

Advanced Placement Psychology Syllabus

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Course Introduction:

Advanced Placement Psychology is the equivalent to a college level introductory psychology course. This is a rigorous and demanding course, intended to provide the scope and level of accomplishment expected in a college level setting. The curriculum for this course is determined by the College Board and places an emphasis on essential readings, writing assignments, independent projects and frequent tests intended to prepare students for the AP Psychology exam. Please understand from the outset a fact of extreme importance: the most important facet of this class is “you.” Acting as a college student and taking responsibility for your learning by charging ahead to seek, find and internalize knowledge will be critical to success in this course. You must be an agent of your own educational progress. The instructor’s role is to facilitate your drive and accomplishment by structuring learning situations and selecting learning tools to help you attain your goals: a successful score on the AP Psychology exam, an enrichment of your life through the acquisition of psychological knowledge and enjoyment of the course.

Critical Thinking as a Foundation of the Course:

Critical thinking is an active and systematic strategy to examine, evaluate and understand events, solve problems and make decisions on the basis of sound reasoning and valid evidence. More specifically, critical thinking involves: maintaining an attitude that is both open minded and skeptical; recognizing the distinction between facts and theories; striving for factual accuracy and logical consistency; objectively gathering, weighing and synthesizing information; forming reasonable inferences, judgements and conclusion; identifying and questioning underlying assumptions and beliefs; discerning hidden or implicit values; perceiving similarities and differences between phenomena; understanding casual relationships; reducing logical flaws and personal biases, such as avoiding oversimplifications and overgeneralizations; developing a tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; exploring alternative perspectives and explanations; and searching for creative solutions.

Workload Expectations:

The AP Psychology curriculum is constructed to mirror that of a three credit general psychology course at the college level. One college credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week (outside of class) necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade “C” in the course. This is to get an AVERAGE grade. The amount of time necessary outside of class will vary greatly and is dependent on both the individual student and the letter grade sought.

General Expectations:

It is expected that you are in this course because you have an interest in Psychology, have a desire to work at a college pace and have an ultimate goal of passing the AP exam. Any disruption or behavioral issue that you create will be a distraction to the learning environment and to the progress of fellow students. Our time together will be spent on content – not on behavioral distractions. Please observe the following guidelines:

****Respectful Speaking & Listening:** Participate in discussions. Listen to your classmates, consider their opinions and treat them as you would like to be treated.

****Preparation, Focus & Attention:** Be prepared for class every day. Be focused on what is happening in class. All cell phones should out of sight, per school policy.

****Attendance & Classroom Efficiency:** Tardy policy follows school policy. If you must be tardy, please do so by making an entrance that will not be disruptive to the learning of others. Every minute of class will be utilized for learning. We will begin at the bell and end with the dismissal of the instructor. Be in your seat when the bell rings. Please keep bathroom and locker visits to a minimum.

Textbooks:

Myers, David G. (2014). *Myers Psychology for AP*

Hock, Roger B. (2009). *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology*

Evaluation & Grade Calculation:

Students in this course will be evaluated through unit exams, reading quizzes, written assignments/activities and both a midterm and final exam. Grades will be calculated by using the following guidelines:

Unit Exams:	45% of total grade
Reading Quizzes	25% of total grade
Written Assignments/Activities	15% of total grade
Midterm & Final Exams	<u>15 % of total grade</u>
	= 100% total grade

Unit Exams (45%)

There will be one exam given per unit of study. The length of each unit ranges from 10-17 days. Part I of each exam will include 20 vocabulary terms/definitions from the unit. Students will have 10 minutes to complete part I. Part II of each exam will include between 40-50 multiple choice questions (selected from the current unit, previous units and lecture material). Students will have 25 minutes to complete part II. Part III of each exam will include 1 free response question that is intended to evaluate the student's ability to make connections among concepts from different psychological areas of study. Students will have 25 minutes to complete part III.

****IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING PERFORMANCE ON EXAMS****

It is highly recommended that students keep a detailed notebook OR create flashcards to better understand the terminology associated with each unit. While this is not a required or graded element of the course, it is the most concrete and likely way to increase performance on exams.

Reading Quizzes (25%)

Open Notes Myers Text Quizzes:

A critical component of success in this course will be students reading assigned text pages, page for page, word for word, closely. It will depend on students reading the assigned chapters in a timely manner, but also comprehending the material. The Myers textbook is considered by most psychology instructors to be the most readable text on the market. David Myers writes in a way that is creative, personal and easy to follow.

Each chapter has been dissected into chunks or modules in an effort to 1) assist students in better managing the chapter, 2) promote understanding, and 3) prepare students for the daily lecture topic. It is essential that students read the assigned material before the due date. Open note quizzes will be given on a variable schedule. Thus, students will be reinforced for the hand-written notes. Computer generated notes/photo copied notes may not be used.

Forty Studies That Changed Psychology Quizzes:

This reader presents full-length descriptions of the most significant/historical studies in the science. These studies are relatively short and easy-to-read. Students were required to read 10 of these studies over the summer. There will be a class discussion centered around most of these studies, based on student summaries, and a quiz consisting of 10 questions on each of these important studies. This book is a great supplement to the main text- providing much more detail on the most fascinating studies in our field.

Assignments (15%)

There will be a variety of writing assignments and in class activities that will be incorporated throughout this course to help students with a further understanding of course material. Several of these assignments will be included in student grades for each quarter.

Midterm and Final Exams (15%)

A midterm and final exam will be given at the completion of each semester. The first semester midterm will include questions from the first semester units of study. The second semester final will include questions from all units of study (first and second semesters). In an effort to prepare students for the AP Exam in early May, an emphasis will be placed on continued study and rehearsal of previously learned information. Each final exam will include vocabulary, multiple choice and free response sections.

Grading Scale:	93-100	A
	85-92	B
	77-84	C
	70-76	D
	Below 69	F

**Percentages/grades will not be rounded.

**Extra Credit is not an option. Students wishing to obtain a certain grade must earn the respective percentage points, as listed above, and by the weights and guidelines explained in this syllabus.

**Grade marks in the "assignment" category are due at the beginning of the period (i.e., work handed in at the end of the period or at the end of the day is considered late). Late assignments are accepted at no more than 70% of the maximum value of the assignment and must be turned in within one week of the due date. No credit may be earned after this time period (score of "0").

Due Dates:

Assignments in this course, including pre-reading or pre-writing assignments, are intended to give you some background before the lecture or discussion on the given topic. Thus, due dates for completion need to be followed for the best possibility of student success. It is the students' responsibility to check due dates, by being aware of the class board outline and/or by checking with the instructor or classmates if need be.

Attendance as related to course work:

**All exams, quizzes and assignments will be posted with notice. An absence or absences on the proceeding day(s) does not constitute a change in due date. Students are expected to look ahead, be aware of due dates and take the necessary measures to be prepared for class each day. Unusual, lengthy and/or emergency absences or circumstances should be brought to the attention of the instructor.

**Students absent on the date of the unit exam are subject to an ALTERNATIVE FORM of the exam. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule a time OUTSIDE OF CLASS to complete the exam ASAP.

**All make-up exams/quizzes must be completed within one week of return (preferably before to maximize the likelihood of student success).

Scholastic Misconduct & Academic Honesty Statement:

Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for this course is grounds for receiving a grade of "F" for said work and possibly the course.

Scholastic misconduct is broadly defined as "any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work." Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to: cheating on assignments or exams; plagiarizing, which means representing as your own work any part of work done by another; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work.

Course Overview (not necessarily in this order):**I. History & Approaches**

Topics: Historical Schools of Psychology, Modern Approaches to Psychology, Subfields in Psychology, Nature v. Nurture

II. Research in Psychological Science

Topics: The Powers & Perils of Intuition, Experimental Research, Counterintuitive Findings

III. Biological Psychology

Topics: Split-Brain Research, Left v. Right Handedness, Neurological Disorders, Twin Studies, Heritability, Evolutionary Theory of Mate Selection, Phantom Limb Syndrome

IV. Sensation & Perception

Topics: Visual Illusions, Subliminal Stimuli, Pain, Phantom Limb Syndrome, Color Blindness, Depth Perception, Human v. Non-Human Animal Senses

V. States of Consciousness

Topics: Attention, Divided Attention, Sleep, Sleep Disorders, Dreaming, Hypnosis, Drug States

VI. Learning & Conditioning

Topics: Classical Conditioning, Operant Conditioning, Observational Learning

VII. Cognitive Psychology

Topics: Amnesia, Memory, Accuracy of Eyewitness Testimony, Memory Improvement, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Known Errors in Human Problem Solving

VIII. Motivation & Emotion

Topics: The Hunger Drive, The Sex Drive, The Sleep Drive, The Need for Achievement, Stress, Conflict, Coping Skills, Self-Consciousness, Universal Facial Expressions

IX. Developmental Psychology

Topics: Infant & Child Development, Social Attachment, Adolescence, Parenting Styles, Aging, Cognitive Development in Childhood, Development of Morality

X. Personality: Theory, Research & Assessment

Topics: What is the difference between personality, character and temperament? How does personality develop? How should we measure personality?

XI. Intelligence & Individual Differences

Topics: IQ, Intelligence Testing, Giftedness, Mental Retardation, Why are people intelligent?

XII. Psychological Disorders

Topics: OCD, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Phobic Disorder, Hypochondriasis, Antisocial Personality Disorder

XIII. Social Psychology

Topics: Attraction, Conformity, Obedience, Group Influence, Social Pressure, Love, Aggression

Benefits of the AP Course:

- Earning college credit
- Financial Considerations
- Class Size
- Teacher v. Professor/Classroom v. Lecture