AP Psychology Summer Assignment

Labosky 2026-2027

Welcome to AP Psychology! This course will give you an in-depth overview of many elements of the study of the brain and behavior. As it will be a comprehensive, content-oriented AP-level course, it is essential that you do some work over the summer. The goals behind these assignments are threefold:

(1) Introduce you to important AP Psychology content

(2) Get you thinking about some interesting and relevant examples of the applications of psychology, allowing me to hear from you as writers and critical thinkers

(3) Encourage you to engage in research practices as a psychologist yourself.

Please complete all of the three assignments attached below prior to our first class meeting in August.

<u>A few notes before you begin:</u>

- You may complete the assignments in steps or on separate occasions, but please have a stapled series of papers on which all completed tasks can be found by the first day of school.
- I will ask that students take notes by hand in this class unless we meet individually and you can share why taking notes via computer is best for your learning. Thus, it would be good practice to take notes by hand for assignment #1.
- Concepts/vocabulary in assignment #1 will help you with assignment #3.



Image retrieved from https://www.mooc.org/blog/why-is-it-important-to-study-psychology

Assignment #1: Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods

Please watch and take notes on the first two videos of Hank Green's Crash Course: Psychology series.

1) Intro to Psychology: Crash Course Psychology #1

2) Research & Experimentation: Crash Course Psychology #2

In your notes, be sure to have definitions on the following terms:

Sigmund Freud Structuralism Functionalism Psychoanalysis Wilhelm Wundt William James Behaviorism Psychology	Hindsight bias Operationalizing Scientific Method Case studies Naturalistic observation Sampling bias Correlation Experiments Experimental Group Control Group Double-Blind Procedure

Assignment #2: Exploring Psychology through *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell

Choose *one* of the following chapters of *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell to read:

- Chapter 1: The Matthew Effect
- Chapter 2: The 10,000-Hour Rule
- Chapter 3: The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 1
- Chapter 4: The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 2
- Chapter 6: Harlan, Kentucky
- Chapter 7: The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes

Write a two-paragraph, 350-400 word response to the chapter you read. One paragraph should summarize the chapter in your own words. The other paragraph should be an analysis of your chosen chapter, evaluating its implications, or what it tells us about human behavior and cognition.

I would highly recommend borrowing a copy of this book from a library. You can also use a free, online copy of the book or buy your own copy (links below).

Online version:
https://outliers310-analysis.weebly.com/uploads/3/3/9/3/3393409/ebook_gladwell_malcolm_-_outliers_the_story_of_success.pdf

Buy this book:
https://www.amazon.com/Outliers-Story-Success-Malcolm-Gladwell/dp/0316017930

Assignment #3: Naturalistic Observation and Study Design

Imagine you are a psychological researcher tasked with carrying out a naturalistic observation. Pick a public location at which you spent time this summer and sit and observe the people around you.

1.) Take notes on the behaviors you see for 15-20 minutes. These notes can be in a raw, bullet point format. One of the ethical guidelines for psychological research is that the data you collect remains anonymous, so do not use names or clear, identifiable descriptors. Be sure to note what location you were observing.

2.) In 5-10 sentences, reflect on the observations you made. Were there any themes or trends you noticed in human behavior in this location?

3.) Based on your observations, what is one question about human behavior you have that you could investigate further with an experiment? What would your operationalized independent and dependent variables be?

E.g. I observed people in the supermarket. I wonder how time of day impacts how much food people buy. My independent variable would be time of day (10am, 2pm, or 6pm) and my dependent variable would be how many items are in their cart upon leaving.

I observed people at the beach. I wonder how the number of people at the beach impacts how willing people are to go into the water. My independent variable would be number of people at the beach (10, 50, or 100) and my dependent variable would be how willing they say they are to swim (self-reported on a 1-7 scale)