



AP Psychology

Course Summary:

The AP Psychology course introduces students to the scientific study of the behaviors and mental processes of human beings. Students will study a wide range of topics, including the history and approaches of psychology, research methods, behavior and learning, personality, and abnormal behavior and its treatment. Over the course of study, students will create a biography book detailing the contributions of important figures in the field. In addition, students will be exposed to a wide variety of activities, readings, and research studies during the course.

Course Outline

1. History and Approaches

1. History of Psychology Part 1
 - Define psychology
 - Explain how psychology qualifies as a science
 - Compare and contrast the field of psychology to other social and physical sciences
2. History of Psychology Part 2
 - Identify contemporary perspectives psychologists use to study behavior and cognitive processes
 - Explain the factors that affect the influence of contemporary psychological perspectives
 - Explain how early psychological research was biased
 - Summarize why minority groups were excluded from psychology
 - Identify the contributions women and minorities have made to psychology
3. Psychology Subfields
 - List and describe several areas and subfields of psychology
 - Identify occupations available to students who obtain different degrees in psychology
4. History and Approaches Unit Review
5. History and Approaches Unit test

2. Psychological Research Methods

1. Psychology and Research
 - List and explain the goals of psychology research
 - Explain the steps of the scientific method used to guide psychological research
 - Differentiate between types of variables used in experimental research and variables that can possibly interfere with research results
 - Distinguish between the purposes of a control group and an experimental group in a research study
 - Describe various factors influencing the generalization of a research study
2. Types of Research
 - Explain various types of descriptive research methods

- Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative data
 - Define statistics and examine various aspects of descriptive statistics
 - Describe hypothesis testing in inferential statistics
 - Examine correlation and regression in inferential statistics
 - Define and differentiate between reliability and validity and Explain issues influencing statistical significance
 - Examine benefits and limitations of using statistics to support psychological claims
3. Ethics in Research
 - Define ethics and relate ethics to the study of psychology
 - Summarize the American Psychological Association's Ethical Guidelines for Research
 - Describe current controversies involving ethical issues in psychology
 - Identify historical examples of ethical controversies that contributed to current ethical codes
 - Explain ethical guidelines surrounding the use of data in regard to electronic tools
 - Examine the status of ethical issues involving animal research
 4. Psychological Research Methods Unit Review
 5. Psychological Research Methods Unit test
3. **Biological Bases of Behavior**
 1. Biology and Psychology
 - Explain means of communication within the nervous system, and describe the structure and function of the neuron
 - Describe the process by which neurons transfer information
 - List common neurotransmitters that influence behavior and explain the function of each
 - List and describe key structures and functions of the peripheral nervous system
 - List and describe key structures and functions of the central nervous system
 - Describe the structure and functions of the endocrine system and Compare and contrast the communication process of the nervous and endocrine systems
 - Describe how hormones influence internal and external behavior
 2. Biological Structures
 - Identify the location of the forebrain and describe its function
 - Identify the location of the midbrain and hindbrain and describe the functions of each
 - Describe the components and functions of the cerebrum
 - Identify the lobes and associated components of the cerebral cortex and describe the function of each
 3. Genetics
 4. Biological Bases of Behavior Unit Review
 5. Biological Bases of Behavior Unit test
 4. **Sensation and Perception**
 1. Sensory and Perception
 - Define sensation and describe the study of psychophysics
 - Identify how sensory systems detect and process sensory stimuli
 - Identify the concepts of threshold, signal-detection theory, and sensory adaptation
 - Define perception and describe how sensation influences the process of perceptions

- Identify various factors involved in perceiving information
 - Describe Gestalt principles of perceptual organization and Discuss how depth cues and perceptual constancies influence perception
 - Identify various influences on perception and perceptual change
2. How Vision Works
 - Describe the structure and function of the eye
 - Explain how visual stimuli is related to and processed in the brain
 - Identify various eye conditions, eye diseases, and vision problems
 3. Hearing and Other Senses Part 1
 - Describe the structure and function of the ear
 - Explain how auditory stimuli is relayed to and processed in the brain and Describe common sensory hearing disorders
 - Identify the structure and function of the tactile system, including common touch disorders
 - Summarize the structure and function of the gustatory system, including common taste disorders
 - Describe the olfactory system and identify common smell disorders
 - Describe the sense of pain and pain disorders and Describe kinesthesia and disorders of kinesthesia
 - Describe the vestibular sense and disorders of the vestibular system
 4. Hearing and Other Senses Part 2
 5. Sensation and Perception Unit Review
 6. Sensation and Perception Unit test
- 5. States of Consciousness**
1. Consciousness: Hypnosis and Meditation
 - Define consciousness and identify key features of consciousness
 - Describe differing levels of consciousness from the psychodynamic viewpoint
 - Define and explain hypnosis and Describe the early uses of hypnosis to address psychological symptoms
 - Identify the contemporary uses of hypnosis in pain control and psychotherapy
 - Explain the effects of meditation
 - Critique the use of biofeedback as a mechanism for gaining control over biological functions
 - Compare the cultural and historical influences on the value judgments associated with voluntary consciousness changes
 2. Sleep Patterns
 - Describe the sleep cycle and biological rhythms and Explain why people sleep
 - Compare and contrast sleeping behavior between animals and humans
 - Define dreaming as a biological and psychological construct
 - Compare different theories about the significance of dreams
 - Explore the significance of dreams in a variety of cultures
 - Conduct short and sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
 3. The Effects of Drugs
 - Describe the major classes and effects of psychoactive drugs
 - Explain how the major drug classes affect neurotransmission and behavior
 - Describe the long-term psychological and physiological effects of drugs
 4. States of Consciousness Unit Review
 5. States of Consciousness Unit test
- 6. Learning**
1. Learning and Conditioning Part 1

- Describe what learning is
 - Differentiate between innate and learned behaviors
 - Define classical conditioning, and identify two researchers prominent in discovering and establishing classical conditioning methods
 - Describe the process of classical conditioning
 - Describe common factors that influence the process of classical conditioning
 - Describe the process of operant conditioning, and identify two researchers prominent in discovering and establishing operant conditioning methods
 - Describe common factors that influence the process of operant conditioning
2. Learning and Conditioning Part 2
 - Compare and contrast positive and negative reinforcement
 - Explain the influence of various schedules of reinforcement on behavior
 - Discuss the role of punishment in conditioning
 3. Influences of Learning Part 1
 - Identify the role of cognition in learning and conditioning
 - Discuss various experiments used in establishing support for cognitive influences on learning
 - Describe how genetic factors or learned experiences interfere with conditioning processes
 - Describe social learning and discuss factors that influence socially learned behavior and Describe basic processes that influence social learning
 - Explain how the theory of social learning creates controversy about media portrayals of violence
 - Describe how culture assists in shaping behavior and Discuss how environmental and cultural influences impact learning and academic achievement
 - Describe various influences of collaborative learning on academic achievement
 4. Influences of Learning Part 2
 - Identify personal skills necessary for effective self-regulation, and describe the three phases involved in self-regulating behavior
 - Identify therapeutic and self-implemented behavior modification strategies
 5. Learning Unit Review
 6. Learning Unit test
 - 7. Cognition and Memory**
 1. Processing, Remembering, and Forgetting Part 1
 - Identify brain structures and various factors influencing memory formation
 - Describe the characteristics and operations of sensory and short-term memory
 - Describe the characteristics and operations of long-term memory
 - Describe the importance of attention in forming memories
 - Describe how different types of processing can enhance retention of information
 - Describe measures of retrieval and forgetting as well as issues associated with memory retrieval
 - Explain issues influencing forgetfulness, and describe various perspectives on recovered memories and Identify factors that interfere with memory formation and retrieval
 2. Processing, Remembering, and Forgetting Part 2
 - Discuss suggestions to enhance deep processing of information
 - Identify strategies for improving memory
 - Describe research on memory reconstruction

3. Solving Problems and Making Decisions

- Describe how and why concepts are formed in the mind
- Examine how concepts are organized
- Explore various types of problems and the steps of the problem solving process
- Summarize common strategies used to solve problems
- Identify influences on and obstacles to problem solving
- Identify various types of decisions and strategies used to make decisions
- Summarize various influences on decision making

4. Language

- Define language and its key properties
- Identify the basic structural units of language and how grammar is used in language systems
- Summarize the stages of language development from infancy to childhood
- Compare and contrast different theories of language
- Analyze whether or not animals can obtain and use language

5. Cognition and Memory Unit Review

6. Cognition and Memory Unit test

8. **Motivation and Emotion**

1. Motivation

- Define motivation and describe how it assists individuals in attaining goals
- Describe various factors influencing the motivation of hunger and eating behaviors
- Compare and contrast intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and describe factors influencing achievement motivation
- Compare and contrast the drive-reduction and incentive theories of motivation
- Discuss Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and explain the expectancy theory of motivation

2. Emotion

- Define emotion and describe the components of emotion
- Identify fundamental emotions individuals experience
- Explain various theories of emotion
- Conduct short, more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
- Describe how culture influences emotion
- Describe how emotion directly and indirectly influences behavior

3. Stress

- Identify major types of stress and influences on level of stress
- Explain cultural factors impacting stress level
- Identify possible psychological and physical effects of stress
- Describe the physiological response to stress
- Identify positive and negative coping strategies utilized to decrease stress

4. Motivation and Emotion Unit Review

5. Motivation and Emotion Unit Test

9. **Mid Course Review and Exam**

1. Mid-Course Review

2. Mid-Course Exam

10. **Developmental Psychology**

1. Introduction to Developmental Psychology

- Summarize the nature versus nurture debate
- Describe how heredity affects physical characteristics and human behavior

- Identify environmental factors that affect human behavior
 - Discuss the theoretical debate between continuity and stage perspectives in development
 - Explain the theoretical debate concerning the stability or instability of personal characteristics throughout development
 - Describe the stages of prenatal development and Identify factors that can affect prenatal development
 - Describe the process of maturation and various developmental norms marking changes in physical development and Discuss processes involving brain and motor development that occur during childhood
2. Social, Cognitive, and Moral Development
- Describe and critique Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development
 - Explain theories of attachment, and discuss the influence of different parenting styles on development
 - Describe variations in temperament, and discuss the importance of peer relationships
 - Describe various influences on cognitive development and Explain and critique Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development
 - Describe Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development, and compare Vygotsky's theory to Piaget's theory of cognitive development
 - Discuss developmental trends in moral development, and describe various factors influencing one's morality
 - Explain Lawrence Kohlberg's stage theory of moral reasoning and Discuss criticisms of and proposed adaptations to Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning
3. Development in Adolescence and Adulthood Part 1
- Explain the physiological changes that occur during adolescence
 - Describe changes in cognitive and social development during adolescence
 - Discuss various factors involved in an adolescent's search for identity
 - Describe various factors impacting the process of developing a gender identity
 - Discuss various factors impacting the process of developing a cultural and ethnic identity
4. Development in Adolescence and Adulthood Part 2
- Identify and describe common features that characterize emerging adulthood
 - Explain physiological, psychological, and social changes that commonly occur throughout adulthood
 - Discuss various life transitions that impact adulthood
5. Developmental Psychology Unit Review
6. Developmental Psychology Unit Test

11. Personality

1. Personalities
- Define personality and discuss environmental and biological influences on personality
 - Identify cultural influences on personality
 - Identify different types of personality assessments used in psychology
 - Discuss issues associated with personality assessments
 - Explain Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory
 - Compare Carl Jung's and Alfred Adler's theoretical perspectives on personality to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory
 - Critique the effectiveness of psychodynamic perspectives in explaining personality

2. Perspectives on Personalities Part 1
 - Define the term personality trait, and identify the Big Five personality traits
 - Identify prominent trait theorists and their corresponding perspectives on personality
 - Critique trait perspectives used to explain personality
 - Describe how theorists have used B. F. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning to explain personality
 - Discuss how Albert Bandura uses social cognitive theory to explain the interaction between personality and environment and Critique behavioral perspectives used to explain personality
 - Define humanism and discuss Carl Rogers' perspective on personality structure and development
 - Describe the characteristics of an individual with a healthy personality as defined by humanistic theorist Abraham Maslow and Critique humanistic perspectives used to explain personality
3. Perspectives on Personalities Part 2
 - Explain Hans Eysenck's assertion that personality is determined by genetic factors
 - Explain how behavioral genetics research provides support for biological perspectives on personality, and describe the evolutionary approach to personality
 - Critique biological perspectives used to explain personality
4. Personality Unit Review
5. Personality Unit Test

12. Testing and Individual Differences

1. Measuring Intelligence
 - Define intelligence and trace the history of intelligence tests
 - Describe the principles in constructing intelligence tests
 - Evaluate the two extremes of intelligence
2. What Makes us Smart?
 - Describe Charles Spearman's two-factor theory of intelligence as well as opposing perspectives
 - Differentiate between Robert Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence and Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences
 - Explain the concept of emotional intelligence, and define the relationship between creativity and intelligence
3. Factors that Influence Intelligence
 - Explain possible biological and environmental influences on intelligence
 - Describe gender differences in intelligence scores and how they might be explained
 - Describe ethnic differences in intelligence scores and how they might be explained
4. Testing and Individual Differences Unit Review
5. Testing and Individual Differences Unit Test

13. Abnormal Behaviors

1. Abnormal Psychology
 - Describe the characteristics of abnormal behavior and how they are used to diagnose psychological disorders
 - Compare and contrast the medical and biopsychosocial perspectives of psychological disorders
 - Describe the process for classifying psychological disorders
 - Discuss the effects of diagnosing an individual with a psychological disorder

2. Mood, Psychotic, and Anxiety Disorders
 - Identify two mood disorders and the symptoms for each
 - Discuss the risk factors, etiology, and treatment of mood disorders
 - Identify four types of schizophrenic disorders and the symptoms for each
 - Discuss the risk factors, etiology, and treatment of schizophrenic disorders
 - Identify five anxiety disorders and the symptoms for each
 - Discuss the risk factors, etiology, and treatment of anxiety disorders
3. Other Types of Disorders
 - Identify three somatoform disorders and the symptoms for each
 - Discuss the risk factors, etiology, and treatment of somatoform disorders
 - Identify three dissociative disorders and the symptoms for each
 - Discuss the risk factors, etiology, and treatment of dissociative disorders
 - Identify seven personality disorders and the symptoms for each
 - Discuss the risk factors, etiology, and treatment of personality disorders
 - Identify and describe the symptoms, risk factors, etiology, complications, and treatment of two eating disorders and Identify and describe the symptoms, risk factors, etiology, and treatment of two organic disorders
4. Abnormal Behaviors Unit Review
5. Abnormal Behaviors Unit test

14. Treatment

1. Treating Psychological Disorders
 - Discuss the issues involved in seeking therapeutic treatment
 - Describe the types of therapists, and explain what makes therapy successful
 - Define insight therapy and describe three types used in treatment
 - Summarize the treatment processes of behavior and cognitive therapies
 - Discuss three types of biomedical therapy used in treating mental disorders
2. Psychotherapy
3. Treatment Unit Review
4. Treatment Unit test

15. Social Psychology

1. Introduction to Social Psychology Part 1
 - Describe the components of culture
 - Identify different types of culture in the United States
 - Describe common cultural variations in beliefs and behavior
 - Explain how perceptions are formed and how they influence personal behavior
 - Describe how cultural socialization determines social schema development
 - Describe the process of attribution and Explain the differences between internal and external attributions
 - Explain how attributions affect our explanations of behavior
2. Introduction to Social Psychology Part 2
 - Describe attitudes and discuss factors influencing attitude variation
 - Explain theories of attitude formation and change
 - Discuss various factors impacting methods of persuasion
3. Social Attitudes Part 1
 - Describe the difference between prejudice and discrimination, and discuss ways that discrimination is commonly expressed in society
 - Discuss the cognitive, social, and emotional roots of prejudice
 - Explain possible strategies that can be used to reduce prejudiced behavior
 - Define aggression and identify common factors in aggression
 - Describe various theories concerning influences on aggressive behavior
 - Discuss whether media displays of violence influence aggression

4. Social Attitudes Part 2
 - Identify important factors in the formation and maintenance of close relationships
 - Explain the processes involved in mate selection
 - Describe love as a construct in a relationship
5. Group Attitudes and Behaviors
 - Define altruism and describe examples of altruistic behavior
 - Discuss various perspectives concerning the reasons for altruistic behavior and Identify factors that reduce or promote altruism
 - Describe possible influences groups can have on personal behavior
 - Identify possible consequences of conformity and obedience as demonstrated by research on group influences
 - Identify the effects of role-playing in group situations
 - Explain the development of conflict between groups
 - Describe strategies that are designed to foster cooperative groups
6. Social Psychology Unit Review
7. Social Psychology Unit Test

16. Cumulative Exam

1. End Course Review
2. End Course Exam

17. AP Exam Preparation and Review

1. Course Review Part 1
2. Course Review Part 2
3. AP Practice Exam 1
4. AP Practice Exam 2