

**International School of Port of Spain**  
**AP Psychology: Course Outline**  
**2007-2008**

**Course Objectives:**

Psychology is the study of behavior and cognitive (thinking) processes. I expect that students will be able to do the following upon successful completion of this course:

- Explain why psychology is considered a science and how psychologists use the scientific method to answer questions about human behavior and thought processes.
- Demonstrate an introductory level understanding of the major theories and approaches that comprise the science of psychology.

**Specific Course Objectives and Outcomes:**

- To gain a better understanding of the field of psychology both historic and current: Students will be able to identify the major fields of study and theoretical perspectives within psychology and articulate their similarities and differences.
- To become familiar with the research methodology commonly used by psychologists and to examine the benefits and limitations of these methods of inquiry: Students will be able to differentiate between the major observational, correlational, experimental, and quasi-experimental designs used by psychologists and articulate the benefits and limitations of each. Students will be able to critique various studies and theories based on this information.
- To become familiar with the biological bases of behavior: Students will be able to identify and discuss the biological bases of behavior on both the micro (e.g. neurocellular, neurophysiological, and neurochemical) and macro (e.g. central and peripheral nervous system) levels.
- To develop an understanding of processes involved in learning and cognition: Students will be able to articulate the basic principles, major theories, and research concerning learning and cognition.
- To develop an understanding of the various types of development that an individual experiences across the life span: Students will be able to discuss the major theories of development, critical research on development, and developmental concepts from across the life span.
- To become familiar with the theories concerning psychological health and disorders: Students will be able to discuss the symptomatology, possible etiology, and proposed treatment for the major categories of psychological disorders.
- To become familiar with the theories concerning human behavior in a social context: Students will be able to identify and discuss the major theories and research from the area of social psychology.

- To become familiar with the rapidly growing body of literature on psychology: Students will be able to read current literature related to a specific psychological topic and write a paper discussing and evaluating this research.
- To further develop writing skills in conjunction with the use of APA format: Students will be able write their paper in APA format.
- To become familiar with the moral and ethical issues inherent in the field of psychology: Students will be able to identify and discuss moral and ethic issues and practices as it relates to the APA's code of ethics and moral principles in general.

## Course Outline: Semester 1

**UNIT I: History and Approaches** (Aug 27- Sept 3)

**UNIT II: Research Methods** (Sept 5 – Sept 19)

Test on Units I and II: September 19th

**UNIT III: Biological Bases of Behavior** (Sept 21 – Oct 5)

**UNIT IV: Sensation & Perception** (Oct 8 – Oct 19)

Test on Units III and IV: October 22<sup>nd</sup>

**UNIT V: States of Consciousness** (Oct 24 – Oct 31)

**UNIT VI: Learning** (Nov 2 – Nov 14)

Test on Units V and VI: November 14<sup>th</sup>

**UNIT VII: Cognition** (Nov 19 – Nov 30)

**UNIT VIII: Developmental Psychology** (Dec 3 – Dec 19)

## Course Outline: Semester 2

**UNIT IX: Motivation & Emotion** (Jan 7 – Jan 18)

Cumulative test on Units I – IX: Jan 21<sup>st</sup>

**UNIT X: Personality** (Jan 28 – Feb 13)

**UNIT XI: Testing & Individual Differences** (Feb 15 – Feb 22)

**UNIT XII: Abnormal Psychology** (Feb 25 – March 5)

**UNIT XIII: Treatment of Psychological Disorders** (March 7 – March 17)

Test on Units X – XIII: March 19th

**UNIT XIV: Social Psychology** (April 7 – April 25)

**UNIT XV: AP Exam Review period & Practice Tests** (April 28 – May 12)

**Tuesday May 13, 2008 at 1:00pm: AP Psychology**

**May 19 – June 18: Research Projects**

# Assessment Practices & Grading Policy

Your grade in this class will be calculated on an ongoing basis. This means that your semester grades and your final grade will be cumulative in nature.

The assessments in this course will fall into three broad categories: Ongoing, Unit Tests and the Research Paper.

Ongoing	40%
Unit Tests	45%
Research paper	15%

## Ongoing Assessments:

The On-Going assessments will include daily assignments, quizzes, class work and participation. It is important that students come to class prepared by doing the assigned work & readings from previous classes. At the start of each class, students may be given a short activity (quickwrites, quizzes etc) based on the assigned reading for that class and will be graded accordingly.

As part of your participation in class, you will be graded on certain factors including:

Preparedness  
Attitude  
Team work  
General conduct

It is important that students share their points of view as such sharing will help other students grasp certain concepts or deepen their understanding of certain concepts.

## Unit tests & cumulative tests

Students will be evaluated on each unit by a unit test given periodically. In addition to this, there will be cumulative tests after every three/four units, so that students are encouraged to review earlier work. This will be a form of preparation for the AP exam in May.

In the last two weeks before the exam, students will be given several practice exams. However, only the top mark from these will count toward the final course grade.

## Research Paper

As stated in the course objectives, this course aims to help students:

- *become familiar with the rapidly growing body of literature on psychology: Students will be able to read current literature related to a specific psychological topic and write a paper discussing and evaluating this research.*

And:

- *To further develop writing skills in conjunction with the use of APA format: Students will be able write their paper in APA format.*

In order to achieve these goals, students will be required to write a research paper for this course.