

Advanced Placement Psychology

Course Syllabus and Survival Guide

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Purpose of the Course

The purpose of the Advanced Placement course in Psychology is to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of behavior and mental processes of human beings and animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about the methods psychologists use in their science and practice. (Taken from the Advanced Placement Course Description in Psychology by the College Board).

Course Objectives

1. Students will prepare to do acceptable work on the Advanced Placement Examination in Psychology.
2. Students will study the major core concepts and theories of psychology. They will be able to define key terms and use these terms in their everyday vocabulary.
3. Students will learn the basic skills of psychological research. They will be able to devise simple research projects, interpret and generalize from results and evaluate the validity of research reports.
4. Students will be able to apply psychological concepts to their own lives. They should be able to recognize psychological principles when they are encountered in everyday situations.
5. Students will develop critical thinking skills. They will become aware of the danger of blindly accepting or rejecting any psychological theory without careful, objective evaluation.
6. Students will build their reading, writing, and discussion skills.
7. Students will learn about psychology as a profession, and become aware of the educational requirements which must be met to pursue such careers. They will learn about the ethical standards governing the work of psychologists.

Questions to Think About Before We Begin

1. Why are you taking this class? Do you want to learn about psychology? Are you ready for a "college level" class? Are you serious about preparing for and taking the AP Exam in May? Would the regular psychology class better suit your goals?
2. What are your priorities? Are academics near the top of the list, or are you more concerned with athletics, social life, a part-time job, television, and so on?
3. How much time will you need to devote to this class? This will depend on your own strengths and weaknesses. A rule of thumb suggested by many colleges is to spend two to three hours working outside of class for every hour you spend in class. Since most college courses meet three hours a week, this translates to about six to nine out of class hours per week. Are you willing to make this commitment?
4. Are you a strong reader? In terms of course assignments, nothing will occupy more of your time than reading and studying the text. Research has shown that the strongest prediction of success in high school AP classes is reading ability. If you are a good reader, you have a distinct advantage. If you are not a good reader, know that it is going to require extra time and effort to compensate for that weakness.
5. What is your motivation level? Your level of motivation is much more important than your ability level. If you want to succeed in AP Psychology and you are willing to put in the necessary effort, you will succeed. Attitude, study skills, determination, and discipline count for more than intelligence toward your success in this class.

After considering the above, if you have any questions, concerns, etc. as to whether AP Psychology is the course for you, please see me in room 204 ASAP!