



# Advanced Placement Psychology

Mr. Van Over

Course Information

Spring 2017

<http://markvanover.weebly.com/>



Please note that information contained in this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be noted to students in advance.

## Course Description

The goal of the AP Psychology course is to provide high school students with a quality educational experience that is the equivalent of a one-semester, college-level introductory psychology course, incorporating the concepts and materials typically covered in such a course. It is a challenging course, one that requires students to do more than simply memorize isolated facts. The AP Psychology course is designed to:

- give students a working knowledge of the theories and key concepts of each of the major subfields within psychology;
- expose students to many of the contributing psychologists and significant research studies, both historical and current, that have shaped our understanding of behavior and mental processes;
- train s to apply psychological principles and understand connections between ideas and theories; and
- leave them with an appreciation of the scientific methods and ethical procedures that produce such knowledge.

These goals focus, almost exclusively, on the development of content knowledge. This is undoubtedly important for students to succeed on the AP Psychology Exam. However, it is also important to consider student outcomes beyond simply “passing the test.” The goal, of course, is not to transform students into psychologists but to help them develop psychological thinking skills—that is, skills that direct psychologists in their professional lives.

## Course Goals

This course will:

1. Students will study the major core concepts and theories of psychology. Students will be able to define key terms and use these terms in their everyday vocabulary. Students will be able to compare and contrast the major theories in psychology. Students will develop an understanding of the biological and psychological bases of behavior.
2. Students will learn the basic skills of psychological research. Students will be able to devise simple research projects, interpret and generalize from results, and evaluate the general validity of research reports. Students will be able to recognize the scientific nature of investigation in psychology.
3. Students will be able to apply psychological concepts to their own lives. Students will be able to recognize psychological principles when they are encountered in everyday situations.
4. Students will develop critical thinking skills. Students will become aware of the danger of accepting or rejecting any psychological theory without careful, objective evaluation.
5. Students will build their reading, writing, and discussion skills.
6. Students will learn about the ethical standards governing the work of psychologists. Students will maintain high ethical standards and sensitivity in applying the principles of psychology to themselves, other people, and other organisms.
7. Students will gain fluency in the knowledge and skills that will allow them the opportunity to succeed on the nationally administered AP Psychology Exam, administered on **May 1, 2017**, in the afternoon administration.

## Required Texts

The following textbook is used consistently throughout the course and is checked out to students:

Myers, David G. Myers' Psychology for AP. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. 2014.

## Class Organization

- Unit study guides are available online. These are for student use to interact with material in the textbook, in class, and material expected on both unit exams and on the national AP Exam. There are times when these guides (or parts of them) may be assigned for homework and collected for credit.
- Weekly assignment sheets are posted online on Mondays/Tuesdays listing the schedule for that particular week, and due dates will be listed on the calendar available at the course website. These agendas will list any discussion questions for which to prepare, the reading assignments discussed that week, all announced quiz and test dates, along with other anticipated information.
- Daily class meetings are a combination of lecture, collaborative coursework, analysis of discussion questions, essay writing and peer evaluation, or viewing and interacting with instructional videos.
- Periodically, student essays, reports, or presentations will be required. Presentation projects are frequently group projects and **are assigned outside of class**; they are ongoing, and little to no in-class time will be provided.
- Nightly reading assignments are given, and at times there may be online viewing exercises that are meant to supplement and extend the information being learned both in-class and in reading assignments. When directed, there may be written assignments related to each. These are turned in online at TurnItIn.
- Generally, longer multiple-choice reading quizzes will be given over the readings from that week. Students have an opportunity to complete quiz corrections to regain up to .25 points for each question missed, not to exceed 100%.
- At times, more formal, written homework assignments may be assigned. **However, not all of these homework assignments will be graded critically for credit. The choice of assignments will be randomized and will be graded within the TurnItIn platform.** Other assignments may be evaluated to “spot check” for completion and for quality of work. These assignments are worth substantially less than those which are critically graded.

## Study Techniques

The reading load, especially in the first 2—3 weeks, is considerable. In order to cover the maximum amount of material with the least amount of stress, sharing is DEFINITELY encouraged. While each student is expected to read ALL TEXT MATERIAL, outlining discussion questions and supplemental readings may be shared with your group. (Take care, however, to ensure that any work submitted is CLEARLY your own.) You are responsible for understanding all of this material for testing. The amount of time required for homework in this class will vary with your reading speed. Assignments vary in length. Watch your weekly assignment calendar and plan for long assignments and supplemental readings. Time management is an essential skill for this class, and you must take the responsibility for budgeting your time. As you become accustomed to course format and texts, things will fall into place and become easier. It is important to NOT GET DISCOURAGED!

## Tests

Tests will be a combination of objective (multiple choice) and free response questions modeled after the AP Psychology exam. All tests will attempt to recreate the testing environment of the AP Examination, including multiple-choice and essay tests that will resemble an actual AP exam to the fullest extent possible. All multiple-choice tests are graded in a manner similar to the method employed by the College Board. In addition, all tests are timed in accordance with actual AP testing procedures. Students will receive guidance on how test scores would possibly translate to AP grading procedures.

## Grading Categories

Grades in this course are arranged in the following categories, with the percentage of the overall grade noted:

CCA Points (Participation)	2% of overall grade
Coursework	30% of overall grade
Weekly Reading Quizzes	18% of overall grade
Tests	35% of overall grade
Mid-Term or Final Exam	15 % of overall grade

## Grading Scale

The grading scale is as follows:

A+	97.5-100	B+	87.4-89.4	C+	77.5-79.4	D+	67.5-69.4	F	59.4-below
A	93.5-97.4	B	83.5-87.4	C	72.5-77.4	D	62.5-67.4		
A-	89.5-93.4	B-	79.5-83.4	C-	69.5-72.4	D-	59.5-62.4		

\*\*Grades shown factor automatic rounding for .5 or higher; the grading scale shown here is exact and is not-negotiable.

## Course Grades:

Our school reports grades at each quarter, which, given the 4x4 block schedule, means that reporting periods come quickly. Consequently, when the SDUHSD experiences the end of first “quarter,” our class is experiencing the end of first “semester.” Grades “begin again,” or are recalculated from zero, at the beginning of the fourth quarter.

A Mid-Term and a Final Exam, worth 15 % of the overall grade, is administered at the end of each quarter.

## Mid-Term and Final Exams

All students are required to take a mid-term exam at the end of the third quarter and a final exam at the end of the semester. Students must attend these examinations. **No early examinations will be scheduled.** Student's failing to report for the mid-term/final exam period will receive the course grade with the exam entered as a “zero” until a make-up exam is completed. Grades will be calculated factoring in this zero and a grade change will be filed after completion of the make-up exam.

## Homework Guidelines

All homework assignments for this class are to be **typed**, unless otherwise stated or cleared through the teacher **in advance**. Hand-written work is acceptable if discussed in advance of the assignment being due; these must be scanned as a PDF to be turned in online at the TurnItIn platform. All written work must be submitted online at TurnItIn ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)).

As a general rule, I do not accept work e-mailed to me unless we have discussed it in advance.

## **NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED AT ANY TIME.**

Late work is not given credit, and will be entered as a “zero” in the grade book and will be noted as late. The only exception to this is when a student is absent. District make-up work policies apply for student absences. Work that was assigned prior to an absence is due upon a student’s return.

## Student Success Code (General Procedures and policies)

1. Be present and on time; this means being in your assigned seat when the tardy bell rings.
2. Have materials ready as soon as you are seated. Have your homework ready to turn in (including stapled) and have your notebook ready on your desk.
3. No food or drink is permitted in the classroom. This includes candy and gum. Water is acceptable.
4. All bags and purses must be left on the floor.
5. Electronic devices are permissible at appropriate times and when used appropriately. (This includes cell phones, laptop computers, iPods, portable gaming consoles, etc.) However, students found to be consistently off-task with an electronic device risk confiscation of the device, in accordance with school procedures. Devices will be returned at the end of the school day in such cases.
6. Having an electronic device visible at any time during a quiz or a test is automatically considered a violation of the Academic Honesty policy.
7. Show respect to others at all times. This includes letting others speak without being interrupted (including teachers) and being respectful of differences in opinion.

<b>Consequences:</b>	First Offense:	Warning
	Second Offense:	Detention and parent contact
	Third Offense:	Administrative referral
	SEVERE CLAUSE:	Severe disturbances or violations will result with automatic referral.

## Tardies and Detentions

- **A tardy is defined as not being in one's assigned seat when the bell that signals the start of class rings. For example, if one is standing in the doorway when the bell rings, they are not in their assigned seat; therefore, they are tardy.**
- **Students who are tardy are not appropriately participating in class at that time.**
- Tardies are both disruptive to the class and disrespectful to the teacher and to fellow students. They are considered a disciplinary issue and are dealt with as such.
- Students who are habitually tardy—**even if the tardies are excused**—will be referred to administration for possible review by the School Attendance Review Board.

### CCA Tardy Policy/My Tardy Policy:

First Offense:	Verbal Warning
Second Offense:	Parents contacted. Detention assigned; loss of 10 CCA points.
Third Offense:	Student referred to Saturday School.
Fourth Offense:	Student referred to administration.

- Since tardy students are not appropriately participating in class, tardies result with a loss of 10 CCA/Participation Points. These points can be regained by attending detention sessions arranged with the teacher.
- Detentions may be issued for infractions of the Student Success Code or class procedures, since these are times in which students are not appropriately participating in class. CCA point reductions can take place for infractions of rules. As with tardies, these points can be regained by attending detention.

## Attendance

It cannot be stressed enough that regular class attendance is essential to AP students. Missing one class can leave one in major disarray, particularly when scheduled on a 4x4 Block schedule.

- If you are aware of a future unexcused absence (field trip, college visit, etc.) you must obtain an Absence Notification Form. This form must be filled out and given to the instructor at least 5 days in advance of your absence. Failure to notify the instructor in the time frame discussed will result in zeros for the assignments missed during the absence.
- **Students who accumulate an excessive number of absences may be referred to administration for SARB process consideration, even for excused absences.**

## Make-Up Work:

- Please see me before or after school to discuss make-up work arrangements, or to complete make-up work and quizzes. I am unable to give you the full attention needed during passing periods. Please know that it is the student's responsibility to contact me about absences; I will not remind students about their work.
- **If a student is absent on the due date of an assignment (i.e., was present when the assignment was given), the work is due upon the student's return to school.**
- For work assigned during a student's absence, the student will be given an amount of time equal to the number of days absent to complete make-up work.
- Students are given five days from the date of return to make-up a test or quiz given during the absence.
- No credit is earned for assignments missed due to unexcused or uncleared absences.

## Extra Credit:

Extra credit is offered sparingly in AP Psychology. When it is offered, it is extremely conditional. The conditions are as follows:

- Extra credit can only be submitted if **ALL** homework has been submitted.
  - Even if an assignment is missed, and thus is not eligible for credit, it still must be submitted before any extra credit will be awarded.
- Extra credit is placed in the CCA Points category. It is considered to be extra participation on the part of the student and is placed in the grade accordingly.

### **Contacting Mr. Van Over**

I can be reached in several ways:

- Students may visit me during my office hours, which are generally from 7:35 to 8:00 AM, and 3:15 to 4:00 PM, or by appointment.
- By e-mail: [mark.vanover@sduhsd.net](mailto:mark.vanover@sduhsd.net)
- By telephone: (858) 350-0253
  - Should you telephone, please do not call during school hours.

PLEASE NOTE: I am a Social Science Special Teacher for the San Dieguito Union High School District. As such, there are times in which my after school availability may be limited. I will do my best to ensure that students are aware of times I will not be available.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any assistance

**AP Psychology Students:  
AVOID THE MAY 6, 2017, SAT EXAM DATE!**

In the past, many students and their families have chosen to take the May SAT Exam. However, we all found that the need to prepare adequately for the SAT Exam conflicted greatly with the need to prepare for AP Exams—particularly those students whose AP courses were held in the Fall Term and required review.

**The Nature of the AP U.S. Psychology Exam**

The AP Psychology Exam offered by the College Board is typically known as being a challenging exam. Students who have taken other AP courses sometimes believe that the exam is easier than other Social Science subjects. However, given the technical nature of much of the course content, and given the complexity of many psychological concepts, this test is much different than others.

Because our course is a spring course, we will have to move quickly through the course to ensure adequate exposure to course material necessary to do well on the exam. To supplement this pacing, optional Saturday review sessions have been established for the following dates:

April 2017: 16, 23, 30 in the afternoons.

(The AP Psychology is held on Monday, May 1, 2017, during the morning session.)

In my experience teaching other AP subjects, nearly every student who earned a 4 or a 5 on the exam had attended most—if not all—of the review sessions. Many students who had a very good chance of earning a 5 on the exam scored lower than expected; these students had not attended review sessions.

**Recommended SAT Dates:**

March 11, 2017; June 3, 2017

February 1, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am excited at the opportunity to have your student in our class this semester. AP Psychology provides students with a challenging and engaging curriculum and allows students the opportunity to experience a college-style atmosphere while in high school. Studies indicate that students who have taken AP courses in high school tend to not only outperform their peers in college, but also have a lower college drop-out rate.

Please take a moment to visit the Electronic Syllabus for this course. It contains pertinent information that is important to student success in this course. Please sign this sheet below and return it with your student tomorrow. In fact, it is their first homework assignment and must be turned in tomorrow, February 2, 2017! **PLEASE RETURN ENTIRE SHEET; It is not necessary to print out the entire syllabus to turn in..**

In short, the following information is of particular importance:

1. Homework policies and the policy regarding work that is late.
2. Unit review guides and their importance to quizzes and unit exams.
3. Attendance suggestions and tardy policies

I am available for questions that you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me should the need arise. **The best way to contact me is via e-mail.** E-mails allow for me to reply quickly. Generally, however, I return phone calls within one or two days of a message. My phone number and e-mail address are listed below.

PLEASE NOTE:

**AVOID THE MAY 6, 2017, SAT EXAM DATE!** We have found that many families that wish for their students to take the SAT or the SATII exams in May find their students in a difficult situation. Many take multiple AP subjects and wish to take their exams, but they also may wish to enroll in SAT preparation courses, typically held on Saturdays. This conflicts with AP Psychology review sessions, which are held on Saturday afternoons through April 30, 2016. Another SAT date is held in June.

Please also note that weekly homework agendas can be accessed on the AP Psychology website at <http://markvanover.weebly.com>.

I have included a space below for you to note your e-mail address. I have found that e-mail certainly makes communication with parents MUCH easier.

Again, I am excited that your student is in this course and am looking forward to an extremely productive and exciting school year.

Respectfully,

Mark Van Over  
Social Science Teacher/District Social Science Staff Support  
Phone: (858) 350-0253 E-mail: [mark.vanover@sduhsd.net](mailto:mark.vanover@sduhsd.net)

**PLEASE RETURN ENTIRE SHEET.**

I have read and understand the course policies and syllabus for AP Psychology.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Class Period

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\*\*Parent\*\*** E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN ENTIRE SHEET.**