

**Clear Creek Independent School District
Clear Springs High School
Course Syllabus for AP Psychology
Fall 2015/Spring 2016**

COURSE TITLE: AP Psychology

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of the Advanced Placement course in Psychology is to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of behavior and mental processes of human beings and animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about the methods psychologists use in their science and practice. Because psychology is a fascinating course, it is possible to explore the field using a variety of methods. The course information will be presented through lectures, class participation activities, demonstrations, and audio-visual aids. Students will use textbooks and other resources such as the internet, popular media, newspapers, and professional Psychological publications in order to conduct research throughout the year. Students will learn about the methods and ethical approaches of professional psychology.

You are to be commended for taking on the challenge of a college-level course during this school year. If the effort is put in, the rewards can be significant. It is our goal to create a level of understanding and interest in psychology that will benefit you in this class and the rest of your college-level classes.

AP Psychology is designed to be a rigorous, fast-paced course. Please exercise your manners, expertise, opinions, and especially ideas and comments as we discuss various topics throughout the semester.

COURSE TEXTBOOK:

Myers, David (2007) Psychology (8th edition) New York, NY; Worth Publishers.

AP EXAM:

The exam is very vocabulary based, and extensive work on building psychological terminology in the class will be of major focus. Preparation for the exam will be extensive at the end of the spring semester. Date of the exam is May 2016. The exam consists of two parts, 100 multiple choice questions, and two essay questions, a 50 minute timed section.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS/WORKLOAD:

- 1. We learn from each other:** This course is not one in which you will play a passive role. Instead, you are expected to take an active part in your own learning and that of the class as well. In the AP classroom, discussion and demonstrations will dominate over lectures so that we can learn from each other. Each of you brings something special to the course, something special that our team needs if we are to be successful. *Come ready to contribute each day.*

- 2. Knowledge for application's sake:** In AP Psychology there is a considerable amount of content you must master. However, you must do more than memorize information provided by myself or other sources. You will be asked to apply this information to real life situations via class discussions or through concisely written free response questions.

3. Psychologists read: As AP students, you will be expected to do a considerable amount of daily reading in the text. You must show evidence of daily preparation by participating in class discussions, asking critical questions, making text-to-world connections, and bringing a rough draft of your concept map to class each day.

4. Active note taking: The amount of material distributed in this course is substantially higher than in a regular class. Each period you are expected to take notes on our class activities, and fill in the rough drafts of your concept maps. As you will need access to this material in order to study for the unit exams and the AP exam, you keep this material in your binder throughout the year.

NOTEBOOKS:

Students must provide * 3-ring binder (whatever size is comfortable for you) and *3inch, 3 ring binder for your portfolio * 30+ plastic sheet protectors and *12 dividers. Notebooks are to be brought to class every day and may be collected at any point in the year so please keep them as neat as possible. Along with reading the textbook, taking notes is the primary way you will learn psychology. The points below may help you in your note taking.

1. Take complete, dated class notes.
2. Your notes should be more than just the items listed on Blackboard.
3. Put the notes in your own words.
4. Leave some blank spaces on each page to make additions and/or clarifications.
5. Review your class notes each day while they are fresh in your mind. Expand them, clarify them, and add examples so they will make sense when you go back to study them later. Note anything that does not make sense and we will address it in class the following day.
6. Before class look over the notes from the proceeding class. This is especially important if a topic is presented over multiple days.
7. If you are absent on class note days, you are responsible for obtaining the notes from other students.

CORE GOALS: Change how you view the world and make you a better student

- 1. Mastery of Psychology's core concepts** – through elaborative rehearsal and the development of hierarchical schemas, you will master Psychology's most important concepts.
- 2. The ability to graphically represent complex concepts** – anyone can make an outline, but it requires true understanding of a concept to be able to draw a diagram showing the structure and relationship of its constituent parts. You will leave this course with a new ability, cogently, and graphically arranging your thoughts.
- 3. The ability to apply Psychology to your life** – Application does not stop once you leave the classroom. The concepts we study shape our existence. You will constantly look for psychological applications in your life.
- 4. The ability to think with a psychological lens** – see life situations as they relate to the information learned in all content areas.
- 5. Literacy in the 21st century skills you need for success in today's world.** – I do not want to just teach you content, I want to teach you how to use that content. At the end of this course you will be able to:
 - a. Read** real psychological research
 - b. Write** about psychology for your peers and for the general public

- c. Use **critical thinking & problem solving** techniques to solve your real world problems
 - d. Use **technology** to utilize websites and leverage the power of social media
 - e. **Collaborate** in a professional learning community through small groups.
 - f. **Orally** present and debate a complex argument based on psychological research.
 - g. Feel the satisfaction of a **strong work ethic!**
- 6. Pass the AP Test with a 3, 4, or 5!!**

AVERAGE HOMEWORK:

Typically time in class will be allotted to begin an assignment or work on vocabulary for each topic of learning. Out of class time will be required to read sections assigned in the Myers text or outside readings. Reading the assigned sections is crucial to success on exams and the AP exam. Outside class time will be required in order to complete projects and take notes while reading. Note taking is essential for each chapter and must be hand written in your own handwriting using black/blue ink or pencil. PowerPoints for chapters will be on website for students to take notes and may be used for quizzes. Students may also use notecards on quizzes. Notecards may be required for chapter homework. Internet research will also be necessary at times.

GENERAL METHODS OF ASSESSMENT, GRADE CALCULATION, AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Students' averages will be determined by averaging their grades as follows:

- 45% Daily Assignments** (What you have been doing to gain knowledge and improve skills)
- 50% Tests and Major Projects** (What you have learned/know and what you can do)
- 5% Reading/Writing Grade**

*Disclaimer: you EARN your grades. I do not give them. DO NOT come to me at the end of the semester when you want "bumped." Take responsibility for your actions, and keep your long-term goals in mind. ☺

POLICIES:

1. Late work and makeup work will follow district policy. You are given ample notice for assignments. Feel free to turn in assignments prior to the date. Late work left on my desk without a conversation **will not be accepted**. If, at any point in the course, you miss two assignments in a row, you will be assigned a detention after school for us to discuss your future in this course.

2. Plagiarism will also follow district policy. Plagiarism is either as part of the assignment or as a whole, and will result in a zero. (Students who cheat historically fail the AP Psych exam)

*****This syllabus is subject to change with or without notice**