

Psychology

Updated 5/2020

Course Description:

Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. Aspects covered and emphasized include: physiology and behavior, sensation and perception, states of consciousness, theories of personality (both normal and abnormal), memory, and conditioning. Projects and activities include various case studies, a dream interpretation project, field observation, “end of the world” simulation, country profile project, and psychological film analysis. This course is designed for the college-bound student and/or students who want to further their understanding of human thought and philosophies. ***(Prerequisite: enrolled students must have an average of a B- or better in all previous social studies courses)***

Students may earn 3.0 hours of college credit through enrollment in PY101 Psychology Perspectives/Human Behavior at SEMO.

Big Ideas:

- The value of both basic and applied psychological research with human and non-human animals
- The major divisions and subdivisions of the human nervous system
- Various factors that significantly influence emotion, motivation, and personality
- The relationship between attitudes (implicit and explicit) and behavior

Essential Questions:

- How can the reliability and validity of observations be measured during data collection and analysis?
- How does an individual's interaction with the environment help shape perception?
- How do individualistic and collectivistic cultural perspectives relate to personality?
- How do privilege and social power structures influence stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination?

Essential Learner Objectives:

1. Students will be able to understand the importance of psychology as an empirical science, while also describing perspectives it employs to understand behavioral and mental processes.
 - Scientific Inquiry
 - Describe and compare a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods
 - Describe the scientific method and its role in psychology
 - Define systematic procedures used to improve the validity of research findings, such as external validity

- Identify ethical standards psychologists must address regarding research with human and non-human participants
- Social Science
 - Define psychology as a discipline and identify its goals as a science
 - Discuss the value of basic and applied psychological research with humans
 - Describe the major subfields of psychology
 - Identify the important role that psychology plays in benefitting society and improving people's lives
 - Explain how psychology evolved as a scientific discipline
 - Explain other statistical concepts, such as statistical significance and effect size

2. Students will be able to identify the structure and explain the various functions of the nervous system in human and non-human animals, specifically focusing on sensory processes.

- The Brain and Spinal Cord
 - Identify the parts of the neuron and describe the basic process of neural transmission
 - Discuss the mechanisms and importance of the plasticity of the nervous system
 - Describe lateralization of brain functions
 - Discuss issues related to scientific advances in neuroscience and genetics
- Sensory Processes
 - Explain the processes of threshold and adaptation
 - Explain how experiences and expectations influence perception
 - List forms of physical energy for which humans and non-human animals do and do not have sensory receptors
 - Describe other sensory systems, such as olfaction, gustation, and somesthesia

3. Students will be able to identify biological and environmental influences on the expression and experience of emotions, motivation, and personality.

- Emotion
 - Differentiate among theories of emotional experience
 - Explain how culture and gender influence emotional interpretation and expression
 - Explain the biological and cognitive components of emotion
- Motivation
 - Explain the role of culture in human motivation
 - Discuss the roles of sexual behavior and orientation in understanding motivation
 - Explain biologically and cognitively based theories of motivation
- Personality

- Discuss the reliability and validity of personality assessment techniques
- Identify how the idea of self-concept can affect one's personality over time
- Evaluate how Freud's psychodynamic theory relates to personality

4. Students will be able to discuss how group dynamics influence individual behavior, as well as how psychological research examines race, ethnicity, and sociocultural diversity.

- Race and Ethnicity
 - Define culture and diversity
 - Discuss factors influencing attraction and relationships
 - Identify persuasive methods used to change attitudes
 - Describe determinants of prosocial behavior
- Sociocultural Diversity
 - Compare and contrast gender identity and sexual orientation
 - Examine how perspectives affect stereotypes and treatment of majority and minority groups in society
 - Discuss psychological research examining differences in individual cognitive and physical abilities
 - Discuss influences upon aggression and conflict