

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

PROPOSED COURSE NAME **AP Psychology**

SUBMITTED BY **Brian Arenz**

Underline the Appropriate Item: New Course / Major revision to an existing course

Implementation Date: **Fall of 2013**

Person(s) who will write the Curriculum: **Brian Arenz**

Duration: **Full Year Course**

Open to: **Juniors and Seniors**

Prerequisites: **None**

Pass/Fail Option: **No**

Credit: **1 Credit**

If the course meets a graduation requirement, which one does meet?

This course would meet the Social Studies requirements to graduate, as well as preparing the students for college with the rigors of an AP course.

Where does this course fit into department sequence?

This course would be an elective that students would take after completing AP Human Geography, AP US History, and other challenging courses.

What is the potential impact of this course on the other department offerings?

This may have to take the place of a Diversity class. Diversity is an excellent class that is shaped around the ideals of a sociology course. However, the addition of an AP Psychology course would greatly enhance the preparedness of students for college, as well as enhance the reputation of the school by adding an AP course that 65.5% of all students get a 3 or better.

Course Description

“The AP Psychology Course is designed to introduce students to the systematic study of the behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about ethics and methods psychologists use in their science and practice.” From the Advanced Placement Course Handbook.

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RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES

1. Course Rationale

A) What is the evidence of student need for this course?

The study of psychology is one of the most fascinating fields today. In the AP course, they will gain a better understanding of why their mind works the way it does, and why people do the things they do. While this is a rigorous course, students often enjoy Psychology more than any other AP offering simply because it is one that translates to their everyday lives most apparently.

B) What departmental needs/goals would this course meet?

This course satisfies the Psychology aspect of Social Studies and would further the department's AP offerings.

C) What institutional needs/goals would this course meet?

As a school, it is the goal to prepare students by helping them master content, and further prepare them for education beyond just high school. AP courses are designed as college level courses, thus giving them credit but also a chance to understand the demands that need to be met at the next level in order to succeed.

2. Course Objectives: What will each student learn and know?

Attached to this proposal is the AP Course Curriculum outline. It specifies exactly what types of psychologies, study standards, sciences, and methods that are used in the Psychology field.

3. What types of instructional strategies will be used in the class?

There will be many different styles of instructional strategies used in the classroom. Most frequently will be there will be lecturing, as this is the main strategy used in a college-level class. However, activities will also be instilled in the class curriculum as a means of enriching the materials being covered in a particular unit. It is also important to keep in mind these students are still in high school, and despite their prior academic achievements, stimulating and enriching activities are still required.

4. What types of student assessment procedures will be used? How will the assessment be used to guide instruction?

The most important assessment in this class is the AP Exam. Scoring a "3" or better on the exam will ensure some college credit for the students at the next level. There will also be exams given along the way in order to check on preparedness for said AP Exam.

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5. List resources needed and approximate costs to implement this course. Include staff development, materials, textbooks, additional staff, equipment, technology resources, facilities, and fees.

There would require some training, as a new AP teacher there is some training required. Also, a classroom set of textbooks would also be required. There would be no new equipment or technology resources required. Everything already in the classroom would be sufficient for maximum efficiency.

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AP Psychology

Topic Outline

These are the major content areas covered by the AP Psychology Exam, as well as the approximate percentages of the multiple-choice section that are devoted to each area.

- I. History and Approaches (2–4%)
- II. Research Methods (6–8%)
- III. Biological Bases of Behavior (8–10%)
- IV. Sensation and Perception (7–9%)
- V. States of Consciousness (2–4%)
- VI. Learning (7–9%)
- VII. Cognition (8–10%)
- VIII. Motivation and Emotion (7–9%)
- IX. Developmental Psychology (7–9%)
- X. Personality (6–8%)
- XI. Testing and Individual Differences (5–7%)
- XII. Abnormal Psychology (7–9%)
- XIII. Treatment of Psychological Disorders (5–7%)
- XIV. Social Psychology (7–9%)

I. History and Approaches (2–4%)

1. Logic, Philosophy, and History of Science
2. Approaches:
 1. Biological
 2. Behavioral
 3. Cognitive
 4. Humanistic
 5. Psychodynamic
 6. Sociocultural
 7. Evolutionary/Sociobiological

II. Research Methods (6–8%)

1. Experimental, Correlational, and Clinical Research:
 1. Correlational (e.g., observational, survey, clinical)
 2. Experimental
2. Statistics:
 1. Descriptive
 2. Inferential
3. Ethics in Research

III. Biological Bases of Behavior (8–10%)

1. Physiological Techniques (e.g., imaging, surgical)
2. Neuroanatomy
3. Functional Organization of Nervous System
4. Neural Transmission
5. Endocrine System
6. Genetics

IV. Sensation and Perception (7–9%)

1. Thresholds
2. Sensory Mechanisms
3. Sensory Adaptation
4. Attention
5. Perceptual Processes

V. States of Consciousness (2–4%)

1. Sleep and Dreaming
2. Hypnosis
3. Psychoactive Drug Effects

VI. Learning (7–9%)

1. Classical Conditioning
2. Operant Conditioning
3. Cognitive Processes in Learning
4. Biological Factors
5. Social Learning

VII. Cognition (8–10%)

1. Memory
2. Language
3. Thinking
4. Problem Solving and Creativity

VIII. Motivation and Emotion (7–9%)

1. Biological Bases
2. Theories of Motivation
3. Hunger, Thirst, Sex, and Pain
4. Social Motives
5. Theories of Emotion
6. Stress

IX. Developmental Psychology (7–9%)

1. Life-Span Approach
2. Research Methods (e.g., longitudinal, cross-sectional)
3. Heredity-Environment Issues
4. Developmental Theories
5. Dimensions of Development:
 1. Physical
 2. Cognitive
 3. Social
 4. Moral
6. Sex Roles, Sex Differences

X. Personality (6–8%)

1. Personality Theories and Approaches
2. Assessment Techniques
3. Self-concept, Self-esteem
4. Growth and Adjustment

XI. Testing and Individual Differences (5–7%)

1. Standardization and Norms
2. Reliability and Validity
3. Types of Tests
4. Ethics and Standards in Testing
5. Intelligence
6. Heredity/Environment and Intelligence
7. Human Diversity

XII. Abnormal Psychology (7–9%)

1. Definitions of Abnormality
2. Theories of Psychopathology
3. Diagnosis of Psychopathology
4. Anxiety Disorders
5. Somatoform Disorders
6. Mood Disorders
7. Schizophrenic Disorders
8. Organic Disorders
9. Personality Disorders
10. Dissociative Disorders

XIII. Treatment of Psychological Disorders (5–7%)

1. Treatment Approaches:
 1. Insight Therapies:
Psychodynamic/Humanistic Approaches
 2. Behavioral Approaches
 3. Cognitive Approaches
 4. Biological Approaches
(psychopharmacology/psychosurgery)
2. Modes of Therapy (e.g., individual, group)
3. Community and Preventive Approaches

XIV. Social Psychology (7–9%)

1. Group Dynamics
2. Attribution Processes
3. Interpersonal Perception
4. Conformity, Compliance, Obedience
5. Attitudes and Attitude Change
6. Organizational Behavior
7. Aggression/Antisocial Behavior

The Exam

About the Exam

The two-hour exam includes a 70-minute multiple-choice section and a 50-minute free-response section.

Section I: Multiple-Choice

This section is designed to assess the breadth of your knowledge of the subject. The questions cover the 14 areas of scientific psychology covered in the course and described in the [Topic Outline](#). In some questions, you are asked to demonstrate your understanding of a psychological term (e.g., genotype, echoic memory, mania, phonemes). In others you are asked to apply concepts from a particular psychological theory (e.g., Kohlberg's theory of moral judgment, attribution theory) or to identify the theoretical framework with which a given explanation is associated (e.g., an explanation of depression in terms of norepinephrine levels). Other questions are designed to assess general understanding of the scientific method as well as knowledge of findings from major research studies or areas of study.

Unlike other multiple-choice tests, random guessing can hurt your final score. While you don't lose anything for leaving a question blank, one quarter of a point is subtracted for each incorrect answer on the test. But if you have some knowledge of the question and can eliminate one or more answers, it's usually to your advantage to choose what you believe is the best answer from the remaining choices.

Section II: Free-Response

The free-response section tests your ability to make connections among constructs from a number of the 14 content domains covered in the course. There are two questions in the free-response section. Each question incorporates concepts from a number of domains. The questions often involve application, analysis, synthesis, or a critique of psychological principles.

Scoring the Exam

The multiple-choice section counts for two-thirds of your grade; the free-response section counts for one-third.

Sample Questions & Scoring Guidelines

The AP Psychology Exam is two hours long. In Section I, students are given one hour and 10 minutes to answer 100 multiple-choice questions; in Section II, they must answer two free-response questions in 50 minutes.

Multiple-Choice Questions

For sample multiple-choice questions, refer to the Course Description

[AP Psychology Course Description \(.pdf/667K\)](#)

Free-Response Questions

- [2008 Free-Response Questions \(.pdf/122K\)](#)
- [2007 Free-Response Questions \(.pdf/139K\)](#)
- [2006 Free-Response Questions \(.pdf/63K\)](#)
- [2005 Free-Response Questions \(.pdf/143K\)](#)
- [2004 Free-Response Questions \(.pdf/72K\)](#)
- [2003 Free-Response Questions \(.pdf/90K\)](#)
- [2002 Free-Response Questions \(.pdf/105K\)](#)

Scoring Guidelines

- [2008 Scoring Guidelines \(.pdf/104K\)](#)
- [2007 Scoring Guidelines \(.pdf/186K\)](#)
- [2006 Scoring Guidelines \(.pdf/143K\)](#)
- [2005 Scoring Guidelines \(.pdf/124K\)](#)
- [2004 Scoring Guidelines \(.pdf/103K\)](#)

2007 Psychology Grade Distribution

Examination Grade	% of Students Earning Grade
5 - Extremely Well Qualified	18.8
4 - Well Qualified	26.2
3 - Qualified	20.5
2 - Possibly Qualified	13.7
1 - No Recommendation	20.8

Additional Statistics

Mean Grade	3.09
Standard Deviation	1.41
Total Number of Students	116,128
Number of Schools Administering this AP Exam	4,257
Number of Colleges Receiving AP Grades in this Subject	2,357