

Psychology

Winthrop High School

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Course Syllabus (Advanced Placement)
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Goals:

Students will learn about some of the explorations and discoveries made by psychologists over the past century.

Students will assess some of the differing approaches adopted by psychologists, including the biological, behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, psychodynamic, and sociocultural perspectives.

Most importantly, students will come to an appreciation of how psychologists think (or at least an appreciation of the kind of critical analysis that psychologists espouse and hope to model in their words and actions).

Resources:

Our required text will be D. G. Myers' (2007) *Psychology* (9th ed). In addition to this text, of which we will be critically reading over 600 pages, we will use released open-response exam questions from 1999 – 2008, released multiple-choice questions from 2006, and various APA, academic, and government websites. Students may also wish to purchase a copy of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed.), more commonly known as the DSM-IV.

Summer Work:

Students will read Myers' first two chapters (the Prologue and Chapter 1). They should take copious notes, focusing on different psychological perspectives and on the different methods of research. They will complete a five-paragraph essay comparing and contrasting EITHER three of the psychological perspectives OR three of the methods of research. They should be prepared to discuss their ideas during the first class meeting.

Grading:

Quarterly grades are each 20% of your final grade. The midterm exam and the final project are each worth 10%. I base my quarterly grades on the following:

- Reading Quizzes/Bookwork (several per chapter) – 10-20 points
- Open Response Papers (1-2, some units only) – 7-9 points each
- Objective Exams (1 per unit) – 50-60 points each (dependent on open response points and number of multiple-choice questions)
- Projects (periodic, approx. 1-2 per quarter) – 40-60 points each
- Final Project – a whopping 300 points
- Behavior, attendance, and participation – as per “General Classroom Behavior”

See Grading Supplement for details on Unit Test grading.

Course Outline (with associated AP Course Requirements (CR) and AP National Standards references):

I. Scope, History, and Methodology [CR1; APA I A] - Readings during the summer, assessment during Week 1 – 6 Days

Historical Schools: Functionalism vs. Structuralism
 Modern Approaches: Psychodynamic, Behaviorist, Cognitive, Humanistic, Evolutionary, Neuroscience
 Nature of Scientific Inquiry: Sources of bias and error
 Research Methods: Introspection, observation, survey, psychological testing, controlled experiments [CR2]
 Statistics: Central tendency, variance, significance, correlation
 Ethics in Research: Human participants, animal subjects [CR16]

II. Biopsychology [CR3; APA II A] – 12 Days

Neuron: Neuronal and synaptic transmission, psychopharmacology, drug abuse
 Brain: Research methodology, neuroanatomy, brain development and aging, hemispheric specialization
 Nervous System: Structural and functional organization
 Endocrine System: Anatomy, HPA-axis, and immune system
 Genetics and Heritability

III. Sensation and Perception [CR4; APA II B] – 14 Days

Psychophysics: Thresholds (absolute, difference, Weber’s constants), signal detection theory
 Sensory Organs and Transduction: Visual (including color vision and feature detection), auditory, olfactory, gustatory, proprioceptive (including kinesthetic and vestibular)
 Perception: Attention, processing, illusions (including Gestalt psychology), and camouflage

IV. States of Consciousness [CR5; APA IV D] – 10 Days

States of Consciousness: Waking, sleep and dreaming, hypnosis, altered states

V. Learning Theory [APA IV A] – 9 Days

Historical Background and Philosophy of Radical Behaviorism

Classical Conditioning: Pavlov, Watson, applications, biological critique, cognitivist challenge

Operant Conditioning: Thorndike, Skinner, Bandura, behavior modification, biological critique, cognitivist challenge [CR15]

VI. Cognition and Memory [CR7; APA IV B, IV C] – 17 Days

Memory: Information processing, storage, retrieval

Accuracy of Memory: Loftus and Schacter

Cognition: Problem solving and heuristics [CR7]

Language: Skinner and Chomsky

VII. Testing and Individual Differences [CR11; APA IV E] – 5 Days

Psychological Testing: Methodology, norms, reliability, validity

Intelligence: Defining intelligence, history of intelligence and aptitude testing, nature-nurture issues

VIII. Motivation and Emotions [CR8; APA II C] – 8 Days

Motivational Concepts: Instincts, drives, optimal arousal, Maslow's hierarchy

Hunger and Eating Disorders

Stress as a Concept: Selye

Stress and Health Adjustment

Sexuality and Sexual Orientation

Achievement Motivation: McClelland and the TAT, intrinsic versus extrinsic motivators

Physiology of Emotion: Fear, anger, happiness

Expression of Emotion: Darwin and Ekman

Theories of Emotion: James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Schacter-Singer

IX. Developmental Psychology [CR9; APA II A] – 10 Days

Methodology: Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies

Nature vs. Nurture (maturation versus learning)

Influential Theories: Piaget and cognitive development, Freud and psychosocial development, Kohlberg and moral development, Gilligan and gender differentiation [CR6]

Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence, and Adulthood

X. Personality [CR10; APA III B] – 10 Days

Psychodynamic Perspective: Freud, Jung, Adler

Trait Perspective: Allport, factor analysis and the five-factor model, assessment (Myers-Briggs, MMPI)
Humanistic Perspective: Maslow and Rogers
Social-Cognitive Perspective: Bandura and Seligman

XI. Abnormal Psychology and Treatment [CR12, CR13; APA V A, V B] – 13 Days

Approaches to Abnormality: The Rosenhan study, historical approaches (deviance), the medical model, the biopsychosocial model
Classifying Disorders: Evolution of the DSM-IV-TR
Major Categories of Disorders: Anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders, mood disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders
Major Approaches to Psychotherapy: Psychoanalysis, behavioristic, humanistic, cognitive, group, pharmacological
Does Therapy Work? Eysenck, outcome studies, and the Consumer Reports study

XII. Social Psychology [CR14; APA V C] – 20 Days

Attitudes and Behavior: Fundamental attribution error, roles, Festinger and cognitive dissonance
Group Influence: Asch and conformity, Milgram and obedience, facilitation and loafing, Janis and groupthink
Prejudice and Scapegoating
Altruism: Darley and Latané

See Timeline Supplement for dates.

Assessment:

Each unit will culminate in a multiple-choice objective exam (30-45 questions) and one or two 25-minute essays. Quizzes will reinforce classwork and assigned readings, and will be based upon Myers' chapter reviews. Additionally, students will complete the following projects.

- Build-A-Study (in depth. Final Exam grade)
- Naturalistic Observation
- Motivation and Emotion Research Project
- Review of Literature (part of Build-A-Study)
- Testing and Individual Differences Project

Scheduled assessments include the MidTerm (structured identically to the AP Exam) and a final project, presented following the AP Exam in May. A well-prepared project will consist of IRB-approved original research, with a lit review, presented in accordance with APA research guidelines.