

# Psychology

**A-G Subject Area Fulfillment:** Meets one semester of the (A) Social Science graduation requirement.

## **Course Overview:**

Psychology is an introductory survey course designed to introduce students to the vast and diverse field of psychology. The course is based on the High School Psychology Standards as developed by the American Psychological Association. The course will include the five content domains and standards according to the following: Cognitive; Bio-psychological; Research Methods; Life Span Development; and Social/Emotional Psychology.

## **Course Description:**

This course will emphasize several contemporary psychological perspectives such as biological, cognitive, humanistic, psychoanalytical, and socio-cultural perspectives with current studies and past experiments. Students will gain an overall insight into psychology as a science. Specifically, students will learn the operative definition of psychology as a scientific endeavor and also consider many of the philosophical and social implications of psychological knowledge. They will become familiar with the modern psychological perspective on the complex interplay of factors that shape human personality, behavior and mental processes. Students will also become acquainted with the development of psychological theory, past and present, and with some of the philosophers and scientists who have made major contributions to the field. Lastly, students will learn about themselves, learn critical thinking skills, and develop a social consciousness related to mental health.

## **Course Goals and Objectives**

### **Correlates with the California State Standards**

#### **I. History of Psychology**

Introduction:

Establishing fundamental operative terminology:

- What is modern psychology?
- How is modern psychology practiced?
- What are the different perspectives on human psychology?
  - The “perspectives” framework is a reoccurring theme in this course.
  - “How would a cognitive learning theorist explain that behavior?” might be an application question.

A. Definitions of psychology:

1. What psychology is and what it is not.
2. Origin of the modern field of psychology.

- B. Methodology of psychology:
  - 1. Modern psychological research methodology.
  - 2. Challenges associated with studying human psychology scientifically.
- C. Psychological disciplines and degrees:
  - 1. Disciplines of psychological practice.
  - 2. What people do with degrees in psychology.
- D. The major psychological perspectives covered:
  - 1. Behaviorism
  - 2. Gestalt
  - 3. Psychodynamic
  - 4. Evolutionary
  - 5. Biological
  - 6. Cognitive
  - 7. Humanistic/Existential
  - 8. Learning (behavioral and cognitive)
  - 9. Sociocultural

## II. The Biology of Psychology

Introduction:

Philosophical questions which arise from the study of modern psychological theory:

- How much conscious control do we have over our behavior and mental processes?
- Is one's own psychology something spiritual or immaterial?

This unit introduces students to the current theory that “psychology is a function of the brain and nervous system.”

By understanding the physiological foundations of behavior and mental processes, students will be better equipped to know the biological parameters within which they must operate as individuals.

- A. The physiological processes of human psychology
  - 1. The nervous system
  - 2. Brain structures and functions
  - 3. Left and right hemispheres
  - 4. Neurochemistry (and the mechanics of medication/addiction)
  - 5. The endocrine system
- B. Nature vs. Nurture:
  - 1. Definition of “nature vs. nurture.”
  - 2. How “nature vs. nurture” both interact and influence.

## III. Developmental Psychology

Introduction:

- The developmental psychology unit will make students more aware of the processes that create and influence a person's changing psychology over the lifespan.
  - By examining the various stages up to and including adolescence, students should have a deeper understanding of “how they got where they are.”

- By studying future stages and what they might expect, they might be better prepared to navigate those upcoming stages more consciously and successfully.
- A. Human behavior and mental processes change and develop over the course of a lifespan .
- B. Reflection: Students will consider their own developmental histories up to this point in their lives .
- C. Preparation:
  1. A preview of life challenges and opportunities to come.
  2. Psychological knowledge on how to navigate stage-of-life developmental opportunities successfully.
- D. Research on attachment, abuse and effective parenting methods .
- E. Important theorists covered:
  1. Piaget on cognitive development
  2. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development
  3. Kohlberg on moral development
  4. Erikson on psychosocial development

#### IV. Personality

Introduction:

- A. Developing an Identity
- B. Perspectives of Personality
- C. Background on the Science of Personality Measurement:
  1. The science of personality measurement
  2. Evaluating different theories of personality:
    - a. The psychodynamic perspective (“uncovering the iceberg”)
    - b. The trait perspective (the five-factor model)
    - c. Learning-theory perspectives
      1. Behaviorist
      2. Social-cognitive
    - d. The humanistic-existential perspective
      1. Maslow's Pyramid
      2. Rogers' Self
    - e. The socio-cultural perspective
      - a. Individualism vs. collectivism
      - b. Acculturation
- B. Measurement of personality
  1. Objective
  2. Projective

#### V. Psychological Disorders

Introduction:

Definitions of Psychological Disorders:

- Is it a “unique personality,” or is it a “disorder”?
  - That is the first question posed by this unit. Having thus far in the course seen

how human psychology functions under mostly “normal” conditions, students will see in this unit what a variety of pathologies can look like and how they develop.

- Students will examine the interplay of genetic, experiential and environmental factors in the genesis of disorder.
  
- A. Study the history of Western explanations of psychological disorders, from “demonic possession” to “chemical imbalances.”
- B. Survey the characteristics and probable causes (genetic, experiential and environmental) of some major disorders:
  1. Anxiety disorders
  2. Dissociative disorders
  3. Somatoform disorders
  4. Mood disorders
  5. Schizophrenia
  6. Personality disorders
  7. Addiction

## VI. Methods of Therapy

Introduction:

- Now that students have seen what sorts of disorders can arise, this unit then asks the next logical question: “How can these issues be addressed?”
- Since students are already familiar with the various major perspectives on psychology (psychodynamic, cognitive, etc.), they will be able to draw connections between those theoretical underpinnings and these forms of praxis.

- A. Acquaint students with the major styles of psychotherapy
  1. Psychodynamic
  2. Humanistic
  3. Behavioral
  4. Cognitive
  5. Chemical/biological treatments
- B. Assess current research on the effectiveness of therapy, both in general and considering which therapies seem to work best for specific disorders

## VII. Social Psychology

Introduction:

- What happens to human psychology when the individual is considered, not in isolation, but in the context of a group dynamic?
  - In this unit, students will become more aware of the ways in which the presence of other people – peers, strangers, and authority figures – can influence their behavior and mental processes without their even knowing it.
  - With that awareness, students may be able to take more conscious control of their actions in their outside lives.

- A. Attitudes:
  - 1. What are they?
  - 2. How are they formed?
- B. Persuasion:
  - 1. What works?
  - 2. Why?
- C. Social perception: The attributional process
- D. Social influence:
  - 1. Obedience
  - 2. Conformity
- E. Group behavior:
  - 1. Facilitation, deliberation and decision-making
  - 2. Group-think, mobs and de-individuation

### **Course Grading**

- 1. Classroom participation - 15%
- 2. Daily assignments (including reading notes and study questions) - 35%
- 3. Projects - 20%
- 4. Tests - 15%
- 5. Final exam - 15%

### **Academic Integrity**

#### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism: “1. the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.”

(“Plagiarism.” Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Random House, Inc. 20 Feb. 2009. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Plagiarism>>.)

Access to technology makes it easier to copy the work of others. Students will learn what constitutes plagiarism and how to steer clear of it. As a rule, if there are three words in a row that someone else can claim, cite it. Plagiarism is stealing and cheating and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is against the law.

The first time a student is caught plagiarizing, there will be a teacher/student conference, a phone call home, no credit given for the assignment, and notification given to the SAEP office. Copying from a fellow classmate is also unacceptable on homework assignments and individual assessments. The consequences are the same as above.

### **Teacherease.com:**

Parents and students can access grades and attendance through a web-based grade program at [teacherease.com](http://teacherease.com). By the end of the first week, parents will be e-mailed the password to access the program. If you do not receive your password via e-mail, please contact the office staff at [saep@csun.edu](mailto:saep@csun.edu) and request the password to be re-sent. It is beneficial for you to refer often to the website to check your child's progress and attendance in class. If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me.

### **Classroom Behavior:**

The student is expected to demonstrate mature, polite behavior and extend courtesy to everyone at all times:

1. Actively participate, and respectful verbal and nonverbal interaction with all opinions must be shown at all times.
2. Since differing views will be expressed, the teacher and the student(s) will mutually maintain a safe environment for courteous dialogue.
3. Respect is to be shown for all CSUN property.
4. No food or beverages will be permitted in the classroom. Snacks must be eaten outside between the designated breaks.
5. Warnings for behavior / discipline problems will be given once. Any further problems will result in a phone call to the parent(s) or guardian(s) and possible dismissal from the program.

### **SAEP Electronics Policy**

#### **Cell phones, music players and headphones are not permitted to be used during class hours.**

- a. Please put your cell phone on silent (NOT vibrate).
- b. No texting is allowed during class.

You will be given one verbal warning if the above is not followed. Should a second warning be necessary, your cell phone, music player and/or headphones will be confiscated and held by the teacher until after class. If a third time occurs, your cell phone, music player and/or headphones will be confiscated and held in the SAEP office and **MUST BE PICKED UP BY A PARENT.**

# Psychology

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After reading through the syllabus, please sign and date and have your student return it to class. The signature constitutes your commitment to the class as we partner to make the next five weeks a life-long educational experience for your student.

**Student/ Parent Agreement:**

**Please bring this signed and dated Psychology** syllabus agreement to class tomorrow.

If you do not understand any portion of this syllabus, or if you have any questions regarding this class, please do not hesitate to email the teacher.

We have read and understand the contents of this syllabus.

Student name \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_