AP/IB Psychology I Course Syllabus 2024-2025

Instructor: Coach Blum

Classroom: 801

Email: blumky@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

The following is a psychology class outline that has been designed to prepare students for proficient mastery of the International Baccalaureate Standard Level IB psychology requirements.

# Aims for this course (from the International Baccalaureate Psychology Curriculum Guide)

1. Develop an understanding of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors affecting mental processes and behavior
2. Apply an understanding of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors affecting mental processes and behavior to at least one applied area of study
3. Understand diverse methods of inquiry
4. Understand the importance of ethical practice in psychological research in general and observe ethical practice in their own inquiries
5. Ensure that ethical practices are upheld in all psychological inquiry and discussion
6. Develop an awareness of how psychological research can be applied to address real-world problems and promote positive change

Psychology and the international dimension

IB psychology takes a holistic approach that fosters intercultural understanding and respect. In the core of the IB psychology course, the biological level of analysis demonstrates what all humans share, whereas the cognitive and sociocultural levels of analysis reveal the immense diversity of influences that produce human behavior and mental processes. Cultural diversity is explored and students are encouraged to develop empathy for the feelings, needs and lives of others within and outside their own culture. This empathy contributes to an international understanding.

# *AP/IB Psychology Topics*

### Psychological Research and Experimentation

We will look at several different types of psychological research; some involving experimentation while others involve simple observation. Several examples will be provided in class as well as specific guidelines for making your research project a success.

The focus of this section will center around four very specific topics:

1. **Introduction to research methods** – building from the general scientific method and building further with psychologically specific information

**The ethics of psychological experimentation and research** – We will look at specific experimental subjects.

1. **Quantitative research methods** – using specific results from experimentation to prove our hypotheses.
2. **Qualitative research methods** -- ways to use correlation to strengthen our arguments if experimentation is not possible.
3. **Analysis of Results** – use of central tendency, standard deviation and validation.

*TOK AREAS FOR DISCUSSION IN THIS UNIT:*

* *How does empirical data help substantiate theoretical science?*
* *What role do ethics play in scientific experimentation? How can the ways of knowing affect those ethical considerations?*

### Biological Psychology

Biological psychology, with the advent of medicinal treatments for disorders, has gone to the forefront of psychological studies in the current media. In this section of the course, students will analyze the different sections of the brain, their specific functions, and how both naturally produced and synthetically produced chemicals affect those areas. Some topics that will be covered in this section include, but are not limited to:

* 1. **The different sections of the brain and nervous system and how they control bodily functions and perceptions**
  2. **How illicit drugs can affect these functions and perceptions.**
  3. **Roger Sperry’s split brain studies**
  4. **Long-term potentiation and plasticity**
  5. **Lykken and Bouchard’s twins study and their implications on the nature-nurture debate and genetics**
  6. **Hormones and their effects on human behavior**
  7. **Environmental factors and their effect on dysfunctional behaviors such as depression and schizophrenia.**
  8. **Animal Research in Psychology**

*TOK AREAS FOR DISCUSSION IN THIS UNIT:*

* *What are the philosophical debates surrounding the nature v. nurture debate?*
* *Are there social, legal and ethical implications in relation to genetic research? If so, what role must science and governmental systems play to monitor the research?*
* *What aspects of modern brain imaging support or refute the theories of classical philosophers in terms of the body-mind connection?*

### Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology is the study of how the brain processes information. In this perspective, we will analyze the importance of input, processing and output in the mind’s ability to “think”. We will also study how the mind can be affected if those processes are somehow limited. Some topics that will be covered in this section include, but are not limited to:

1. **The parallels to computer processing as they apply to the Schema Theory**
2. **Long-term, short-term and sensory memory**
   1. **Atkinson and Shiffrin’s multi-store studies**
   2. **Elizabeth Loftus’ studies on false memories and eyewitness testimony**
   3. **Baddeley and Hitch’s model of memory**
   4. **Craik’s models and studies on memory processing**
3. **Biological limitations to these studies (H.M., Alzheimer’s patients, Clive Wearing)**
4. **Limitations of the cognitive approach to psychology**
5. **The Effect of Technology on Cognition**
6. **The Impacts of Globalization on Cognition**

*TOK AREAS FOR DISCUSSION IN THIS UNIT:*

* *If computers create a model for cognitive processing, can computers (AI) think?*
* *What role does language play in the cultural bias debate regarding diagnostic labeling?*
* *How can we be sure what we know if human memory is so malleable, as proposed by Elizabeth Loftus?*

### Socio-Cultural Psychology

Social Psychology is the final core topic to be discussed this academic year. Social psychology focuses on the way social interactions can change group as well as individual behaviors and thoughts. This final topic will serve as a final opportunity to analyze the different perspectives as they pertain to human behavior. Some topics that will be covered in this section include, but are not limited to:

1. **Attribution errors – how they form and effect behavior.**
2. **Stereotypes, discrimination and Prejudice – dispositional and situational factors in their origins and effects**
3. **The influence of Solomon Asch’s Conformity study in the understanding of individual “wrong” choices.**
4. **The importance of Stanley Milgram’s Obedience study in analyzing atrocities in Nazi Germany and Rwanda – as well as the ethical implications of the study.**
5. **Tafjel’s social identity theory and its counterparts**
6. **The social role concepts developed by Philip Zimbardo.**
7. **Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and their roles in cultural “norm” development**

*TOK AREAS FOR DISCUSSION IN THIS UNIT:*

* *What role does Pygmalion Effect, Self Fulfilling Prophecy and Social Stereotypes play in the development of “self” perception in minority groups?*
* *Can a person ever truly be an individual when he/she is constantly part of a group?*
* *What role does language and emotion play in compliance and persuasion?*
* *What do the atrocities in Rwanda and Nazi Germany, in conjunction with Milgram’s research, reveal about human nature? How would Humanistic philosophy counter such a bleak outlook?*

**Materials Needed For Class**

-paper

-pens/pencils

-RCBOE issued laptop (please charge each night and bring to class each day)

**Canvas:** We will be utilizing Canvas this year for our course.  You will need to charge your RCBOE issued laptop each night and bring it to class fully charged to use during class.  We will do many of our assignments on paper, but you will also be expected to use your laptops when instructed during class, so you need to have them prepared each day.

**Remind:** I will be using Remind to communicate with students and parents when I need to send a whole class announcement. We will be signing up for Remind in class. The join code is posted below in case you would also like to join our class Remind: **@aipsych1**

**Tutoring**: I will be available after school upon arrangement on an individual basis.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Student Expectations:**   1. Be prepared and on time for class every day. 2. Respect yourself, your teacher, and others around you. 3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. 4. Stay on task and give full effort at all times. 5. No food is allowed in the classroom unless it is during our assigned lunch time. | **Consequences:**   1. Verbal Warning 2. Conference 3. Phone Call Home 4. Classroom Detention 5. Administrative Referral |

*\*\*\* In addition, students are expected to follow all Richmond County school rules and guidelines.*

\*\*\**If a serious infraction/offense has occurred we maintain the right to skip any of the above-mentioned consequences and go directly to a classroom detention and/or referral.*

**Cell Phone Policy:** THE COUNTY MANDATED CELL PHONE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY WILL BE FOLLOWED TO THE LETTER. POWER THEM DOWN AND PUT THEM AWAY. BETTER YET, LEAVE THEM AT HOME.

**Grades:**

Major Assignments 60%

Minor Assignments 40%

**Where can work be found when you are absent?** All assignments are posted on Canvas; This way, you may always stay up to date with the class if you must be absent.

**Late Assignment Policy**

Making arrangements for completing makeup work is the responsibility of the student. You have five (5) business days to hand me any past due. For each day that I do not receive your work, I take 5 points off the grade. After the five days, I will not accept the past due assignment and you will have to accept a failing grade. All makeup work will be completed and turned in before or after school OR during class but never during homeroom or while the student is supposed to be in another teacher’s class. THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT WORK.

**Academic Integrity:**

Any student who engages in or attempts to engage in cheating, plagiarism, falsification, violation of copyright laws, or violation of computer access shall be subject to disciplinary action. The following actions are specifically prohibited:

a. Cheating—giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance on academic work.

b. Plagiarism—copying the language, structure, or idea of another and representing it as one's own work. Plagiarism includes using artificial intelligence or other online resources to develop work product that does not reflect the student’s own independent thoughts or ideas. Students must follow any parameters set forth by their classroom teachers for use of online resources or artificial intelligence in completing assignments.

c. Falsification—verbal or written statement of any untruth. Students shall not provide false information to school officials and/or parents/caregivers regarding any report card, attendance matter, grades or progress reports, discipline matters or any other school business.

d. Violation of copyright laws—unauthorized duplication of computer software (computer piracy), printed material, digital material, copyrighted media of any kind (such as sound recordings, motion pictures, etc.), and/or the use of pirated computer software.

e. Violation of computer access—logging on as a person other than oneself to any device or system of any kind and/or impersonating someone other than oneself or misrepresenting oneself online or through electronic means. Any conduct prohibited under Policy Code 3225/4312/7320 Technology Responsible Use is also subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the violation is specifically described in this Code of Conduct.

**I am looking forward to a great school year working together!**