

## Advanced Placement Psychology Course Syllabus

**Course Title: Advanced Placement Psychology**

**Department: Social Studies Chelmsford High School**

**Primary Course Materials: Psychology AP\* Edition Phil Zimbardo et al. Pearson 2007.**

**Course Description:** This full-year, college level course, for seniors and juniors, is designed to introduce students to the biological and theoretical foundations of Psychology. The course will cover material ranging from the historical roots of this social science to the anatomical structure and function of the brain and sensory organs. Emphasis will be placed on investigative research, analysis, interpretation and writing skills. Students will explore the concepts that today's psychologists are continuing to investigate. Students will be expected to take on the demands of a college level course, including additional reading assignments during the summer and throughout the school year. Students are required to purchase a copy of Lauren Slater's Opening Skinner's Box and read the book prior to the first class meeting in September. Test taking and writing skills will be addressed throughout the course to prepare students for the Advanced Placement Psychology Exam in May.

### **Essential Questions:**

*What is Psychology and what is not?*  
*What are Psychology's historical roots?*  
*What are the Perspectives used in Psychology Today?*  
*How do Psychologists develop new knowledge?*  
*How do we make sense of data?*  
*How are genes and behavior linked?*  
*How does the body communicate internally?*  
*How does the brain produce behavior and mental processes?*  
*How does stimulation become sensation?*  
*How are the senses alike and how are they different?*  
*What is the relationship between sensation and perception?*  
*How is consciousness related to other mental processes?*  
*What cycles occur in our everyday consciousness?*  
*What other forms can consciousness take?*  
*What sort of learning does classical conditioning explain?*  
*How do we learn new behaviors through operant conditioning?*  
*How does cognitive psychology explain learning?*  
*What is memory?*  
*How do we form memories?*  
*How do we retrieve memories?*  
*Why does memory sometimes fail us?*  
*How do children acquire language?*  
*What are the components of thought?*  
*What abilities do good thinkers assess?*

*What do our emotions do for us?*  
*Where do our emotions come from?*  
*How much control do we have over our emotions?*  
*Motivation: What makes us act as we do?*  
*How are achievement, hunger, and sex alike? Different?*  
*How and why do we experience stress?*  
*How do psychologists explain development?*  
*What capabilities does the child possess?*  
*What are the developmental tasks of infancy and childhood?*  
*What changes mark the transition of adolescence?*  
*What developmental challenges do adults face?*  
*What forces shape our personalities?*  
*What persistent patterns are found in personality?*  
*What “theories” do people use to understand each other?*  
*How do we measure individual differences?*  
*How is intelligence measured?*  
*What are the components of intelligence?*  
*How do psychologists explain IQ differences among groups?*  
*What is a psychological disorder?*  
*How are psychological disorders classified?*  
*What are the consequences of labeling people?*  
*What is therapy?*  
*How do psychologists treat psychological disorders?*  
*How is the biomedical approach used to treat psychological disorders?*  
*How does the social situation affect our behavior?*  
*What are the roots of violence and terrorism?*

*Essential questions from Zimbardo, Philip G. et al Psychology Ap\*Edition. Pearson. Boston. 2007.*

**Course Objectives:** *(what students will know and be able to do)*

1. Develop questions that guide inquiry and research in class work
2. Analysis of effective argument and critical thinking from scientific research
3. Express oneself clearly and effectively through writing and speaking
4. Critical analysis of statistics and graphic representations of data

**Common Goals:**

**Thinking and Communicating**

- 1)  Read information critically to develop understanding of concepts, topics and issues.
- 2)  Write clearly, factually, persuasively and creatively in Standard English.
- 3)  Speak clearly, factually, persuasively and creatively in Standard English.
- 4)  Use computers and other technologies to obtain, organize and communicate information and to solve problems.
- 5)  Conduct research to interpret issues or solve complex problems using a variety of data and information sources.

## Gain and Apply Knowledge in and across the Disciplines

- 6) Gain and Apply Knowledge in:
- a)  Literature and Language
  - b)  Mathematics
  - c)  Science and Technology
  - d)  Social Studies, History and Geography
  - e)  Visual and Performing Arts
  - f)  Health and Physical Education

## Work and Contribute

- 7)  Demonstrate personal responsibility for planning one's future academic and career options.
- 8)  Participate in a school or community service activity.
- 9)  Develop informed opinions about current economic, environmental, political and social issues affecting Massachusetts, the United States and the world and understand how citizens can participate in the political and legal system to affect improvements in these areas.

## Concepts and Skills from the National Standards for Psychology

<http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/national-standards.pdf>

### I. Methods Domain

A. Introduction and Research Methods

### II. Biopsychological Domain

A. Biological Bases of Behavior

B. Sensation and Perception

C. Motivation and Emotion

D. Stress, Coping, and Health

### III. Developmental Domain

A. Life Span Development

B. Personality and Assessment

### IV. Cognitive Domain

A. Learning

B. Memory

C. Thinking and Language

D. States of Consciousness

E. Individual Differences

### V. Variations in Individual and Group Behavior Domain

A. Psychological Disorders

B. Treatment of Psychological Disorders

C. Social and Cultural Dimensions of Behavior

## Additional Learning Skills Beyond the Curriculum Framework

### Instructional practices support the achievement of 21<sup>st</sup> C. Learning Expectations by:

(check those that apply to the Course)

- \_\_\_\_\_ personalizing instruction
- \_\_\_x\_\_\_ engaging students in cross disciplinary learning

- engaging students as active and self directed learners
- emphasizing inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking
- applying knowledge and skills in authentic tasks
- engaging students in self assessment and reflection
- integrating technology

**Content: National Standards for Psychology**

<http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/national-standards.pdf>

**Content Standards Unit 1 Historical Roots and Methods of Psychology**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

- IA-1. Contemporary perspectives used by psychologists to understand behavior and mental processes in context
- IA-2. Major subfields and career opportunities that comprise psychology
- IA-3. Research strategies used by psychologists to explore behavior and mental processes
- IA-4. Purpose and basic concepts of statistics
- IA-5. Ethical issues in research with human and other animals that are important to psychologists
- IA-6. Development of psychology as an empirical science

**Content Standards Unit 2 Biological Basis of Behavior**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

- IIA-1. Structure and function of the neuron
- IIA-2. Organization of the nervous system
- IIA-3. Hierarchical organization of the structure and function of the brain
- IIA-4. Technologies and clinical methods for studying the brain
- IIA-5. Structure and function of the endocrine system
- IIA-6. How heredity interacts with the environment to influence behavior
- IIA-7. How psychological mechanisms are influenced by evolution

**Content Standards Unit 3 Sensation and Perception**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

- IIB-1. Basic concepts explaining the capabilities and limitations of sensory processes
- IIB-2. Interaction of the person and the environment in determining perception
- IIB-3. Nature of attention

**Content Standards Unit 4 States of Consciousness**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

- IVD-1. Nature of consciousness
- IVD-2. Characteristics of sleep and theories that explain why we sleep
- IVD-3. Theories used to explain and interpret dreams
- IVD-4. Basic phenomena and uses of hypnosis
- IVD-5. Categories of psychoactive drugs and their effects

**Content Standards Unit 5 Learning**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

- IVA-1. Characteristics of learning

- IVA-2. Principles of classical conditioning
- IVA-3. Principles of operant conditioning
- IVA-4. Components of cognitive learning
- IVA-5. Roles of biology and culture in determining learning

### **Content Standards Unit 6 Cognition, Language and Memory**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

- IVB-1. Encoding, or getting information into memory
- IVB-2. Sensory, working or short-term, and long-term memory systems
- IVB-3. Retrieval, or getting information out of memory
- IVB-4. Biological bases of memory
- IVB-5. Methods for improving memory
- IVB-6. Memory constructions
- IVC-1. Basic elements comprising thought
- IVC-2. Strategies and obstacles involved in problem solving and decision-making
- IVC-3. Structural features of language
- IVC-4. Theories and developmental stages of language acquisition
- IVC-5. Links between thinking and language

### **Content Standards Unit 8 Motivation and Emotion**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

- IIC-1. Motivational concepts
- IIC-2. The role of biology and learning in motivation and emotion
- IIC-3. Major theories of motivation
- IIC-4. Interaction of biological and cultural factors in emotions and motivations
- IIC-5. Role of values and expectancies in determining choice and strength of motivation
- IIC-6. Physiological, affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of emotions and the interactions among these aspects
- IIC-7. Effects of motivation and emotion on perception, cognition, and behavior

*Additionally during this unit the following information is covered:*

- IID-1. Sources of stress
- IID-2. Physiological reactions to stress
- IID-3. Psychological reactions to stress
- IID-4. Cognitive and behavioral strategies for dealing with stress and promoting health

### **Content Standards Unit 9 Development**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

- IIIA-1. Development as a lifelong process
- IIIA-2. Research techniques used to gather data on the developmental process
- IIIA-3. Theories of development
- IIIA-4. Issues surrounding the developmental process (nature/nurture, continuity/discontinuity, stability/instability, critical periods)

### **Content Standards Unit 10 Personality and Assessment**

- IIIB-1. How to distinguish between personality and personality constructs
- IIIB-2. Personality approaches and theories
- IIIB-3. Assessment tools used in personality



