

**AP PSYCHOLOGY SYLLABUS**  
**MRS. NILAND**  
**2010-2011**

*“People who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious. They produce their own future, rather than simply foretell it.”*

Albert Bandura, 1925-present

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## **Introduction**

The Advanced Placement Program offers a course and exam in psychology to qualify students who wish to complete studies in secondary school equivalent to introductory college course in psychology. The AP Psychology course is designed to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomenon associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about the ethics and methods psychologist use in their science and practice (*College Board Course Description, 2006*). This course is open to anyone who wants to take it – the only thing you need to be successful in this course is a good work ethic, desire to learn, and an interest in why people do what they do!

Thinking about how and why we perceive, feel, think, and behave the way we do is the focus of this course. In order to do well in this course, you must adopt the role of a scholar/scientist (i.e., in this case, one who is actively questioning assertions about behavior and mental processes) rather than passively memorizing and accepting ideas in the text or my words in class (although there are times you will have to do this too). Thus, “To think is to question”. If you do this, you will develop an understanding of psychological ideas that will forever change the way in which you view yourself and the world around you. (*Dr. Schwoebel, 2006*)

My hope is that you will find the study of psychology to be as fascinating and useful as I do.

## **Course Objectives**

***Knowledge of Psychology.*** I will evaluate your progress toward this goal based on the quality of your performance on the FRQ essays, activities, exams, and critiques. The components of this objective include your knowledge of the:

1. Historical and cultural roots of psychology
2. Theoretical frameworks in psychology
3. Methods used to explore psychological questions
4. Current evidence and beliefs in the major areas of psychology

***Scientific Attitudes and Skills.*** I will evaluate your progress toward this goal based on the quality of your performance on the FRQ essays, activities, exams, and critiques. The components of this objective will include your increased tendency to:

1. Refuse to accept assertions based solely on authority
2. Be open to changing your own beliefs based on new information
3. Critically evaluate generalizations
4. Appreciate the limitations and tentative nature of scientific knowledge
5. Question the evidence and logic behind assertions
6. Think about the implications and applications of scientific findings
7. Express your thoughts clearly when speaking and writing

## **Resources**

Lefton, Lester (1997, 2000). *Psychology*. Allen and Bacon Publishers. Boston.

Resources from TOPPS

1994, 1999, 2004, Released Exams and Released FRQs 1994-2006

## **Supplemental & Summer Reading**

Numerous articles and readings from books, newspapers, magazines, and journals assigned (see each unit calendar for specifics). *Summer Reading:* During the summer students are required to read two articles from the book “*Forty Studies that Changed Psychology.*” – “*What You Expect Is What You Get*” by Rosenthal and Jacobson, “*Thanks for the Memories*” by Loftus, and “*Who’s Crazy Here, Anyway?*” by Rosenhan and complete an analytical critique on each article.

## Grading Policy

<i>Quarter Grade</i>		<i>Semester Grade</i>	
Essays/Critiques	40%	Quarter	40%
Tests/Quizzes	40%	Quarter	40%
Class Participation	10%	Semester Exam	20%
Projects	20%		

## Assessments

- Unit Tests – These tests follow most chapters or units and are modeled on the AP Exam with approximately 30 multiple choice questions and an FRQ (free response question or essay)
- Practice FRQs – These Free Response Questions will allow you to practice with writing the FRQ as well as practice with the content before the unit test. I will lead students through the rubric and students will peer evaluate the FRQ and students will be able to correct their FRQs.
- Reading Quizzes – Quizzes will be given after every piece of textbook reading (students may use notes they take on their reading for the quiz).
- Quizzes – Quizzes will be announced and given on specific chunks of content in especially long chapters. The format for these quizzes will be open-ended factual and critical thinking type questions.
- Analytical Critiques – Students will receive numerous articles and readings from books, newspapers, magazines, and journals assigned (see each unit calendar for specifics). After each reading students are to complete an analytical critique which includes the following components – summary of the main points of the article, analysis of the science behind the article, a personal response to the article or newly learned information, and the article's importance to the field of psychology.
- Experiments/Studies – Students will be asked to complete a series of experiments/studies in the areas of sensation and perception, memory, and statistics.
- Final Project – Students will be able to design their own final project. In the past most projects have included an original experiment or study, analytical comparison of books in a particular topic, or a research project/paper. Each student or group will also present a PowerPoint presentation to the class on their research/experiment/study.
- AP Exam/Final Exam – All students are expected to take the AP Exam in May. Students who fall below a C average for any quarter will also have to take a final exam.

## Course Outline

### SEMESTER 1 TOPICS:

<i>AP Psychology Topics</i>	<i>% Exam</i>	<i>Lefton Ch</i>	<i>AP Psychology Topics</i>	<i>% Exam</i>	<i>Lefton Ch</i>
I. History and Approaches A. Logic, Philosophy, and History of Science B. Approaches • Biological, Behavioral, Cognitive, Psychodynamic/psychoanalytic, Humanistic, Socio-cultural, Evolutionary, Socio-biological	2-4%	Chapter 1	IV. Sensation and Perception A. Thresholds B. Sensory mechanisms C. Sensory adaptation D. Attention E. Perceptual systems	7-9%	Chapter 3
II. Research Methods A. Experimental, correlational, and clinical research B. Statistics • Descriptive • Inferential C. Ethics in Research	6-8%	Chapter 1 & Appendix	V. States of Consciousness A. Sleep and dreaming B. Hypnosis C. Psychoactive drug effects	2-4%	Chapter 4
III. Biological Basis of Behavior A. Physiological techniques (imaging, surgical) B. Neuroanatomy C. Functional organization of nervous system D. Neural transmissions E. Endocrine system F. Genetics	8-10%	Chapter 2	VI. Learning A. Classical conditioning B. Operant conditioning C. Cognitive process in learning D. Biological factors E. Social learning	7-9%	Chapter 5
			VII. Cognition A. Memory B. Language C. Thinking D. Problem solving	8-10%	Chapter 7
			VIII. Motivation and Emotion A. Biological bases B. Theories of motivation C. Social motives D. Hunger, thirst, sex, pain E. Theories of emotion F. Stress	7-9%	Chapter 9

SEMESTER 2 – TOPICS:

<i>AP Psychology Topics</i>	<i>Percent of Exam</i>	<i>Lefton Chapters</i>
IX. Developmental Psychology A. Life-span approach B. Research methods (longitudinal, cross-sectional) C. Heredity-environmental issues D. Developmental theories E. Dimensions of development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical</li> <li>• cognitive</li> <li>• social</li> <li>• moral</li> </ul> F. Sex roles and sex differences	7-9%	Chapters 10 & 11
X. Personality A. Personality theories and approaches B. Assessment techniques C. Self-concept, self-esteem D. Growth and adjustment	6-8%	Chapter 12
XI. Testing and Individual Differences A. Standardization and norms B. Reliability and validity C. Types of tests D. Ethics and standards in testing E. Intelligence F. Heredity/environment and intelligence G. Human diversity	5-7%	Chapter 8

<i>AP Psychology Topics</i>	<i>Percent of Exam</i>	<i>Lefton Chapters</i>
XII. Abnormal Psychology A. Definition of abnormality B. Theories of psychopathology C. Diagnosis of psychopathology D. Anxiety disorders E. Somatoform disorders F. Mood disorders G. Schizophrenic disorders H. Organic disorders I. Personality disorders J. Dissociative disorders	7-9%	Chapter 15
XIII. Treatment of Psychological Disorders A. treatment approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insight therapies: psychodynamic, humanistic</li> <li>• Behavioral therapies</li> <li>• Biological approaches: psychopharmacology, psychosurgery</li> </ul> B. Modes of therapy (individual, group) C. Community and preventative approaches	5-7%	Chapter 16
XIV. Social Psychology A. Group dynamics B. Attribution processes C. Interpersonal perception D. Conformity, compliance, and obedience E. Attitudes and attitude change F. Organizational behavior G. Aggression/antisocial behavior	7-9%	Chapter 13

Expectations:

- You are responsible for your own work, in class and make up. If you miss work due to absences, you are responsible for making it up in the required time (one day per day of absence). Always remember that you can get work or announcements from the web site (<http://nniland.com>). If there is any question, please e-mail me ([nniland@nniland.com](mailto:nniland@nniland.com)). You may miss one reading quiz a quarter. You must make up all others on the day following your absence or must take the make up reading quiz (within four days of your absence or the reading quiz will become a zero) which will be a different more difficult quiz. The point is that you will be treated like adults in this class and you are expected to take responsibility for your learning – no one is going to chase you to make up work.
- Annoying or rude behavior such as chewing gum, putting on make up, writing notes, working on other subject material texting, or sleeping will not be tolerated.
- Come prepared each day with necessary materials.
- Cheating and/or plagiarism are grave offenses and will be handled immediately by appropriate school authorities. You are encouraged not to tolerate anyone you know is cheating and can notify me of any incident (anonymously if you wish) so I can deal with it.
- You are tardy to class if you are not in your seat when the bell rings.

## Expectations (cont.):

- This is a college level class and will be taught as such. Expect more work, expect to work independently, expect questions on tests that are thinking questions and may not be in your text. I will give out a calendar at the beginning of each chapter and I will work hard to keep it or update it. Therefore, you will know about all work in advance (i.e. no whining!). Even though that is true, I will “hold your hand” (provide notes, detailed study guides, etc) more than other AP courses because most students who take AP Psychology have not taken an AP class before.
- The goal of this course is to prepare students to pass the National AP Exam at the end of the year (Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon). This is an optional exam that costs about \$80. If you pass it you’ll probably receive college credit worth a one semester class (Psy 101). Different colleges may have different policies regarding A.P. scores. If you choose not to take the exam, you’ll be required to take and be graded on a comprehensive exam that I develop. But everyone will study together in the days leading up to the National A.P. Psychology Exam. Students will be expected to take their final exam the week of the AP exam – dates will be announced closer to May.
- Please note that no matter what level learner you are, you can be successful in this class if you put the effort into the class and buy into what I ask you to do.
  - In 2006 with 54% of students taking AP Psychology as their first AP course ever, 95% of students who took the class took the AP exam and 92% of those students passed the exam (with 83% scoring a 4 or a 5).
  - In 2007 with 52% of students taking AP Psychology as their first AP course ever, 96% of students who took the class took the AP exam and 85% of those students passed the exam (with 64% scoring a 4 or a 5).
  - In 2008 with 49% of students taking AP Psychology as their first AP course ever, 95% of students who took the class took the AP exam and 82% of those students passed the exam (with 80% scoring a 4 or a 5).
  - In 2009 with 48% of students taking AP AP Psychology as their first AP course ever, 97% of students who took the class took the AP exam and 83% of those students passed the exam (with 85% scoring a 4 or a 5).
  - In 2010 with 43% of students taking AP AP Psychology as their first AP course ever, 100% of students who took the class took the AP exam and 85% of those students passed the exam (43 students scoring a 4 and 38 scoring a 5).
- Lastly, it is very important that if you are struggling in this class you come for extra help as soon as possible. Many concepts that we study in psychology build on each other and can seem overwhelming if you do not seek help right away. I am not a mind reader and I cannot always sense when students are struggling with material (until after a test or quiz). There may be a time when students who are struggling consistently with material may be asked to come for mandatory extra help.



*“You’ll have to forgive Sidney. The left and right hemispheres of his brain are currently engaged in a struggle for dominance...”*