

2015-2016 Advanced Placement Psychology

Instructor- Andrea M. Anderson

aanderson@wcpss.net

Course Introduction

Advanced Placement Psychology is the equivalent of a three-credit college Introduction to Psychology course. This is a rigorous and demanding course, intended to provide the scope and level of accomplishment expected in a college or university setting. The curriculum for this course places a heavy emphasis on essential readings, writing assignments, independent projects, and frequent tests intended to prepare students for the AP Exam. **It is of utmost important that students enrolled in this course realize that this is a college course, and they will be treated as a college student.** Therefore, students are expected to seek, find, and internalize the information presented through reading resources and class lecture/experiment. This is not a class for the passive student.

Structure of the Test- the AP Psychology Exam is 2 hours long and consists of:

Section 1- 100 multiple choice questions (1 hour and 10 minutes)

Section 2- 2 free response questions (50 minutes)

Course Objectives- Successful completion of this course will be determined by how well students demonstrate an understanding of the course objectives. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- understand the vocabulary and concepts of psychology.
- understand how critical thinking skills are developed
- describe the critical developments that led to the present discipline of psychology
- describe and apply psychological theory in some areas of his/her life

Evaluation and Grade Calculation

Tests/Major Projects: **50% of total grade**

**Minor Grades-Quizzes, mini-projects,
class participation:** **40% of total grade**

Classwork and homework: **10% of total grade**

***Note: There is a vocabulary quiz given for EACH chapter covered. Expect to have vocabulary quizzes on a weekly basis.**

Teaching Methods: Methods will include lectures, class discussions, films, interactive board, oral presentations, group projects, class discussions, creative exercises, and a variety of student centered approaches.

Student Expectations

- ✓ I expect that each student enrolled in this course has done so because they have an interest in the field of Psychology, a desire to work at a college pace, and an ultimate goal of passing the AP Exam.
- ✓ Be in class on time, prepared to participate and take notes
- ✓ Students are expected to review the assigned materials by the assigned due dates.
- ✓ Students are expected to actively participate in all discussions.
- ✓ All coursework must be typed and submitted in a Word document.
- ✓ Students are expected to turn in quality work which, in addition to meeting content requirements, is grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. (Poor grammar and/or spelling will result in a reduction in the overall grade for the assignment)
- ✓ Students are expected to turn in all work on the date it is due.
- ✓ Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the Holly Springs High School policy on plagiarism, cheating and other academic dishonesty

Workload Expectations

The AP Psychology curriculum is constructed to mirror that of a three credit Introduction to Psychology course at the collegiate level. One college credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week necessary for the average (C) student to attain an average grade (C). **Thus, a student taking a three credit course that meets for three hours per week should expect to spend an additional six hours per week on coursework outside of the classroom.** This, of course is a generalization. The amount of outside work will vary greatly by student and the letter grade sought.

Study Tips

- 1. Start studying now!** Commit to putting in the necessary time to remember information from the course! There is a direct relationship between the amount of time you spend learning material and the length of time you remember it (YES - carrying a full load is like a full-time job!). An ideal situation is to review your notes and do some reading/studying shortly after each class period while class is fresh in your mind.
- 2. Space your study sessions.** All night cram sessions are one of the least effective ways to learn or memorize new material. Repeated spaced practices (e.g. reviewing a little every class day) allow you to mentally process and incorporate the information into memory. It's a basic fact about the way human memory works.
- 3. Read material BEFORE we cover it in class.** Another function of human memory is that we tend to remember things much easier when we have some sort of mental framework to guide us. That's exactly what reading the material ahead of time does; it gives you that all important mental framework so that when the professor mentions the concept, you already have a place to "hang" the information.
- 4. Find a place to study where you can concentrate.** Problems in absorbing new information arise when distracting thoughts, background noise, televisions, stereos, and friends sidetrack your attention. I recommend the library. No matter how good you think you are at multi-tasking, do NOT do it while studying. Loads and loads of research data say that you should NOT divide your attention between your phone, your music, television, Facebook, etc. while reading and studying.
- 5. BEWARE** - so much of psych sounds familiar that it is very tempting to think you are grasping it all just by passively listening in lecture. This is *not* enough to actually learn and be able to use the material in the course. You must be an active, involved learner and really work with the text and lecture notes to get a good grade. **Test yourself** before I test you - If you take the online practice test and only get 60% right, there is a pretty good chance you'll only get ~60% (D-) on our test too! The study aids you actually produce yourself (flashcards, outlines, concept maps) are extremely important to your learning. Conscientiously try to anticipate our test questions. Each day after class ask yourself "What concepts from today's class are likely to be on the test (and make a list)?"