

--We will work with and apply lots of the concepts and information you are learning, but we won't review everything in class, there is simply not enough time. If something is assigned, you are responsible for it. So take notes while you are reading, talk to each other about what you are learning, and ask questions!

--I really like teaching this course and find psychology fascinating and relevant. I want to help you develop an understanding of psychology and better understand yourself and the world around you.

--Some parts of the course are very different than others. Brain research, for example, is very different than social psychology. You may find some parts very interesting and others less interesting. That is the nature of a survey or intro course. Hopefully you will test out of intro to psych (because you will do so well on the AP exam) in college and be able to choose a more advanced and specialized course based on the aspects of psychology that you find most interesting.

## **Resources for Teaching AP Psychology**

1. Text: David Myers, *Psychology* (New York: Worth, 2007)
2. Released AP Psychology Exams and other support materials provided by the College Board.

## **Supplemental Reading**

Various readings from books, journals, and news articles will be used throughout the course to supplement the text.

## **Grading Policy:**

The course grade is a weighted average consisting of the following elements:

Quarterly Grades 45% (each) Final Exam Grade 10%

Quarterly grades are made up of the following:

Tests and Quizzes 45%    Essays 25%    Projects/Other 15%    Participation 15%

## Unit Outline

### 1. History, Approaches, and Methodology

- *Scientific Inquiry*: scientific method; sources of bias and error
- *Approaches*: historical and modern
- *Research Methods*: introspection; descriptive methods: observation, case study, survey; correlation; experimental method
- *Statistics*: central tendency; variance; significance; correlation
- *Experimentation*: cause and effect; independent and dependent variables; random assignment
- *Statistical Reasoning*: describing data

### 2. Neuroscience and Behavior

- *Neurons*: what they are and how they work (parts and functions); neurotransmitters and their effects
- *Nervous System*: structural and functional organization; peripheral (including autonomic and somatic) and central nervous systems
- *Brain*: research tools and methods; neuroanatomy; hemispheric specialization

### 3. Nature, Nurture, and Human Diversity

- *Behavior Genetics and Evolutionary Psychology (Nature)*
- *Parents and Peers (Nurture)*
- *Cultural Influences*
- *Gender Development*: similarities; differences; nature and nurture

### 4. Development

- *Influential Theories*: psychosocial development (Freud and Erikson); cognitive development (Piaget), moral development (Kohlberg and Gilligan)
- *Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence, and Adulthood*
- *Methodology*: longitudinal and cross-sectional studies

### 5. Sensation and Perception

- *Basic Principles*: thresholds (absolute, difference, Weber's Law); signal detection theory; sensory adaptation
  - *Sensory Organs and Information Processing*: visual (including color vision)

and eye structure); hearing (including stimulus input and ear structure), touch; taste; smell

- *Perception*: attention; processing; illusions (including Gestalt psychology); organization and interpretation

## **6. Consciousness and Memory**

- *States of Consciousness*: waking; sleep and dreaming; hypnosis; altered states
- *Memory*: information processing; encoding, storage and retrieval; forgetting; improving memory
- *Accuracy of Memory*: Loftus and Schacter
- *Cognition*: problem solving and heuristics

## **7. Behaviorism and Learning**

- *Historical Background and Philosophy of Radical Behaviorism*
- *Classical Conditioning*: Pavlov and Watson; how it works
- *Operant Conditioning*: Thorndike and Skinner; how it works; contrast classical and operant conditioning
- *Observational Learning*: Bandura; how it works

## **8. Thinking, Language, and Intelligence**

- *Thinking*: solving problems and forming judgments
- *Language*: structure and development; theories of Skinner and Chomsky
- *Intelligence*: define; types of; assessment and testing; influences on

## **9. Motivation, Emotion, Stress and Health**

- *Motivational Concepts*: instincts; drives; optimal arousal; Maslow's hierarchy
- *Hunger and Eating Disorders*
- *Sexuality and Sexual Orientation*
- *Achievement Motivation*: intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivators
- *Physiology of Emotions*: fear, anger, happiness
- *Expression of Emotion*: cognition and emotion; culture and emotional expression
- *Stress and Health; Coping and Adjustment*

## 10. Personality

- *Psychodynamic Perspective*: Freud, Jung, Adler
- *Trait Perspective*: exploring and assessing traits (Myers-Briggs, MMPI, Big Five)
- *Humanistic Perspective*: Maslow and Rogers
- *Social-Cognitive Perspective*: Bandura and Seligman

## 11. Psychological Disorders and Therapy

- *Approaches to Abnormality*: the Rosenhan study; medical model; biopsychosocial model
- *Classifying Disorders*: deviance, distress, and dysfunction; understanding; labeling; evolution of the DSM-IV-TR
- *Major Categories of Disorders*: anxiety disorders; dissociative disorders; mood disorders; schizophrenia; personality disorders
- *Major Approaches to Therapy*: psychoanalysis; behavioral; humanistic; cognitive; group; pharmacological
- *Does Therapy Work?* Eysencks, outcome studies, and the *Consumer Reports* study

## 12. Social Psychology

- *Attitudes and Behavior*: fundamental attribution error; roles; Festinger and cognitive dissonance; Zimbardo and The Stanford Prison Experiment
- *Group Influence*: Asch and conformity; Milgram and obedience; facilitation and loafing; Janis and groupthink
- *Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Aggression*
- *Altruism*: Darley and Latane

## Assessment Practices

### Traditional Assessments

- **Quizzes** – Reading quizzes and Multiple Choice quizzes

Reading quizzes will be oral quizzes based on recent reading assignments. These will be given frequently throughout the course.

Multiple choice quizzes are modeled on AP exam questions and will be assigned about once per chapter. They precede tests and often require students to apply their knowledge.

- **Unit Tests** – Multiple Choice  
These tests are modeled on the AP exam with multiple-choice questions that assess knowledge of recent concepts and objectives. They often require students to apply their knowledge.
- **Essays** – Essay assessments require students to respond to a prompt that is either from a released AP exam or modeled on an AP exam question. These questions typically require students to apply information from a number of different units to a given scenario. Essays are scored using AP rubrics or rubrics similar to those used to score the AP exam essays.
- **Midterm Exam** – Students take a midterm exam covering the first six units. The exam is in the same format as the AP exam (multiple-choice and short essays), but the number of multiple-choice questions is reduced proportionately to the time available in the exam period to maintain a similar time pressure.
- **Final Exam** – The final exam will follow the format of the AP exam and include multiple choice questions and short essays. It will cover all twelve units of study, but the second six units will be represented more heavily.

## Projects

- **Naturalistic Observation**  
Each student will complete a 15-minute observation of human participants in a naturalistic setting. Students will compose a research question and gather data during their observation. This observation will help students view and understand a variety of qualitative research methods.
- **Behavior Modification Proposal**  
Students will propose a plausible behavior modification plan based on Skinner's theory of operant conditioning. Students are required to use relevant concepts and terminology to demonstrate their understanding of operant conditioning.
- **Experimental Design**

### Part I - Research Proposal

Students propose a research concept, either from examples provided or of their own choosing. Students will write a title for their study, a purpose statement/rationale and the research questions, hypotheses or objective to be explored. Students will be expected to discuss the possible method (quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods) for their proposed research.

## **Part II - Literature Review**

After working to refine their research proposal, students will complete a literature review to examine relevant studies in the field. Students will read and summarize two peer reviewed research studies relevant to their research question or hypothesis. They will also analyze how the research studies relate to their proposal.

### **Turning in Work:**

- Electronic assignments should be NAMED (Assignment name & your name) and shared on googledocs with [beanj@portlandschools.org](mailto:beanj@portlandschools.org).
- Missed Work: Not all assignments can be made-up. Make-up assignments will be handled on an individual basis, depending on whether the absence was excused or not and depending on the nature of the assignment. Get your agenda stamped the day after an absence so I know whether or not it was excused.
- Late Work: Some assignments are accepted late, other are not; it depends on the assignment. Grades for late work may be reduced by a percentage based on the number of days late.
- **-Plagiarism**  
Cheating, plagiarism, or assisting another student to cheat or plagiarize is prohibited. Consequences for first offense = no credit for the work and parent notification. Repeat incidents of plagiarism will result in increased consequences including, but not limited to, loss of credit for the course. (See school board policy Academic Dishonesty JICD)

### **Teacher Contact and Availability:**

Here's how to reach me if you have questions, need help, or want to check in.

Email: [beanj@portlandschool.org](mailto:beanj@portlandschool.org) (easiest option)

Phone: 874.8260 ext. 5718

In person:

I am available for help in Room 322 during block 2, second lunch and after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I'm also available other times by appointment. Please let me know when you plan to come.

If you are out sick, especially for more than a day, it is a good idea to check the blog or email me to get the reading assignment and work.

**I'm looking forward to a great semester! Ms. Bean**