

# AP Psychology

Lee Academy Syllabus

2011-2012

## Schedule

Courses are scheduled on an alternating four-block schedule. Each class meets for 80 minutes on five out of every ten school days. There are a total of 88 AP Psychology classes for the school year. Considering the possibility of having the first AP exam date in May, the students will have approximately 73 AP Psychology classes before the exam. This equates to 35 weeks before the exam including vacations, and 30 weeks before the exam excluding vacations.

## Course Goal

Students will learn about topics covering the foundation of psychology in preparation for the AP Psychology exam through lecture, discussions, group activities, homework, labs and projects. Ultimately, students should be able to apply their knowledge to help analyze and recognize psychology in the world around us.

## Textbook

Morris, Charles G. & Maisto, Albert A. *Psychology*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Participation	10 %
Tests, Projects, Sample AP Exams	40 %
Quizzes, Labs	30 %
Homework	20 %

## Grading Proportions

# Course Schedule

## Weeks 1-2

### Chapter 1. The Science of Psychology [CR 1][CR 15]

- Different areas of psychology (biological, clinical, cognitive, counseling, developmental, educational, experimental, human factors, industrial-organizational, personality, psychometric and social)
- Transition from early philosophy to psychology
- Theoretical approaches to psychology (structuralism, functionalism, behaviorism, Gestalt, psychoanalytic/psychodynamic, humanism, evolutionary, biological and cognitive)
- Strengths and limitations of each theoretical approach
- Identifying pioneers of psychology and their contributions

## Weeks 2-4

### Chapter 1, Appendix A. Research Methods [CR 2]

- Naturalistic, survey, correlational, experiment and case study research methods
- Explanation of how research is used to derive conclusions
- Identifying and distinguishing independent, dependent, confounding and control variables
- Distinguish random assignment and random selection of participants

-Definition and prediction of validity based on experimental set up

-Distinguish descriptive and inferential statistics, and learn basic descriptive statistic concepts

-Learn about how clear definitions are required to perform and later repeat and test the results of experiments

[CR 1- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in history and approaches]

[CR 15- Evidence of curricular requirement: As relevant to each content area, the course provides instruction in empirically-supported psychological facts, research findings, terminology, associated phenomena, major figures, perspectives, and psychological experiments]

[CR 2- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in research methods]

-Discuss ethics and former experiments that have led to the use of ethical and legal guidelines ensure the safety of researchers and participants/subjects

## Weeks 5-7

### Chapter 13. Psychological Disorders [CR 12]

-Describe what a psychological disorder is, including the use and reason for having the DSM in standardizing diagnoses

-Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the different theories of explaining psychological disorders including: biological, sociocultural, psychoanalytic, humanistic, cognitive and medical models

-Describe the most prominent psychological disorders, including: mood, anxiety, psychosomatic, somatoform, dissociative, sexual, personality, schizophrenic and childhood disorders

-Discuss the positive and negative consequences of labeling individuals with psychological disorders

-Discuss the use of psychological disorders in the legal system

## Weeks 8-9

### Chapter 14. Therapies [CR 13]

-Discuss the central figures of the different methods of psychological treatment, including the strengths and weaknesses of each method, while comparing and contrasting each method

-Describe the basic components of psychotherapeutic therapy

-Discuss how treatment of psychological disorders can vary from culture to culture

-Describe prevention strategies

## Weeks 10-12

### Chapter 15. Social Psychology [CR 14]

-Identify prominent figures in social psychology

[CR 12- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in abnormal psychology]

[CR 13- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in treatment of psychological disorders]

[CR 14- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in social psychology]

-Explain attribution theory

-Examine group behavior and dynamics, including how we interact with each other and why we treat them the way we do

-Discuss how attitudes change and form

-Examine how different social and cultural characteristics can impact interaction

-Anticipate the impact of behavior on a self-fulfilling prophecy

-Identify what can positively and negatively impact altruism, aggression and attraction

## Weeks 13-16 (Week 13 – Vacation)

Chapter 7. Cognition and Language [CR 7]

- Identify prominent figures in the history of cognitive psychology
- Compare and contrast effortful and automatic processing, deep and shallow processing, focused and divided attention, and psychological and physiological systems of memory
- Examine the basics of encoding, storage and construction of memories
- Discuss ways to improve memory
- Examine problem solving strategies and what makes each effective or not
- Identify characteristics of creative thought and creative thinkers
- Discuss the basics of acquisition, development and use of language

## Weeks 17-19 (Weeks 17-18 – Vacation)

### Chapter 4. States of Consciousness [CR 5]

- Identify prominent figures in consciousness research
- Describe the sleep cycle, theories of sleep and dreaming, and symptoms and treatment of sleep disorders
- Discuss past and present views of the use of hypnosis in therapy

[CR 5- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in states of consciousness]

- Describe hypnotic phenomena

- Discuss psychoactive drugs, including their classifications, psychological effects, physiological effects, likelihood of dependence, addiction, tolerance and withdrawal

## Weeks 19-21

[CR 7- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in Cognition]

## Chapter 2. The Biological Basis of Behavior [CR 3]

- Identify past and present neuropsychological research, including the major contributors in the field
- Describe the neuron and its use
- Discuss the effect of the nervous system
- Describe the nervous system, including: the central and peripheral nervous system, major brain regions, and brain lateralization and hemispheric specialization
- Discuss the effects of drugs on nerves and the nervous system
- Examine the interaction between heredity, environment and evolution in shaping behavior
- Examine how traits and behavior can be selected for their adaptive value

[CR 3- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in biological bases of behavior]

## Weeks 22-23

### Chapter 3. Sensation and Perception [CR 4]

- Identify prominent figures in the history of sensation and perception
- Define sensory transduction identify its process in neurons
- Examine sensory pathways (i.e. vision, hearing, etc.) and common sensory disorders with said pathways
- Discuss how we perceive and organize our world, and how experience and culture can affect how we perceive
- Examine the role of top-down processes in perceiving illusions
- Discuss the role of attention in behavior

[CR 4- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in sensation and perception]

-Examine and discuss common beliefs in parapsychological phenomena

## Weeks 24-25

### Chapter 10. Life Span Development [CR 9]

- Identify prominent figures in the history of developmental psychology
- Distinguish the theories of nature and nurture
- Describe the development of a successful fetus
- Discuss the maturation of motor skills, social skills and cognitive abilities
- Compare and contrast models of moral development
- Discuss the challenges of maturation for adolescence and their families
- Discuss changes in perception of intimacy as individuals age
- Discuss cognitive drop off as we age and prevention of drop off
- Describe the effects of gender on development

[CR 9- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in developmental psychology]

## Weeks 26-28 (Week 26 – Vacation)

### Chapters 9 and 12. Motivation and Emotion [CR 8]

- Identify prominent figures in the history of motivation and emotion
- Identify basic motivational concepts in humans and other animals
- Discuss needs, drives and homeostasis
- Describe classic research findings in motivation systems
- Compare and contrast motivational theories, including strengths and weaknesses
- Compare and contrast theories of emotion, including strengths and weaknesses
- Examine the effect of culture on emotion
- Discuss stress and its effect on physical and psychological health

[CR 8- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in motivation and emotion]

## Weeks 29-31

### Chapter 5. Learning [CR 6]

- Identify prominent figures in the history of learning
- Distinguish classical conditioning, operant conditioning and observational learning
- Describe the effects of classical conditioning and basic phenomena
- Describe the effects of operant conditioning
- Examine the effects of different schedules of reinforcement, practice and motivation in the process of learning
- Examine and interpret graphs as the result of learning experiments
- Examine how biological constraints create learning predispositions
- Distinguish insight learning, latent learning and social learning
- Explain emotional learning, taste aversion, superstitious behavior and learned helplessness
- Examine how behavior modification, biofeedback, coping strategies and self-control can be used to address behavior problems

[CR 6- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in learning]

## Weeks 32-33

### Chapter 11. Personality [CR 10]

- Identify prominent figures in the history of personality
- Compare and contrast the main theories of personality while including the strengths and weaknesses of each
- Describe and compare different methods used in researching personality
- Identify different personality assessments and assess their validity and reliability
- Assess the influence of culture on personality development

[CR 10- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in personality]



-Research  
Experiment for  
Final Project

## Weeks 34-35 (Week 34 – Vacation)

### Chapter 8. Intelligence and Mental Abilities [CR 11]

- Define intelligence
- Identify prominent figures in intelligence research and testing, as well as prominent figures in the history of intelligence theories
- Contrast abstract and verbal measures of intelligence, and assess the speed of processing
- Discuss the impact of culture on the definition of intelligence
- Examine how scientists test reliability and validity
- Interpret a normal curve and its meaning
- Examine labels attached to individuals with certain scores on intelligence tests
- Debate appropriate testing practices

## Weeks 36-42 (Week 36 – Earliest Possible AP Exam)

- Industrial/Organizational Psychology

[CR 11- Evidence of curricular requirement: The course provides instruction in testing and individual differences]