

School District of Springfield Township

Springfield Township High School Course Overview

Course Name: Academic Psychology

Course Description

Psychology provides students with an introduction to the study of human behavior. Content includes personality and its development, states of consciousness, the brain and nervous system, learning and memory, intelligence, sensation and perception, emotion and motivation, stress, and abnormal psychology. Study includes experiments, case studies, independent research, texts, and supplemental materials combined with an emphasis on discussion and collaboration.

Unit Titles

Not all units will be covered in each introductory course. Each semester, teachers will gauge student interest to put together a comprehensive experience, and a course project will allow students to explore additional areas of interest.

Unit 1: Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods

Unit 2: Biological Basis of Behavior

Unit 3: States of Consciousness

Unit 4: Learning

Unit 5: Memory

Unit 6: Lifespan Development

Unit 7: Personality

Unit 8: Motivation and Emotion

Unit 9: Sensation and Perception

Unit 10: Abnormal Psychology

Unit 11: Social Psychology

Unit 12: Testing and Individual Differences

Unit 13: Stress, Health & Coping

Unit 14: Language and Cognition

Essential Questions

1. What is the scientific nature of the study of psychology?
2. What are the major approaches to and perspectives of the study of psychology?
3. How do human personality, behavior, and cognition develop in an individual's lifetime?
4. How does the world around us affect our personality and behavior?

Big Ideas/Enduring Understandings

Unit 1: Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods

- Psychologists conduct research in an attempt to explain and predict why people behave, feel, and think as they do.

- Psychologists today use several methods to conduct research and are able to follow a diverse set of careers paths.
- Although it is a relatively “young” science, psychology has ancient roots in philosophy.

Unit 2: Biological Basis of Behavior

- Psychologists study the ways in which the nervous system, the brain, and the endocrine system affect human behavior, thought, and emotion.
- The nervous system interacts with the environment to produce your behavior.

Unit 3: States of Consciousness

- Consciousness has several different meanings; sensory awareness, inner awareness, and sense of self.
- Humans experience multiple states of consciousness, both natural and artificial, that affect mental processes, thinking, and behavior.

Unit 4: Learning

- Humans acquire knowledge and adapt to their environment through different learning processes including classical and operant conditioning and observation.

Unit 5: Memory

- Memory follows a three-stage process and is subject to the limitations of interference.

Unit 6: Lifespan Development

- The human life span brings about significant changes as the individual experiences physical, cognitive, social, and moral development.
- Development is influenced through factors of heredity and the environment.

Unit 7: Personality

- Several perspectives exist to explain the development of human personality, which is the distinctive and relatively stable pattern of behaviors, thoughts, motives and emotions that characterize the individual.
- Psychologists study personality adjustment and try to understand why some people handle life’s experiences and others fail.

Unit 8: Motivation and Emotion

- Individuals are driven by a variety of internal and external forces.
- Psychologists explain motivation and emotion and why we experience it in different ways through instinct, drive-reduction, incentives, and cognitive theories

Unit 9: Sensation and Perception

- Sensation and perception help humans interpret, adapt to, organize, and understand the world around us.

Unit 10: Abnormal Psychology

- Normal is defined by many cultures in different ways.
- Psychological disorders cause distress and interfere with normal functioning.
- Diverse schools of treatment base their therapies on their psychological perspectives.

Unit 11: Social Psychology

- Social psychologists provide insights into why people choose to interact or have relationships with some people and not others.
- Social factors effect aggression, perception, attitudes, attraction, and individual behavior.

Unit 12: Testing and Individual Differences

- Intelligence is gained/learned though multiple factors in an individual's life.

Unit 13: Stress, Health & Coping

- Stress we encounter every day has a direct impact on our behavior and health. Coping strategies are essential in controlling the effects of stress.

Unit 14: Language and Cognition

- Language is a system of symbols and rules used for meaningful communication.
- Cognition involves activities such as understanding, problem solving, decision making, and being creative.

Key Competencies/Skills/Procedures

Unit 1: Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods

- Describe and compare the (neuro)biological, behavioral, cognitive, sociocultural, humanistic, and psychodynamic perspectives.
- List and explain the major subfields of psychology.
- Describe the elements of an experiment.
- Compare quantitative and qualitative research strategies.
- Describe the concept of correlation and explain how it is used in psychology.
- Debate ethical issues in psychological research.
- Discuss psychology's roots in philosophy and natural science.
- Create a timeline to trace the emergence of experimental psychology.
- Recognize the diversity of psychological theories in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Unit 2: Biological Basis of Behavior

- Identify the neuron as the basis for neural communication.
- Describe how information is transmitted and integrated in the nervous system.
- Classify the major divisions and subdivisions of the nervous system.
- Differentiate the functions of the various subdivisions of the nervous system.
- Identify the structure and function of the major regions of the brain.
- Recognize that specific functions are centered in specific lobes of the cerebral cortex.
- Describe lateralization of brain functions
- Explain how research and technology have provided methods to analyze brain behavior and disease.
- Describe how the endocrine glands are linked to the nervous system.

Unit 3: States of Consciousness

- Define states of consciousness
- Describe levels of consciousness
- Describe the sleep cycle.

- Compare theories that explain why we sleep.
- Assess types of sleep disorders.
- Demonstrate an understanding of individual differences in dream content and recall.
- Compare different theories about the use and meaning of dreams.
- Describe several hypnotic phenomena.
- Explain possible uses of hypnosis in psychology.
- Characterize the major categories of psychoactive drugs and their effects.
- Evaluate the effects of narcotic, depressant, stimulant, and hallucinogenic drugs.

Unit 4: Learning

- Discuss learning from a psychological viewpoint.
- Describe the classical conditioning paradigm.
- Describe the operant conditioning paradigm.
- Explain how social (observational) learning works.
- Describe cognitive learning approaches.

Unit 5: Memory

- Characterize the difference between surface and deep (elaborate) processing.
- Identify other factors that influence encoding.
- Describe the operation of sensory memory
- Describe the operation of short-term memory and working memory.
- Describe the operation of long-term memory.
- Analyze the importance of retrieval cues in memory.
- Explain the role that interference plays in retrieval
- Identify the brain structures most important to memory.
- Identify factors that interfere with memory.
- Describe strategies for improving memory based on our understanding of memory.
- Describe the processes that lead to inaccuracies in memory.

Unit 6: Lifespan Development

- Describe physical, social, and cognitive changes throughout the lifespan.
- Examine the nature of change over the lifespan.
- Identify the complex cognitive structures found in the early development of infants and young children.
- Apply lifespan principles to personal experience.
- Explain the distinguishing characteristics of the longitudinal and cross-sectional methods of study.
- Explain various developmental models.
- Recognize how biological & cultural notions of gender shape the experiences of men and women.
- Examine the development of ethnic identity.
- Describe the role of critical periods in development.
- Explain the issues of continuity/discontinuity and stability/instability in development.
- Assess the effects of heredity and environment on behavior.

Unit 7: Personality

- Define personality as the individual's unique way of thinking, feeling, and acting.

- Explain the role of personality constructs as a framework for organizing behavioral phenomena.
- Explain the characteristics of the psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic, and trait approaches
- Identify important contributions to the understanding of personality.
- Distinguish between objective and projective techniques of personality assessment
- Describe tests used in personality assessment.

Unit 8: Motivation and Emotion

- Apply motivational concepts to the behavior of humans and other animals.
- Describe the interaction of internal cues and learning on basic drives.
- Describe the situational cues giving rise to anger and fear.
- Describe the situational cues and individual characteristics giving rise to curiosity and anxiety.
- Describe one or more theories of motivation, such as expectancy value, cognitive dissonance, arousal, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and drive reduction.
- Explain how common motives and emotions develop.
- Use expectancy-value theory to explain their own and others' behavior.
- Describe theories of emotion, such as James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, or cognitive theories.
- Explaining how emotions and behaviors are related
- Describe differences in perception between individuals differing in motivation.
- Explain how learning, memory, problem solving, & decision-making strategies are influenced by motivation & emotion.

Unit 9: Sensation and Perception

- Explain the concepts of threshold, adaptation, and constancy.
- Describe the operation of sensory systems.
- Explain Gestalt concepts and principles, such as figure-ground, continuity, similarity, proximity, closure, and so on.
- Describe binocular and monocular depth cues.
- Describe the influence on perception of environmental variables, motivation, past experiences, culture, & expectations.

Unit 10: Abnormal Psychology

- Distinguish the common characteristics of abnormal behavior.
- Cite examples of abnormal behavior.
- Relate judgments of abnormality to contexts in which those judgments occur.
- Describe major explanations for the origins of abnormality.
- Discuss major categories of abnormal behavior.
- Explore the challenges associated with accurate diagnosis.
- Consider factors that influence vulnerability to abnormal behavior.
- Discuss the stigma associated with abnormal behavior.
- Speculate about means for promoting greater understanding of abnormal behavior.
- Describe availability and appropriateness of various modes of treatment for individuals (e.g., children, adolescents, and adults) with psychological disorders.
- Describe characteristics of effective treatment and prevention.
- Identify therapists according to training.

- Describing strategies for locating appropriate therapists.
- Describe the intersection between mental health and law.
- Examine the influence of ethics and professional practice.

Unit 11: Social Psychology

- Demonstrate an understanding of person perception.
- Describe how attributions affect our explanations of behavior.
- Identify sources of attitude formation.
- Assess some methods used to change attitudes.
- Identify basic social and cultural categories.
- Discuss how social and cultural categories affect behavior.
- Describe effects of the presence of others on individual behavior
- Describe how social structure can affect intergroup relations.
- Explore the nature and effects of bias and discrimination.
- Describe circumstances under which conformity and obedience are likely to occur.
- Discuss the nature of altruism in society.
- Discuss the significance of aggression.
- Discuss factors influencing attraction

Unit 12: Testing and Individual Differences

- Define and understand the nature of test constructs, such as intelligence, personality, and creativity.
- Describe basic statistical concepts in testing
- Explain how intelligence and personality may be influenced by heredity and environment.
- Describe theories of intelligence.
- Explain why intelligence tests predict achievement.
- Explain issues of using conventional intelligence tests.

Unit 13: Stress, Health & Coping

- Identify and explain major sources of stress.
- List and explain possible physiological reactions to stress.
- List and explain possible psychological reactions to stress.
- Identify and explain cognitive strategies to deal with stress and promote health.
- Identify and explain behavioral strategies to deal with stress and promote health.

Unit 14: Language and Cognition

- Define language as symbols and sounds that convey meaning and facilitate communication.
- Recognize that language is organized in a hierarchical structure.
- Discuss the effects of development on language acquisition.
- Evaluate the theories of language acquisition.
- Speculate on whether animals acquire and use language.
- Define thinking as a mental process involved in the manipulation and understanding of information.
- Recognize that information is classified into categories containing similar properties known as concepts

- Identify problem solving as a directed and productive example of thinking.
- Explain the use of creative thinking in problem solving.
- Analyze the obstacles that inhibit problem solving and decision-making.

Core Vocabulary

Unit 1: Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods

psychology, APA, cognitive, psychoanalytic, sociocultural, behavioral, humanistic, neurobiological, quantitative, qualitative, case study, survey, observation, correlation, experiment, ethical guidelines

Unit 2: Biological Basis of Behavior

Neuron/nerve cell, motor neurons, sensory neurons, axon, dendrite, synapse, neurotransmitters, left brain, right brain, corpus callosum, sub cortex, thalamus, reticular activating system (RAS), hypothalamus, basal ganglia, limbic system, hippocampus, occipital lobe, temporal lobe, parietal lobe, somatosensory cortex, frontal lobe, motor cortex, medulla oblongata, pons, cerebellum, cerebral cortex, EEG (electroencephalograph), MRI, CAT scan, PET scan, central nervous system, autonomic, peripheral, somatic, glands, ductless (endocrine), duct, hormones, pituitary, thyroid, gonads, adrenal

Unit 3: States of Consciousness

Conscious, nonconscious, subconscious, unconscious, non REM, REM, circadian rhythm, sleep deprivation, insomnia, sleep apnea, narcolepsy, somnambulism, night terror, dream analysis, manifest content, latent content, lucid dreaming

Unit 4: Learning

Ivan Pavlov, unconditional stimulus (UCS), unconditional response (UCR), conditioned stimulus (CS), conditioned response (CR), acquisition, counter/avoidance conditioning, generalization, discrimination, extinction, spontaneous recovery, JB Watson, BF Skinner, reinforcement, positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment, behavior modification, Premack principle, shaping, chaining, fixed-ratio, variable-ratio, fixed-interval, variable-interval, A Bandura, Baby Albert, learned helplessness, learned laziness, observation, modeling

Unit 5: Memory

flashbulb memory, confabulation, selective attention, retroactive interference/inhibition, proactive interference/inhibition, repression, amnesia, encoding, rehearsal, short term memory, long term memory, retrieval, recall, recognition, semantic memory, procedural memory, episodic memory, declarative memory, engram/memory trace, mnemonic device

Unit 6: Lifespan Development

nature v nurture, critical periods, imprinting, longitudinal studies, cross sectional studies, maturation, thanatology, E. Kubler-Ross, J. Marcia, L. Kohlberg, E. Erikson, J. Piaget, schemas, assimilation, accommodation, , authoritarian, permissive, authoritative, preoperational thought, object permanence, animism, egocentric thought, concrete operational thought, reversibility, formal operational, empty-nest, gerontology.

Unit 7: Personality

personality, Freud, unconscious, id, pleasure principle, super ego, ego, reality principle, defense mechanisms, personal unconscious, collective unconscious, archetypes, shadow, persona,

anima/animus, introversion, extroversion, Adler, inferiority, creative self, striving for superiority, free will, lifestyle, Horney, insecurity, basic hostility/basic anxiety, coping mechanisms, moving away from others, moving toward others, moving against others, Allport, Cattell, behaviorism, Skinner, reinforcement, Bandura, self efficacy, Maslow, hierarchy of needs, Rogers, self, organism, positive regard, unconditional positive regard, conditions of worth, congruence, incongruence, fully functioning person

Unit 8: Motivation and Emotion

motivation, instinct, need, drive, incentive, set point, Schacter study, Harlow, McClelland, Matina Horner, intrinsic, extrinsic, Drive-Reduction Theory/Clark-Hall, emotions, personality types, Type A, Type B, James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Shacter cognitive theory, opponent process of emotion.

Unit 9: Sensation and Perception

absolute threshold, difference threshold, Just Noticeable Difference, Weber's law, signal detection theory, subliminal messaging, cornea, lens, pupil, iris, retina, rods, cones, fovea, optic nerve, blind spot, sensory adaptation, binocular/stereoscopic vision, after-image, opponent process theory, visual cliff, motion parallax, gestalt, figure ground perception, pinna, tympanic membrane, cochlea, basilar membrane, decibels, conduction deafness, nerve deafness, olfaction, olfactory nerve, gustation, taste buds, phantom limb pain, referred pain, synesthesia, sensory deprivation

Unit 10: Abnormal Psychology

anxiety disorders, somatoform disorders, dissociative disorders, mood disorders, eating disorders, psychosis (schizophrenia), autism and other childhood disorders, personality disorders, normal vs. abnormal, sane vs. insane, lithium, DSM-IVR, psychiatrist, psychologist, resistance, transference, psychotherapy, person centered therapy, Rational Emotive Therapy (RET), empty chair technique, transactional analysis, aversive therapy, systematic desensitization, group therapy

Unit 11: Social Psychology

attribution theory, fundamental attribution error, bystander effect, diffusion of responsibility, deindividuation, compliance, social facilitation, social loafing, Zimbardo prison study, scapegoating, discrimination, Leon Festinger, Solomon Asch, Stanley Milgram, group polarization, groupthink.

Unit 12: Testing and Individual Differences

reliability, validity, standardized test, norm, raw score, aptitude, achievement, intelligence, Binet, IQ (intelligence quotient), mental age, chronological age, fluid intelligence, crystallized intelligence, cultural bias, mental retardation, profoundly retarded, severe retardation, moderate retardation, mild retardation, gifted.

Unit 13: Stress, Health & Coping

frustration, conflict situation, stressor, chronic stress, immune system, locus of control, cognitive restructuring, relaxation training, resilience, optimism

Unit 14: Language and Cognition

Chomsky, language acquisition device, symbol, syntax, phonemes, morphemes, schema, concept, convergent thinking, divergent thinking, inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, functional fixedness, mental set

Core Resources

Plotnik, Rod, *Introduction to Psychology* 6th ed (2002) Modules 1 & 2

Teacher Wikispace <http://fuspsych.wikispaces.com/>

Psych Sim 5.0 <http://www.worthpublishers.com/exploring5e/content/psychsim5/launcher.html>

Discovering Psychology <http://www.learner.org/discoveringpsychology/index.html>

The Mind http://www.learner.org/resources/series150.html#program_descriptions

The Brain: Teaching Modules <http://www.learner.org/resources/series142.html>

The World of Abnormal Psych <http://www.learner.org/resources/series60.html>

National Standards Guiding Course

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has not yet established academic standards for Psychology. In August 2005, the American Psychological Association developed national standards to “enhance quality curricula, to express learning goals for students, and to promote change in the teaching of the high school introductory psychology course.” These standards focus on five major domains: 1. Methods, 2. Biopsychological, 3. Cognitive, 4. Developmental, and 5. Variations in Individual and Group Behavior.

While the discipline is expansive, the time in which we have to teach it is not. This curriculum contains a variety of units that would allow a teacher to “pick and choose” which units of study to pursue in a semester; however, each course should begin with Units 1 and 2, “Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods” and “The Biological Basis of Behavior,” as these units lay the foundation of the discipline and unite the remaining topics. The APA recommends teachers present at least one unit from each domain in order for students to have a well-rounded introductory psychology experience.

Unit 1- Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods

- 1.A.1: Contemporary perspectives used by psychologists to understand behavior and mental processes in context.
- 1.A.2: Major subfields and career opportunities that comprise psychology.
- 1.A.3: Research strategies used by psychologists to explore behavior and mental processes.
- 1.A.4: Purposes and basic concepts of statistics.
- 1.A.5: Ethical issues in research with human and other animals that are important to psychologists
- 1.A.6: Development of psychology as an empirical science

Unit 2- Biological Basis of Behavior

- 2.A.1: Structure and function of the neuron.
- 2.A.2: Organization of the nervous system
- 2.A.3: Hierarchical organization of the structure and function of the brain.
- 2.A.4: Technologies and clinical methods for studying the brain.
- 2.A.5: Structure and function of the endocrine system.

Unit 3- States of Consciousness

- 4.D.1: Understand the nature of consciousness
- 4.D.2: Characteristics of sleep and theories that explain why we sleep
- 4.D.3: Theories used to explain and interpret dreams
- 4.D.4: Basic phenomena and uses of hypnosis
- 4.D.5: Categories of psychoactive drugs and their effects

Unit 4- Learning

- 4.A.1: Characteristics of learning
- 4.A.2: Principles of classical conditioning
- 4.A.3: Principles of operant conditioning
- 4.A.4: Components of cognitive learning

Unit 5- Memory

- 4.B.1: Encoding, or getting information into memory
- 4.B.2: Sensory, working or short-term, and long-term memory systems
- 4.B.3: Retrieval, or getting information out of memory
- 4.B.4: Biological bases of memory
- 4.B.5: Methods for improving memory
- 4.B.6: Memory Constructions

Unit 6- Lifespan Development

- 3.A.1: Development as a lifelong process
- 3.A.2: Research techniques used to gather data on the developmental process
- 3.A.3: Theories of development
- 3.A.4: Issues surrounding the developmental process (nature/nurture, continuity/discontinuity, stability/instability, critical periods)
- 2.A.6: How heredity interacts with environment to influence behavior.

Unit 7- Personality

- 3.B.1: Distinguish between personality and personality constructs
- 3.B.2: Personality approaches and theories
- 3.B.3: Assessment tools used in personality

Unit 8- Motivation and Emotion

- 2.C.1: Motivational concepts
- 2.C.2: The role of biology and learning in motivation and emotion
- 2.C.3: Major theories of motivation
- 2.C.4: Interaction of biological and cultural factors in emotions and motivation
- 2.C.5: Role of values and expectancies in determining choice and strength of motivation
- 2.C.6: Physiological, affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of emotions & the interactions among these aspects
- 2.C.7: Effects of motivation and emotion on perception, cognition, and behavior

Unit 9- Sensation and Perception

- 2.B.1: Basic concepts explaining the capabilities and limitations of sensory processes
- 2.B.2: Interaction of the person and the environment in determining perception.

Unit 10 – Abnormal Psychology

- 5.A.1: Characteristics and origins of abnormal behavior
- 5.A.3: Major categories of abnormal behavior
- 5.A.4: Impact of mental disorders.
- 5.B.1: Prominent methods used to treat individuals with disorders
- 5.B.2: Types of practitioners who implement treatment
- 5.B.3: Legal and ethical challenges involved in deliver of treatment

Unit 11 – Social Psychology

- 5.C.1: Social judgment and attitudes
- 5.C.2: Social and cultural categories
- 5.C.3: Social influence and relationships

Unit 12 – Testing and Individual Differences

- 4.E.1: Concepts related to measurement of individual differences
- 4.E.2: Influence and interaction of heredity and environment on individual differences
- 4.E.3: Nature of intelligence
- 4.E.4: Nature of intelligence testing

Unit 13 – Stress, Health & Coping

- 2.D.1: Sources of stress
- 2.D.2: Physiological reactions to stress
- 2.D.3: Psychological reactions to stress
- 2.D.4: Cognitive and behavioral strategies for dealing with stress and promoting health

Unit 14 – Language and Cognition

- 4.C.3: Structural features of language
- 4.C.4: Theories and developmental stages of language acquisition
- 4.C.1: Basic elements comprising thought
- 4.C.2: Strategies and obstacles involved in problem solving and decision-making

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Approved—chr