



## Course: AP Psychology – 2024-2025

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Course Title:	AP Psychology
Grade:	11-12

### Course Description:

AP Psychology is a one-year introductory course, designed to provide students with a learning experience equivalent to that of a college level Psychology course, and to prepare students for the AP Psychology exam. This course is designed to allow students to experience an in-depth exploration of human thought processes and behavior through various psychological perspectives, including the psychoanalytic, biological, cognitive, behavioral, sociocultural, and humanistic schools of thought. Key terms, concepts, leaders, and principles of psychology are introduced, as well as contradicting viewpoints as to how these basic factors can be interpreted.

Students enrolled in this course must commit to engaging in a strong amount of coursework and homework, including reading, outlining, research, discussion, essay writing, as well as various assessments. Major goals of the course are to expand students' knowledge of Psychology, allow students to apply course concepts to themselves and the surrounding world, and to fully prepare students for the AP Psychology exam. In addition to the academic work, students will be encouraged to become more self-reflective and emotionally attuned, and share their feelings and thoughts with peers and class.

### Course Objectives:

1. Students will have a strong, in-depth understanding of the study of Psychology, including its roots/history, major schools of thought, key concepts, key psychological figures, and the evolution of psychology through the present.
2. Students will be able to research and discuss various psychological phenomena, and apply course concepts to their own life experiences.
3. Students will have the opportunity to reflect upon course concepts, and ask and answer questions about psychological phenomena affecting one another, as well as society at large.
4. Students will be fully prepared to succeed on the AP Psychology exam.
5. Students will have the opportunity to apply the various psychological theories to their own life in the attempt to reflect and grow in their personal development.



**Required Textbook:**

- Myers, D (2010). *Psychology* (9th ed.). New York: Worth Publishers (ISBN-13:978-1-4292-1597-8)

**Other Resources:**

- Various AP Test Preparation Handouts
- Multiple Articles from Psychology Today, Science for the Greater Good, etc.
- Multiple Video and Documentaries, including TED Talks, etc.

**Expectations:**

There are several requirements that all AP classes have in common: high expectations of the students, a high level of rigor, and the expectations that students will engage in self-learning outside the classroom. There are many topics on the AP Exam in May. We will learn a great deal in class with rigorous learning activities. However, as in university, it will be necessary for all students to complete work and research topics at home that we may not discuss in class.

**Important**

Psychology is a course that includes a number of sensitive topics that may make participants feel uncomfortable talking or hearing about in class. The nature of the movies and documentaries will be discussed prior to viewing so that participants can decide if they are comfortable with the topic. It may be necessary to send home permission slips for a signature from your parents or guardians if a documentary that is planned may be of a particularly powerful nature.

**Assignments**

For each unit, students must complete these regular assignments to the instructor's satisfaction:

- Vocabulary notecards (Definition, Example, Picture)
- Reading Questions (from the text and other sources)
- Demonstration and case study analyses
- Free Response Questions
- Personal Progress Checks

Each unit will require the completion of vocabulary notecards, reading questions, and projects:

- Vocabulary – from a list of terms and commonly used psychological vocabulary, the student is expected to not only define the term, but also create an example and choose a visual representation of the term (can be physical or electronic).
- FRQs (Free Response Questions) – each topic will be accompanied by a free response question. As the topic is learned, the student will be prepared to answer the question fully and critically.
- Reading Questions – Reading is a large part of this class. Students are required to read the text and other supplemental readings, and they must answer questions on the readings.



- Personal Progress Checks – Research shows that testing your own knowledge helps with retention and retrieval. Students are required to complete a Personal Progress Check (PPC) on AP Classroom with each unit.

### **Assessments**

Traditional assessments include unit tests, research papers, and exams. Tests and exams will model the format of the AP Psychology Exam, with a combination of multiple-choice and free response essays. Other assessments consist of psychology simulations, experiments, class presentations, collaborative/individual research projects, and online activities, such as assessments from the AP Classroom.

**Tests:** Because a major objective of AP Psychology is to fully prepare students for the AP Psychology Exam, a strong emphasis will be placed on unit tests. Following each unit of study, students will be formally assessed through unit tests, which will be formatted similarly to the AP exam.

Unit tests will consist of multiple choice questions as well as Free-Response Questions. Although unit tests will focus on the present unit of study, some questions will be cumulative (addressing material covered in previous units). Students will be responsible for all unit material discussed in class and assigned for homework and all unit materials are subject to inclusion on unit tests.

**Papers/Assignments/Projects/Presentations:** Throughout the course, students will be assigned papers, projects, assignments and presentations (group and/or individual). Such assignments will be assessed through content, as well as grammar, organization, structure, and neatness. All papers are to be written in American Psychological Association (APA) format. You must ALWAYS cite your sources.

**Quizzes:** Students will be formally assessed regularly (which will serve as benchmarks: to monitor student learning). Quizzes will assess students' understanding of the unit vocabulary terms, and will consist of multiple choice questions (MCQ) and will be formatted similarly to the AP exam.

**Class Work/Homework/Research Studies:** Students will receive various class work assignments throughout the course. Such assignments will include, but are not limited to, textbook readings/questions, outlines/note taking, hand-outs, video reflections, free response questions, research/case study analyses, and personal progress checks.

**Journal:** Students will be required to keep a journal throughout the year. This journal will be used for various in class activities as well as outside assignments. The journal will be kept private in order to encourage openness and honesty.

**Grading:** Students' grades will be updated every 1-2 weeks. Students are encouraged to check in and discuss their grades one-on-one with me before or after class if they feel the need.



**Quizzes / Tests / Assessments: 35%**

**Homework, Reflections: 20%**

**In Class Participation: 10%**

**Projects, Presentations, Assignments and Group Work: 35%**

**Student Materials:**

- Three-ring binder
- (14) Three-ring binder dividers (to separate each unit of study)
- Paper
- Pens/Pencils
- Course Textbook
- Course Syllabus
- Journal

**Student Fees:** AP Exam Fee is currently \$160 (price subject to change)

**Course Outline in Brief:**

Unit #	Unit Name	% Tested on AP Exam
1	The Story of Psychology	5%
2	Research Methods	5%
3	Biological Bases of Behaviour	8%
4	Sensation and Perception	6%
5	States of Consciousness	6%
6	Learning	6%
7	Cognition	10%
8	Motivation and Emotion	6%
9	Developmental Psychology	10%
10	Personality	8%
11	Intelligence	6%
12	Psychological Disorders	10%
13	Treatments	6%
14	Social Psychology	8%

**Course Outline:**

**Unit 1: The Story of Psychology - History and Approaches of Psychology (Textbook Prologue)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Introduction to Psychology
- B. Historical Schools of Thought



- C. Modern Approaches/Perspectives
- D. Psychology as a Profession

- **Questions**

1. When and how did psychological science begin?
2. How did psychology continue to develop from the 1920's through today?
3. What is psychology's historic big issue?
4. What are psychology's levels of analysis and related perspectives?
5. What are psychology's main subfields?
6. How can psychological principles help you as a student?

Unit 1 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 1 FRQ Personal Progress Check

**Unit 2: Thinking Critically with Psychological Science - Research Methods (Textbook Chapter 1)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Scientific Method
- B. Research Methods
- C. Problems/Solutions
- D. Statistics
- E. Ethics in Psychological Research

- **Questions**

1. Why are the answers that flow from the scientific approach more reliable than those based on intuition and common sense?
2. What are the three main components of the scientific attitude?
3. How do theories advance psychological science?
4. How do psychologists observe and describe behavior?
5. Can laboratory experiments illuminate everyday life?
6. Why do psychologists study animals, and is it ethical to experiment on animals?
7. Is it ethical to experiment on people?
8. Is psychology free of value judgments?

Unit 2 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 2 FRQ Personal Progress Check

**Unit 3: Biological Bases of Behavior (Textbook Chapters 2 and 4)**

- **Topics of Study**



- A. Neuroanatomy
- B. Neurological Processes
- C. Nervous System
- D. Neural Transmission
- E. Endocrine System
- F. The Brain
- G. Genetics

- **Questions**

1. What are the neurons, and how do they transmit information?
2. How do nerve cells communicate with other nerve cells?
3. How do neurotransmitters influence behavior, and how do drugs and other chemicals affect neurotransmission?
4. What are the functions of the nervous system's main divisions?
5. How does the endocrine system – the body's slower information system- transmit its message?
6. How do neuroscientists study the brain's connections to behavior and mind?
7. What are the functions of important lower-level brain structures?
8. What functions are served by the various cerebral cortex regions?
9. What do split brains reveal about the functions of our two brain hemispheres?

Unit 3 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 3 FRQ Personal Progress Check

#### **Unit 4: Sensation and Perception (Textbook Chapter 6)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Sensation
- B. Sensory Processes
- C. Sensory Adaptation
- D. Psychophysics
- E. Perception

- **Questions**

1. What are sensation and perception? What do we mean by bottom-up processing and top-down processing?
2. What are the absolute and difference thresholds, and do stimuli below the absolute threshold have any influence?
3. What is the function of sensory adaptation?
4. What is the energy that we see as visual light?



5. What are the characteristics of air pressure waves that we hear as sound?
6. How do the eye and ear transform light and sound energy into neural messages?
7. How do we experience each of the body's senses?
8. How do Gestalt psychologists understand perceptual organization?
9. How adaptable is our ability to perceive?
10. How do our expectations, contexts, and emotions influence our perceptions?

Unit 4 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 4 FRQ Personal Progress Check

### **Unit 5: States of Consciousness (Textbook Chapter 3)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Consciousness
- B. Sleep
- C. Dreaming
- D. Hypnosis and Meditation
- E. Drugs and Consciousness

- **Questions**

1. What is consciousness?
2. How much information do we consciously attend to at once?
3. How do our biological rhythms influence our daily functioning and our sleep and dreams?
4. What is the biological rhythm of our sleep?
5. What is sleep's function?
6. How does loss of sleep affect us?
7. What are the major sleep disorders?
8. What is the function of dreams?
9. What are the functions of hypnosis and meditation?
10. What are tolerance, dependence, and addiction?

Unit 5 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 5 FRQ Personal Progress Check

### **Unit 6: Learning (Textbook Chapter 7)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Classical Conditioning
- B. Operant Conditioning
- C. Social Learning



D. Factors of Learning (Biological, Cognitive)

- **Questions**

1. What are some basic forms of learning?
2. What is classical conditioning and how did Pavlo's work influence behaviorism?
3. In classical conditioning, what are the processes of acquisition, extinction, spontaneous recovery, generalization, and discrimination?
4. Why is Pavlov's work important?
5. What is operant conditioning and how does it differ from classical conditioning?
6. What are the basic types of reinforcers?
7. How do different reinforcement schedules affect behavior?
8. How does punishment affect behavior?
9. Do cognitive processes and biological constraints affect operant conditioning?
10. What is observational learning and how is it enabled by mirror neurons?

Unit 6 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 6 FRQ Personal Progress Check

**Unit 7: Cognition – Memory, Thinking and Language (Textbook Chapters 8 & 9)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Processes of Memory (Encoding, Storage, Retrieval)
- B. Stages of Memory (Sensory, Short-term, Long-term)
- C. Forgetting
- D. Language
- E. Problem Solving

- **Questions**

1. How do psychologists describe the human memory system?
2. What information do we encode automatically? What information do we encode effortfully, and how does the distribution of practice influence retention?
3. What is sensory memory?
4. What are the duration and capacity of short-term and long-term memory?
5. How does the brain store our memories?
6. How do we get information out of memory?
7. Why do we forget?
8. How do misinformation, imagination, and source amnesia influence our memory construction? How real-seeming are false memories?
9. How can an understanding of memory contribute to more effective study techniques?





Unit 7 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 7 FRQ Personal Progress Check

### **Unit 8: Motivation and Emotion (Textbook Chapters 11 & 12)**

- **Topics of Study**

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

- **Questions**

1. From what perspectives do psychologists view motivated behavior?
2. What physiological factors produce hunger?
3. What psychological and cultural factors influence hunger?
4. How do anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder demonstrate the influence of psychological forces on physiologically motivated behaviors?
5. What stages mark the human sexual response cycle?
6. How do internal and external stimuli influence sexual behavior?
7. What has research taught us about sexual orientation?
8. What is the role of organized psychologists?
9. What are the components of an emotion?
10. How do we communicate nonverbally? Are nonverbal expressions of emotion universally understood?
11. What is stress, and what types of events provoke stress responses?
12. What factors affect our ability to cope with stress?

Unit 8 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 8 FRQ Personal Progress Check

### **Unit 9: Developmental Psychology (Textbook Chapter 5)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. The Life Span
- B. Prenatal Development and the Newborn
- C. Infancy and Childhood
- D. Adolescence
- E. Adulthood
- F. Old Age



- **Questions**

1. How does life develop before birth?
2. What are some newborn abilities and how do researchers explore infants' mental abilities?
3. During infancy and childhood, how do the brain and motor skills develop?
4. From the perspective of Piaget and today's researchers, how does a child's mind develop?
5. How do parent-infant attachment bonds form?
6. What physical changes mark adolescence?
7. How did Piaget, Kohlberg, and later researchers describe adolescent cognitive and moral development?
8. What are the social tasks and challenges of adolescence?
9. What is emerging adulthood?
10. What physical changes occur during middle and late adulthood?
11. How do memory and intelligence change with age?
12. What themes and influences mark our social journey from early adulthood to death?

Unit 9 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 9 FRQ Personal Progress Check

### **Unit 10: Personality (Textbook Chapter 13)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Theories of Personality
- B. Assessment Techniques
- C. Self-Concepts/Self-Esteem
- D. Growth and Adjustment

- **Questions**

1. What was Freud's view of personality?
2. How did Freud think people defended themselves against anxiety?
3. What are the projective tests, and how are they used?
4. How do contemporary psychologists view Freud and the unconscious?
5. How did humanistic psychologists view personality, and what was their goal in studying personality?
6. How did humanistic psychologists assess a person's sense of self?
7. How do psychologists use traits to describe personality?
8. What are personality inventories and what are their strengths and weaknesses as trait-assessment tools?
9. In the view of social-cognitive psychologists, what mutual influences shape an individual's personality?
10. Are we helped or hindered by high self-esteem?



Unit 10 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 10 FRQ Personal Progress Check

### **Unit 11: Intelligence - Testing and Individual Difference (Textbook Chapter 10)**

- **Topics of Study**

- Standardization and Norms
- Reliability and Validity
- Types of Tests
- Ethics and Standards in Testing
- Intelligence
- Heredity/Environment and Intelligence
- Human Diversity

- **Questions**

1. What argues for and against considering intelligence as one general mental ability?
2. How do Gardner's and Sternberg's theories of multiple intelligences differ?
3. What makes up emotional intelligence?
4. When and why were intelligence tests created?
5. What is the difference between aptitude and achievement tests, and how can we develop and evaluate them?
6. How stable are intelligence scores over the lifespan?
7. What are the traits of those at the low and high intelligence extremes?
8. What does evidence reveal about hereditary and environmental influences on intelligence?
9. How and why do gender and racial groups differ in mental ability scores?
10. Are intelligence tests inappropriately biased?

Unit 11 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 11 FRQ Personal Progress Check

### **Unit 12: Psychological Disorders (Textbook Chapter 14)**

- **Topics of Study**

- Perspectives on Psychological Disorders
- Classifications and the DSM-IV/V
- Anxiety Disorders
- Dissociative Disorders
- Somatoform Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Schizophrenic Disorders



## H. Personality Disorders

- **Questions**

1. How should we draw the line between normality and disorder?
2. What perspectives can help us understand psychological disorders?
3. How and why do clinicians classify psychological disorders?
4. What are anxiety disorders and how do they differ from ordinary worries and fears?
5. What produces the thoughts and feelings that mark anxiety disorders?
6. What are somatoform disorders?
7. What are dissociative disorders and why are they controversial?
8. What are mood disorders and what forms do they take?
9. What patterns of thinking, perceiving, feeling, and behaving characterize schizophrenia?
10. What causes schizophrenia?
11. What characteristics are typical of personality disorders?
12. How many people suffer, or have suffered, from a psychological disorder?

Unit 12 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 12 FRQ Personal Progress Check

## **Unit 13: Treatment of Psychological Disorders (Textbook Chapter 15)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Treatment Approaches
- B. Types of Therapy
- C. Preventative Approaches

- **Questions**

1. What are the aims and methods of psychoanalysis and how have they been adapted in psychodynamic therapy?
2. What are the basic themes of humanistic therapy, such as Roger's client-centered approach?
3. What are the assumptions and techniques of the behavior therapies?
4. What are the goals and techniques of cognitive therapies?
5. What are the aims and benefits of group and family therapy?
6. Are some therapies more effective than others?
7. How do culture and values influence the therapist-client relationship?
8. What are the drug therapies? What criticism have been leveled against drug therapies?
9. How, by caring for their bodies with a healthy life-style, might people find relief from depression?
10. What is the rationale for preventive mental health programs?

Unit 13 MCQ Personal Progress Check



Unit 13 FRQ Personal Progress Check

**Unit 14: Social Psychology (Textbook Chapter 16)**

- **Topics of Study**

- A. Group Dynamics
- B. Social Thinking
- C. Social Influence
- D. Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience
- E. Social Relations

- **Questions**

1. How do we tend to explain others' behavior and our own?
2. Does what we think affect what we do, or does what we do affect what we think?
3. What do experiments on conformity and compliance reveal about the power of social influence?
4. How is our behavior affected by the presence of others or by being part of a group?
5. What is prejudice? What are its social, emotional, and cognitive roots?
6. What psychological factors may trigger aggressive behavior?
7. Why do we befriend or fall in love with some people and not others?
8. How do social traps and mirror-image perceptions fuel social conflict?
9. How can we transform feelings of prejudice, aggression, and conflict into attitudes that promote peace?

Unit 14 MCQ Personal Progress Check

Unit 14 FRQ Personal Progress Check

*\*Units of Study may not occur in the same order as presented on this syllabus*