
PETERS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

COURSE SYLLABUS: INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

Course Overview and Essential Skills

This course is designed to give students a personal introduction to the study of human behavioral and mental processes with particular emphasis on how course understandings connect to adolescence. The course will focus on a brief foundation of: biopsychology, sensation and perception, consciousness, memory, learning, cognition, motivation, emotion, health psychology and psychological disorders. Students taking the course will engage in class discussions, guided lectures, group projects, and independent and collaborative learning activities.

Course Textbook and Required Materials

- Plotnik, R., & Kouyoumdjian, H. (2014). *Introduction to Psychology*.
- Edmodo class website- Class Code _____

Online Media and Educational Resources This course has a heavy reliance on approved educational supplemental resources. [Two examples include, but are not limited to National Geographic *Brain Games*, and *CrashCourse Psychology*]

Course Outline of Material Covered:

Unit	Concepts/Skills/Resources	Timeframe
Biopsychology, Sensation and Perception	This unit will investigate the building blocks of the human brain and study the workings of our nervous system, including how neurons receive and send information. Additionally, this unit will examine the functions and workings of the major human senses (seeing, hearing, taste, smell, touch, vestibular and kinesthetic) and how sensations combine to form perceptions. Our study of perceptions will include an inquiry of how illusions and cultural experiences factor into individual perceptions.	3 Weeks
Consciousness and Memory	This unit will investigate what happens to our body and brain while we sleep, why we sleep, common sleep problems and their treatments. Additionally, we will discuss dreaming and dream theory and how sleep and dreams fit under a much broader phenomenon of consciousness. This unit also looks at areas of altered consciousness like hypnosis, meditation and illicit drug use. Our study of memory involves examining the stages of memory, how memories are encoded, why emotional memories are long lasting, the issue of repressed memories, the most common reasons for forgetting and the questions surrounding the accuracy of memory.	3 Weeks
Learning and Cognition	This unit will include a discussion of the different kinds of learning beginning with classical conditioning. We will examine how classical conditioning is established and tested, how we respond after being classically conditioned and what we learn during classical conditioning. We will also look at operant conditioning, its history and how consequences or reinforcers work. Additionally, we will examine the dynamics of cognitive/observational learning. We will also study theories of intelligence, how intelligence is measured, the meaning of IQ scores and concerns with intelligence tests. Lastly, this unit will introduce how we form concepts, solve problems, think creatively, acquire language and make decisions.	3 Weeks
Motivation and Emotion	This unit will look at several general approaches or theories that psychologists use to explain motivation, and then focus on specific examples, including hunger and achievement. We will examine why some people are achievers and others are underachievers. Additionally, this unit will discuss how emotions occur; how much our physiological responses, facial expressions, and interpretations contribute to	3 Weeks

	emotions. We will also examine whether feeling or thinking comes first in experiencing on emotion; whether there is a set of basic or universal facial expressions; what the function of emotions are and how specific emotions work.	
Personality and Health Psychology	<p>This unit will examine the prominent psychological theories of personality: Sigmund Freud's psychodynamic theory that emphasizes unconscious forces, irrational thoughts and childhood experiences; Humanistic theory that emphasizes our rational process and our natural striving to reach our true potentials; Social cognitive theory which stresses the influence of cognitive, learning and social processes on personality development; Trait theory which focuses on measuring traits and describing how traits make up our different personalities and influence our behaviors. Lastly, this unit will discuss how we decide something is stressful, our physiological and psychological responses to stress, how our immune system works, our psychosomatic symptoms to stress, which situational and personality factors help or hinder coping with stress and how to develop a stress management program</p> <p><i>Viewing of How the Grinch Stole Christmas</i></p>	3 Weeks
Psychological Disorders	<p>This unit will discuss several approaches to understanding mental disorders and how disorders are assessed and diagnosed. Lastly, we will investigate several areas of mental disorders, such as anxiety disorders, mood disorders, personality disorders, dissociative disorders and schizophrenia.</p> <p><i>Viewing of Inside Out</i> after the final exam</p>	3 Weeks

****Depending on the needs of the class or changes in the school year, the course outline is subject to change.***