



**AP Psychology Syllabus  
2011-12**

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**Course Description:** Advanced Placement Psychology is a **two semester, elective** course available to any 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade, **motivated**, student wishing to study psychology at the **university level**. The course is designed to introduce students to the scientific and systematic study of behaviour and mental processes.

**Course Goal:** To prepare students to be successful on the **advanced placement examination** written in May.

**Course Objectives:**

**Students will:**

1. **develop an inquiring mind** about the nature of human behaviour.
2. **demonstrate** knowledge and understanding of the explorations, discoveries and subsequent theories developed by a variety of intellectuals and psychologists that have influenced and shaped psychological thought today.
3. **define and use key psychological terms** in everyday vocabulary.
4. **recognize and apply** psychological concepts and principles in daily lives and hypothetical situations.
5. **apply** the basic skills of **psychological research** including the ethical standards that govern the work of psychologists. Students will be able to **create** simple experiments as well as **interpret, analyze** and **generalize** from existing research including evaluating the **validity of such research**.
6. **learn to recognize** when **assumptions** about human behaviour are **based on personal experience** (and what students believe to be “common sense”) **not psychological, scientific research**.
7. **distinguish between, and assess**, a variety of approaches adopted by psychologists including the biological, behavioural, cognitive, humanistic, psychodynamic, evolutionary and socialcultural/biological perspectives.

8. **develop critical thinking skills.** Students will become aware of the danger of blindly accepting or rejecting any psychological theory without careful, objective evaluation.

9. **enhance reading, writing and discussion skills.**

10. **become aware** of the variety of **careers** available in psychology and the **educational requirements** of these professions.

**Teacher Expectations:** This is a **university level** course. For students to be successful in the course and on the AP exam, they must have an **in-depth** knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts. To achieve this, students must **actively** and **intellectually engage** themselves. Students must **read** not only the **textbook** but also any additional research or articles assigned. Students must **take responsibility** for their learning experience and involve themselves in classroom discussions, activities and assignments. Successful students seek help when they need it.

**Course Text:** Myers, David, **Psychology** (6<sup>th</sup> ed.).

Students are **strongly encouraged** to register **on line** to access Myers' chapter summaries, activities, reviews etc.

<http://bcs.worthpublishers.com/myers6e/default.asp?s=&n=&i=&v=&o=&ns=0&uid=0&rau=0>

**Course Requirements:**

1. Wide, **three-ringed binder** (2"- 3") to keep **daily notes, articles** and **handouts** in.
2. **Smaller three-ringed binder** (1 ½") to keep **vocabulary** in. This is critical for your **course review** in May.
3. Loose leaf paper, pen, a highlighter and coloured pencils.

**Course Grading:**

**60% Tests** (chapter or units): these are modeled on the AP Exam, with multiple-choice questions and one free response. Some major projects/assignments may count as test grades.

**40% All other work** which may include: reading **quizzes** (from the text or assigned articles), **chapter outlines/notes**, article reviews, chapter **vocabulary assignments**, class **participation**, internet readings, incremental process on research project, critical thinking assignments, demonstrations, individual and/or group presentations, journal reflections, blogging, and other relevant reinforcement assignments.

**Projects: Each semester** a group or individual will submit or present a major assignment worth 2 test grades. See examples below.

**Final Examination** at the end of **first and second semester** counts **20 %** of the **semester grade**. This is modeled on the AP Exam, with multiple-choice questions and free response essay.

**Conference Period:** I can be found in **R207** during my **conference period** (1<sup>st</sup> period) and after school. Please contact me via **email** or at **home** if you have any questions or concerns.

**Make Ups:** I will follow the Social Studies department **test make-up schedule**. Make-ups are held Monday after school and Thursday morning before school in designated teacher classrooms or as arranged between the student and teacher.

**Tutorials:** As required and **mutually agreed** upon between student and teacher.

**Guidelines to follow:** Be **on time** to class. Grade level principals assign detentions.  
Be **prepared** for class (have supplies and completed assignments).  
**Read in advance** of the class lecture or activity.  
Give **100%** of your attention to the topic or exercise.  
Get proper rest; you need to be **alert** and **awake** to learn.  
If you miss class, upon returning, **find out what you missed** and when you need to **make up the work**.  
Ask for a **tutorial**.  
Be **organized**.  
**Ask questions**. If you have one, the likelihood is great that others share the same query.  
You are **responsible** for tests and home work, assigned before your absence, the day you return.

**Classroom climate:** **Respect and courtesy** at all times.  
**No profanity, abusive or inappropriate language**.

**MHS/SBISD policies:** Read your student handbook.  
Be particularly **cognizant** of **MHS/SBISD policies at all times**. Pay special attention to the **dress code, no food policy** and **cell phone off & away policy**.

## Example Projects

### **First Semester:**

#### **Natural Observation**

Each student records detailed observations (in a naturalistic setting) of a stranger, for 30 minutes (or more) per day during 5 consecutive days. Students are to write a paper about their stranger. This assignment not only introduces students to the natural observation research method but also makes them cognizant of the powers of observation and the difference between subjectivity and objectivity.

#### **Experimental Research Analysis**

Each student will select a published psychological experiment of their choice to read, analyze and present to the class in a power point format. This assignment enhances not only the student's understanding of statistics and the experimental research method but also makes students aware of the depth and magnitude of human behaviours that can be examined.

### **Second Semester:**

#### **Research Project**

Each student or group will identify a reasonable question about human behaviour to investigate. Students will then develop a controlled experiment or study to test their hypothesis. A written proposal outlining methodology, participants and procedures will be submitted following APA research standards and guidelines. Upon the completion of the research, a final summary or abstract will include a statistical analysis of the data and the resulting paper or abstract will potentially be submitted for publish.

#### **3-D Model and Presentation**

Working in pairs or in a group, students will create a three-dimensional model of some (teacher approved) aspect of brain/body functioning. The model must be realistic, colour-coded and can be taken apart. Students will also create an activity that the audience must participate in during the demonstration. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the workings of the brain/body by presenting their model to the class and being able to answer specific questions from the audience as well as the instructor.

#### **Film or Book Review**

Students can select a book to read or popular film to view (approved by the instructor) and complete a critical analysis it, using APA documentation, citing supporting evidence of its psychological accuracies and fallacies.

