

General Information

Course Overview: The course is comparable to an undergraduate introductory psychology course, with emphasis on research methods.

Units of Study: Topics studied include research methods, biological psychology, sensation and perception, variations in consciousness, learning, memory, language and thought, intelligence and psychological testing, motivation and emotion, personality, disorders and their treatments, social psychology, and developmental psychology.

Course Level: The course is offered at two levels. IB Psychology SL is a college-prep science class and is comparable in difficulty and workload to other IB science courses such as Biology. Students opting to take Psychology without the IB distinction will find it to be an easier course in terms of both workload and rigor, but should keep in mind that it is still a college-prep course and will require a significant level of dedication, effort, and critical thinking.

Recommended Prerequisites

IB Courses: Students are better prepared if they have completed at least one IB course before taking Psychology. The critical thinking that develops through such courses is fundamental to Psychology. Therefore, Psychology is best when taken as a senior.

Math: Students should have completed at least Algebra II before taking Psychology, as some of the concepts in that course underlie research methods and behavior models discussed in Psychology. Additionally, a few students each year choose to take Statistics & Research Methods concurrently with Psychology, and find each course to benefit significantly from the other.

Assignments

Readings: A great deal of course content is in the textbook. There are three reading assignments each chapter, typically about 10 pages each.

Reading Questions: Each chapter has a set of 40 multiple-choice questions directly from the text, and in the same order of the reading, to answer while reading. These are due at the start of class on the due date of the last reading of the chapter.

Quizzes: There is a group quiz after each of the three readings per chapter. Students opting for the IB distinction are expected to explain concepts in greater detail.

Projects: There is a project each chapter to apply in a real-world context the content covered. Some are personal, but most can be done in groups. A modified version of each project is available for students not opting for the IB distinction.

IB Internal Assessment: This is a basic replication of an existing study. It involves designing and carrying out the replication and writing a formal APA research paper. The overall project is substantial, but it is broken down into manageable steps due weekly from November to March. Students not opting for the IB distinction will still do the research project, but will have more flexibility, including the option to work in groups.

Tests: The majority of each test is conceptually based. Many terms need to be known to address the concepts, but merely knowing the definitions of the terms is not sufficient to do well on most of the test items. The majority of test items relate to content covered both in class and in the book, but some are based only on in-class discussions and some are based only on the reading. One section of the test will be differentiated, in that it will be IB exam review for students in the IB version of the course, versus a section to complete as a group for other students.

Field Trip

We will be going to the Stanford Center for Cognitive and Neurobiological Imaging on September 25. Please contact me if you might be interested in driving and joining us.

Things to make life easier

Website: All slides and course materials are available online at ewyner.com.

Extensions: Students who feel they may need extra time to turn in an assignment, because they will be absent when it is due or for any other reason, can have me sign an extension request form before the assignment is due to change the due date to a different date before the test. In some circumstances, a new due date on or after the test date may be granted. Extensions must be requested in person, and are not granted once an assignment is due, including at parent request.

Free C: Students may request a "Free C" on any nontest assignment once per grading period. When the assignment is due, it can be turned in normally, or the Free C form can be turned in in its place for a score of 70%. The Free C form must be signed by me before the assignment's due date.

Study Sessions: At any point, a group of 4 to 12 students can arrange a formal teacher-led study session, given availability.

Absences and Late Work

Unplanned absences such as illness: Other than quizzes and tests, all notes and assignments are available online. Absent students have the responsibility to stay caught up with these. Missed quizzes are to be made up and attached to an excused absence slip from the office before the day of the test. A missed test is to be made up the day of return. In a case in which any of this will create undue hardship, alternate arrangements can be made by email prior to the due dates. No alternate arrangements will be made on or after the day an assignment is due.

Planned absences such as sports, school activities, vacations, etc.: Students can choose to complete assignments, including quizzes and tests, before they leave, or they can request an extension (see above). Assignments turned in late because of a planned absence will only receive full credit if attached to an Extension Request form signed by me prior to the absence. Do not attach readmit slips from the office for planned absences.

Unexcused late work: All work is accepted late, with a small penalty, until the test. No late work can be turned in after the test, except for projects, which will receive about half credit.

Permissions

Participation in Experiments: Students will be participants in minor psychological experiments, sometimes without being explicitly aware of what is being studied until afterward. Following APA ethical guidelines, any participants can choose to remove themselves or their data from any study at any point without penalty.

Movies: We may use movies to illustrate some of the psychological concepts discussed in class. Not surprisingly, most movies with substantial psychological significance are made for mature audiences and are rated R. The movies we watch will be carefully selected for their psychological value, but this does not mean that they will not contain material that could be considered inappropriate in other respects. If you as a parent would like to be selective about which movies your son or daughter sees, please contact me so that alternate arrangements can be made.

Signatures

We have read and understood this course information sheet. In particular, we approve participation in experiments and watching of R-rated movies unless other arrangements are made.

Parent

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Student

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this entire page. It is available online for later reference.