Information for Course Syllabus

Name of Course: AP Psychology

Grade Level: 11 and 12

School: ORHS

Major Assignments: Book Report, Research Project

Field Trips: None

How can parents access instructional materials? Canvas

The purpose of AP® Psychology is to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. A variety of activities, demonstrations, and projects will be provided to meet this goal of instructing scientific and empirical approaches.

Course Objectives

The central question addressed in AP Psychology is "How do psychologists think?" Your textbook author, David Myers wrote that to think as a psychologist, one must learn to "restrain intuition with critical thinking, judgmentalism with compassion, and illusion with understanding" (Sternberg, 1997). Whether students choose to pursue a career related to psychology or a career in some entirely different field, this habit of mind will be of great value. By taking this course, students will

1. prepare to do acceptable work on the AP Psychology Exam.
2. study the major core concepts and theories of psychology. They will be
3. able to define key terms and use them in their everyday vocabulary.
4. learn the basic skills of psychological research and be able to apply psychological concepts to their own lives.
5. develop critical thinking skills.

Textbook

Myers, David G. *Psychology for AP*, 3rd ed. New York: Worth Publishers, 2019.

Grading

We will use the standard Advanced Placement grading scale used by all AP courses at ORHS:

100 – 88 = A	69 – 65 = D
87 – 80 = B	65 or below = F
79 - 70 = C	

Graded assignments will include the following

Notecards	Vocabulary flashcards, handwritten for each textbook chapter, fourteen times in the year	25 points
Quizzes	Usually unannounced, occur sporadically	50 points
Tests	At the end of every unit, nine times in the semester	100 points
Projects	Long-term assignments, two times in the semester	200 points

Projects

The following projects provide students with opportunities to learn about human behavior and mental processing in a more individualized and deeper experience. These are brief descriptions; more information will be shared at the appropriate time.

1st / 3rd 9 weeks:	Students will choose a book on a topic related to psychology and deliver the information they learned in the form of an oral presentation to class with visual aid. Due last week of school before Winter Break.
2nd / 4th 9 weeks:	Students will design and conduct two pieces of research. Results will be analyzed and explained in the form of a type-written paper explaining the conclusions of the study. Due last day of school before Spring break.

Schedule of Topics

The following reading schedule should be seen as extremely tentative and subject to change based on student feedback and progress, teacher discretion or error, any needed reteaching, or unexpected absences from school such as snow days (of which there were 8 in two weeks a few years ago – yeesh!) Still, the following schedule should help you plot out your reading. We will read the entire book, though not in chapter order. If you have any extended absence or plan on being out, use the schedule to do everything you can to keep up with the reading.

Unit 1 Scientific Foundations of Psychology *Week 1-2*	• Define psychology and trace its historical development. • Compare and contrast the psychological perspectives. • Discuss the ethics of animal and human research. •Identify basic and applied research subfields of psychology. • Identify basic elements of an experiment (variables, groups, sampling, population, etc.). • Compare and contrast research methods (case, survey, naturalistic observation). • Explain correlational studies. • Describe the three measures of central tendency and measures of variation.
Unit 2 Biological Bases of Behavior *Week 3-4*	• Describe the structure of a neuron and explain neural impulses. • Describe neuron communication and discuss the impact of neurotransmitters. • Classify and explain major divisions of the nervous system. • Describe the functions of the brain structures (thalamus, cerebellum, limbic system, etc.). • Identify the four lobes of the cerebral cortex and their functions. • Discuss the association areas. • Explain the split-brain studies. • Describe the nature of the endocrine system and its interaction with the nervous system.
Unit 3 Sensation and Perception *Week 4-5*	• Contrast the processes of sensation and perception. • Distinguish between absolute and difference thresholds. • Label a diagram of the parts of the eye and ear. • Describe the operation of the sensory systems (five senses). • Explain the Young-Helmholtz and opponent-process theories of color vision. • Explain the place and frequency theories of pitch perception. • Discuss Gestalt psychology's contribution to our understanding of perception. • Discuss research on depth perception and cues.
Unit 4 Learning *Week 6-7*	• Describe the process of classical conditioning (Pavlov's experiments). • Explain the processes of acquisition, extinction, spontaneous recovery, generalization, and discrimination. • Describe the process of operant conditioning, including the procedure of shaping, as demonstrated by Skinner's experiments. • Identify the different types of reinforcers and describe the schedules of reinforcement. • Discuss the importance of cognitive processes and biological predispositions in conditioning. • Discuss the effects of punishment on behavior. • Describe the process of observational learning (Bandura's experiments).

Unit 5 Cognitive Psychology *Week 7-9*	• Describe memory in terms of information processing and distinguish among sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory. • Distinguish between automatic and effortful processing. • Explain the encoding process (including imagery, organization, etc.). • Describe the capacity and duration of long-term memory. • Distinguish between implicit and explicit memory. • Describe the importance of retrieval cues. • Discuss the effects of interference and motivated forgetting on retrieval. • Describe the evidence for the constructive nature of memory. • Describe the nature of concepts and the role of prototypes in concept formation. • Discuss how we use trial and error, algorithms, heuristics, and insight to solve problems. • Explain how the representativeness and availability of heuristics influence our judgments. • Describe the structure of language (phonemes, morphemes, grammar). • Identify language developmental stages (babbling, one word, etc.). • Explain how the nature-nurture debate is illustrated in the theories of language development. • Discuss Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis. • Describe the research on animal cognition and communication.
Unit 6 Developmental Psychology *Week 10-11*	• Discuss the course of prenatal development. • Illustrate development changes in physical, social, and cognitive areas. • Discuss the effect of body contact, familiarity, and responsive parenting on attachments. • Describe the benefits of a secure attachment and the impact of parental neglect and separation as well as day care on childhood development. • Describe the theories of Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg. • Describe the early development of a self-concept. • Distinguish between longitudinal and cross-sectional studies.
Unit 7 Motivation, Emotion, and Personality *Week 11-13*	• Define motivation and identify motivational theories. • Describe the physiological determinants of hunger. • Discuss psychological and cultural influences on hunger. • Define achievement motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. • Identify the three theories of emotion (James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Schachter- Singer). • Describe the physiological changes that occur during emotional arousal. • Discuss the catharsis hypothesis. • Describe the biological response to stress.
Unit 8 Clinical Psychology *Week 14-16*	• Identify the criteria for judging whether behavior is psychologically disordered. • Describe the medical model of psychological disorders. • Describe the aims of the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), and discuss the potential dangers of diagnostic labels. • Describe the symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder. • Describe and explain the development of somatoform and mood disorders. • Describe the various symptoms and types of schizophrenia. • Describe the nature of organic and personality disorders. • Describe the characteristics and possible causes of dissociative disorders.
Unit 9 Social Psychology *Week 17-18*	• Describe the importance of attribution in social behavior. • Explain the effect of role-playing on attitudes in terms of cognitive dissonance theory. • Discuss the results of Asch's experiment on conformity. • Describe Milgram's controversial experiments on obedience. • Discuss how group interaction can facilitate group polarization and groupthink. • Describe the social, emotional, and cognitive factors that contribute to the persistence of cultural, ethnic, and gender prejudice and discrimination. • Discuss the issues related to aggression and attraction. • Explain altruistic behavior in terms of social exchange theory and social norms.