

Lasalle Secondary School
AP Psychology
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Purpose:

The AP Psychology course is designed to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of the behaviour 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. They also learn about the ethics and methods psychologists use in their science and practice. A variety of activities, demonstrations, and projects will be provided to emphasize the instruction of scientific and empirical approaches.

Textbook:

- Myers, David G. and C. Nathan DeWall. *Myers' Psychology for the AP Course*, 3rd ed. New York: Worth Publishers, 2018.

Expectations:

This course will be intensive. Ample notice will be given for any assignment, quiz, or test. The amount of work at any given time will depend on the unit being covered. It is likely that you will need to dedicate at least one hour of reading time each day, plus study and assignment time. There will be assigned pages to read in the textbook every week. Condense chapters into shorter, meaningful notes as you read them, but do not try to read an entire chapter at once; they are divided for a reason.

Many vocabulary terms are introduced in each unit. Tests will be administered throughout the course, which will use multiple-choice questions; these will help you master vocabulary and will guide you to adequate exam preparation.

Other assignments will include demonstrations, journal reflections (these assignments vary with each unit being covered), and an independent research study.

You'll be expected to create an account on the College Board website and join our AP Classroom as well as our Google Classroom. Use it to your advantage; countless test banks and additional resources to facilitate your learning, enhance course concepts, and help you study can be found here. I will also post review materials there. You will need this account to register for and write the AP exam in May as well.

If you want to succeed, you will succeed, if you agree to put in the necessary effort. DO NOT MISS CLASS, and do your readings. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day. Missed tests require adequate justification to be permitted to make them up the following day; if this applies to you, you will be writing a different test than everyone else.

I hope that one day you will look back and sincerely say this is one of the best courses you took in high school. It will challenge you deeply, and you will learn about a fascinating subject that is applicable to your daily life now and in the future. You will also have a really good idea of what you'll be getting into at university from taking this course. Best of luck!

Course Outline:

The following is an outline of our AP Psychology course. It shows the major content areas that will be covered, as well as the approximate percentage of the AP exam that is devoted to each subject area. This outline is intended as a guide; it is not an exhaustive list of topics. More detailed information on scheduling and required readings will be provided.

Unit I: History and Approaches

(2 – 4%)

- A. Logic, Philosophy, and History of Science
- B. Approaches/Perspectives (Biological, Behavioural, Cognitive, Humanistic, Psychodynamic, Sociocultural, Evolutionary)

Objectives:

- * Define psychology and trace its historical development.
- * Introduce psychological perspectives; compare and contrast how they define the nature of psychology.
- * Activity: over-confidence experiment (critical thinking and perspective)

Unit II: Research Methods

(6 – 8 %)

- A. Nature of Scientific Inquiry: Sources of bias and error
- B. Experimental, Correlation, and Clinical Research
- C. Statistics: Central Tendency, Variance, Significance Correlation
- D. Ethics in Research: Human Participants, Animal Subjects

Objectives:

- * Identify basic and applied research subfields of psychology, and basic elements of an experiment.
- * Compare and contrast research methods (case, survey, naturalistic observation) through discussion.
- * Explain correlational studies and variation.
- * Learn how the independent study for this course guides you through the research process for psychology.
- * Activities: placebo effect experiment, double blind demonstration, taste ID experiment

Unit III: Biological Basis of Behavior

(8 – 10 %)

- A. Physiological Techniques (Imaging, Surgical)
- B. Neuroanatomy (Neural & Synaptic Transmission, Drug Abuse)
- C. Structural and Functional Organization of the Nervous System
- D. Endocrine System
- E. Genetics

Objectives:

- * Describe the structure of a neuron, neural impulses, neuron communication, and the impact of neurotransmitters.
- * Classify and explain major divisions and reactions of the nervous system.
- * Describe the functions of the brain structures; identify lobes of the cerebral cortex and their functions; label diagrams.
- * Describe the nature of the endocrine system and its interaction with the nervous system.
- * Activities: grapefruit model of the brain, squeeze chain experiment (speed of thought)

Unit IV: Sensation and Perception

(7 – 9 %)

- A. Thresholds
- B. Sensory Mechanisms
- C. Sensory Adaptation
- D. Attention
- E. Perceptual Processes

Objectives:

- * Contrast the processes of sensation and perception; describe the operations of the sensory system.
- * Label diagrams of the parts of the eye and ear; consider hearing impairments and visual distortions.
- * Explain theories related to the senses: colour vision and pitch perception.
- * Explore how perceptual phenomena are used in movies, special effects, etc..
- * Activities: depth perception demonstration; Fresnel lenses; optical illusions; taste, vision, and hearing test

Unit V: States of Consciousness

(2 – 4 %)

- A. Sleeping & Dreaming
- B. Hypnosis
- C. Psychoactive Drug Effects

Objectives:

- * Describe the sleep cycle and functions; identify sleep disorders; discuss functions of dreams and keep a dream journal.
- * Discuss hypnosis and the behaviour of hypnotized people, as well as claims regarding its uses.
- * Discuss drug dependence; chart the names and effects of depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogenic drugs.
- * Activities: myths vs. facts, Mouse Party

Unit VI: Learning

(7 – 9 %)

- A. Classical Conditioning
- B. Operant Conditioning
- C. Cognitive Processes in Learning
- D. Biological Factors
- E. Social Learning

Objectives:

- * Describe the processes of classical conditioning, acquisition, extinction, spontaneous recovery, generalization, discrimination, operant conditioning.
- * Student presentations showing real-world demonstrations of classical and operant conditioning.
- * Discuss the importance of cognitive processes and biological predispositions in conditioning, and process of observational learning
- * Activities: Pavlovian dog experiment, maze learning

Unit VII: Cognition**(8 – 10 %)**

- A. Memory
- B. Language
- C. Thinking
- D. Problem Solving & Creativity

Objectives:

- * Describe memory, including information processing and distinction between types of memory.
- * Explain the encoding process, memory capacity, retrieval cues, and implicit and explicit memory.
- * Describe the structure of language (phonemes, morphemes, grammar) and the developmental stages of language.
- * Describe research on animal cognition and communication.
- * Explain how we use trial and error, algorithms, heuristics, and insight to solve problems, and how representativeness and availability of heuristics influence our judgements.
- * Activities: Letter chunking experiment, self-fulfilling prophecy experiment (Elliot's brown eyes vs. blue eyes), puzzles

Unit VIII: Motivation & Emotion**(7 – 9%)**

- A. Biological Basis
- B. Theories of Motivation
- C. Hunger, Thirst, Sex, & Pain
- D. Social Motives
- E. Theories of Emotion
- F. Stress

Objectives:

- * Define motivation; identify motivational theories; define achievement motivation.
- * Describe physiological determinants and cultural influences of hunger; discuss eating disorders.
- * Identify the theories of emotion; describe the physiological changes that occur during emotional arousal.
- * Define stress and describe its biological responses.
- * Activities: criminal identification experiment, judging emotions experiment, stress test

Unit IX: Developmental Psychology**(7 – 9 %)**

- A. Life-Span Approach
- B. Heredity-Environmental Issues
- C. Developmental Theories
- D. Dimensions of Development (Physical, Cognitive, Social, Moral)
- E. Sex Roles & Sex Differences

Objectives:

- * Discuss the course of prenatal development; illustrate major development changes in physical, social, and cognitive areas in infancy; discuss effects of body contact, familiarity, and secure attachment vs. parental neglect.
- * Describe and apply the theories of Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg.
- * Distinguish between longitudinal and cross-sectional studies.
- * Write an essay applying developmental theories to the adolescent stage of life.
- * Activities: nature vs. nurture debate, instructional planning for developmental stages, gender assumptions activity

Unit X: Personality**(6 – 8%)**

- A. Personality Theory & Approaches
- B. Assessment Techniques
- C. Self-Concept / Self-Esteem
- D. Growth & Adjustment

Objectives:

- * Describe Freud's theory of id, ego, and superego, and its application to personality.
- * Explain defense mechanisms and how they protect from anxiety.
- * Evaluate personality theories based on criteria for good scientific theory.
- * Discuss Maslow and self-actualization, and Rogers' emphasis on potential for growth.
- * Discuss the impact of individualism and collectivism on self-identity.
- * Activities: personality inventory, Rorschach Test experiment

Unit XI: Testing & Individual Differences**(5 – 7 %)**

- A. Standardization & Norms

- B. Reliability & Validity
- C. Types of Tests
- D. Ethics & Standards in Testing
- E. Intelligence
- F. Heredity / Environment & Intelligence
- G. Human Diversity

Objectives:

- * Describe the nature of intelligence; discuss genetic and environmental influences on intelligence.
- * Describe the difference in aptitude and achievements tests; trace origins of testing and discuss its validity & bias.
- * Describe test standardization and analyze the validity of standardized testing by reading reviews of standardized tests to determine strengths and weaknesses.
- * Activities: online intelligence tests, statistical analysis of results of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Unit XII: Abnormal Psychology

(7 – 9 %)

- A. Definitions of Abnormality
- B. Theories of Psychopathology
- C. Diagnosis of Psychopathology
- D. Anxiety Disorders
- E. Somatoform Disorders
- F. Mood Disorders
- G. Schizophrenic Disorders
- H. Organic Disorders
- I. Personality Disorders
- J. Dissociative Disorders

Objectives:

- * Identify the criteria for abnormal behaviour; describe the symptoms of each group of mental health disorders.
- * Describe the function of the most recent DSM; discuss the potential dangers of diagnostic labels.
- * Write a case study of a fictional person diagnosed with a psychological disorder.
- * Activities: depression inventory, diagnosis of case studies

Unit XIII: Treatment of Psychological Disorders

(5 – 7 %)

- A. Treatment Approaches (Insight Therapies, Behavioural Approaches, Cognitive Approaches, Biological Approaches)
- B. Modes of Therapy (Individual, Group)
- C. Community & Preventative Approaches
- D. Ethics in Psychological Practice

Objectives:

- * Discuss the aims and methods of psychoanalysis.
- * Identify the basics of: humanistic therapies, behaviour therapy, cognitive therapies, drug therapy, etc..
- * Discuss the benefits of group and family therapy, and the effectiveness of psychotherapies.
- * Discuss the role of values and culture in the therapeutic process.
- * Ethical dilemmas in therapy presented for discussion.
- * Activities: case study treatment plans, the way I think (cognitive therapy demonstration)

Unit 14: Social Psychology

(7 – 9 %)

- A. Group Dynamics
- B. Attribution Process
- C. Interpersonal Perception
- D. Conformity, Compliance, & Obedience
- E. Attitudes & Attitude Change
- F. Organizational Behaviour
- G. Aggression / Antisocial Behaviour

Objectives:

- * Explain the effect of role-playing on attitudes, according to cognitive dissonance theory.
- * Discuss results of experiments on conformity; discuss interaction and its facilitation of polarization & groupthink.
- * Discuss prejudice and discrimination and its social, emotional, and cognitive factors; explain altruistic behaviour.
- * Activities: sales tactics and social psychology, conformity experiment

Assessment:

Term Work (70%):	Knowledge and Understanding	25%
	Thinking	30%
	Communication	20%
	Application	25%
Final Tasks (30%):	Research Paper & Presentation	15%
	Final Exam	15%

Projects:

Projects are outlined briefly in course objectives. They include written reflection responses, additional readings, and research. All research and formal writing assignments must be presented in proper APA format, with proper documentation.

A response journal will be an ongoing project throughout the course. This journal writing will facilitate deep processing of learning and encourage critical thinking and independent exploration. It will also provide an opportunity to give individualized feedback and guide student learning. Students will reflect on: readings, class discussions and activities, personal experiences and connections, recent media connections, and additional research.

Independent Study:

Students will conduct an independent research assignment throughout the course, based on a relevant topic in the realm of psychology. It will start with an abstract, the creation and administration of a survey, and data collection and analysis. Students will then draw from course content as well as additional research from scientific journals to produce a properly cited research paper in APA format on their chosen topic, which will be due in January. They will then conduct a 10-15 minute presentation of their findings and address questions from the class.

Traditional Assessments:

Unit Tests will be written at the end of each unit, and are modeled on the AP exam, with approximately 60 multiple choice questions and one free response question, to be completed in 75 minutes.

Exams will include a midterm exam (mid-November) and a final exam (late January). The exams will follow the same format as the unit tests and the AP exam; the number of multiple choice questions will be adjusted to the available writing time, to produce a similar time pressure to that of the AP exam.

The AP Exam will be written in May. This is the standardized exam from the College Board. Your credit is not contingent upon this exam; you can still earn the HSB credit without passing, or even writing, the AP exam. If you hope to have this class count as your first year Psychology course in university, you must take the AP exam in May.