

Argo Community High School | Social Science Department

Psychology SS011

Course Description from Course Planning Guide:

Year: 11, 12 | Credit: .5

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes, and this course focuses on how students can use psychology to better understand themselves and the world around them. Rather than only surveying terms and theories, the class emphasizes practical skills that improve daily life. Students learn how attention works, how memory is formed, and how to study effectively, while also exploring how social interactions, group influence, social media, and technology shape the way we think, feel, and behave. Through topics such as relationships, conformity, prejudice, sleep, substance use, stress, coping, mental health, and personal well-being, students connect psychology to challenges and decisions they face in their daily lives. The course builds a foundation in cognition, social psychology, consciousness, learning, personality, and mental health, helping students apply psychological concepts to real situations they face in high school and beyond.

Course Overview:

Unit Name	Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings / Skills	Common Assessments	Readings / Resources	Length
Course Introduction - What Is Psychology? - Course Expectations - Psychology in Everyday Life	- What does psychology study, and how can it help us understand ourselves and others? - How can evidence challenge common assumptions about behavior and mental processes? - How will respectful discussion, reflection, and application support learning in this course?	- Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. - Psychological concepts can be applied to school, relationships, health, decision making, and careers. - Personal experience can generate questions, but psychological claims should be evaluated with evidence. - Students build routines for discussion, reflection, assessment, revision, and responsible technology use.	DIAGNOSTIC / FORMATIVE: - Student information and prior knowledge activities - Final examination pretest and common sense pretest - Selective attention activity - Reflections on technology, social media, and the developing brain	- Course syllabus and course planning guide - The Battle for Your Time, Dino Ambrosi - The Teenage Brain - The Social Dilemma - Selected attention demonstrations and introductory media	1 to 2 weeks

Course Overview (continued):

Unit Name	Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings / Skills	Common Assessments	Readings / Resources	Length
Attention, Memory & Learning • Attention • Studying & Building Memories • Memory Storage & Retrieval • Forgetting, Construction & Improvement • Learning • The Science of Learning	• How does attention determine what information enters awareness and memory? • How are memories encoded, stored, retrieved, forgotten, and reconstructed? • How do classical conditioning, operant conditioning, cognition, and observation produce learning? • Which study practices produce durable learning, and why do some familiar strategies fail?	• Attention is selective and limited; expectations and context influence perception. • Memory requires encoding, storage, and retrieval across interacting memory systems. • Working memory, explicit memory, implicit memory, and the hippocampus serve different functions. • Retrieval cues, context, mood, priming, and serial position influence remembering. • Forgetting can result from encoding failure, storage decay, interference, and retrieval failure. • Memory is reconstructive and can be altered by schemas, suggestion, and misinformation. • Learning occurs through association, consequences, cognition, and observation. • Reinforcement strengthens behavior, while punishment is intended to reduce behavior. • Retrieval practice, spacing, interleaving, dual coding, concrete examples, and elaboration improve learning. • Students apply psychological research to evaluate and improve their own study habits.	FORMATIVE: • CFU quizzes and application questions for each part • Attention demonstrations and perception activities • Memory processing, encoding, and retrieval activities • Conditioning and observational learning applications • Video quizzes, reflections, and study strategy practice SUMMATIVE: • Attention, Memory & Learning quizzes or unit examination • Applied written responses using psychological concepts • Science of Learning application or reflection	• Attention, Memory & Learning unit notes • Crash Course Psychology, Introduction to Psychology • Khan Academy materials on attention • PBS NOVA, The Teenage Brain • Psychology Hacks to Become a Better Teacher or Student • Selected demonstrations and clips on conditioning and learning	4 to 5 weeks

Course Overview (continued):

Unit Name	Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings / Skills	Common Assessments	Readings / Resources	Length
Social Psychology • Attribution, Attitudes & Actions • Persuasion • Roles, Conformity & Obedience • Group Behavior • Prejudice & Discrimination • Aggression • Attraction • Altruism, Conflict & Peacemaking	• How do situations, attitudes, attributions, and social roles influence behavior? • Why do people conform to groups and obey authority, even when doing so conflicts with personal beliefs? • How do stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, aggression, attraction, and helping behavior develop? • How can social psychological knowledge improve relationships, judgment, and conflict resolution?	• Attribution, the halo and horn effects, and self serving bias shape judgments of others. • Attitudes and behavior influence one another through persuasion, roles, and cognitive dissonance. • Conformity and obedience are affected by social pressure, authority, context, and personal responsibility. • Group settings can produce facilitation, social loafing, polarization, groupthink, and deindividuation. • Nonverbal behavior and facial expressions influence communication and social perception. • Stereotypes, implicit associations, social identity, and institutional conditions can support prejudice and discrimination. • Aggression reflects biological, psychological, social, and cultural influences. • Proximity, similarity, familiarity, and reciprocal liking influence attraction. • Empathy, social responsibility, and situational factors influence helping behavior. • Students use social psychology to analyze historical events, media, relationships, and everyday decisions.	FORMATIVE: • Social Psychology CFU quizzes and application questions • Attitude survey and halo effect activities • Body language and deception guided viewing • Stanford Prison reflection • Crash Course Social Influence activities • Prejudice and discrimination draft with feedback SUMMATIVE: • Prejudice and discrimination final response • Social Psychology unit examination • Selected reflections and applied written responses	• Social Psychology unit notes • National Geographic, 102 Minutes That Changed America • Stanford Prison Experiment materials • Secrets of Body Language • Lies, How to Spot Them • Crash Course Psychology materials on social thinking and social influence • Selected cases, demonstrations, and contemporary examples	4 to 5 weeks

Course Overview (continued):

Unit Name	Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings / Skills	Common Assessments	Readings / Resources	Length
Consciousness • Understanding Consciousness & Hypnosis • Biological Rhythms & Sleep • Sleep Deprivation, Disorders & Dreams • Psychoactive Drugs	• What is consciousness, and how do psychologists study altered states? • How do circadian rhythms and sleep stages affect thinking, emotion, and health? • Why do people dream, and what are the limits of major dream theories? • How do psychoactive drugs alter the brain, behavior, perception, and risk?	• Conscious awareness changes across waking, sleeping, hypnotic, and drug influenced states. • Circadian rhythms interact with light, age, schedules, and sleep habits. • NREM and REM stages have distinct brain activity, experiences, and functions. • Sleep supports memory, learning, physical health, emotional regulation, and performance. • Sleep deprivation and sleep disorders can impair judgment, mood, attention, and health. • Dream theories offer different explanations and have different evidentiary limits. • Tolerance, dependence, withdrawal, and addiction involve biological, psychological, and social factors. • Depressants, stimulants, opioids, and hallucinogens differ in their effects and risks. • Students apply health information to evaluate sleep habits, drug claims, and safer decisions.	FORMATIVE: • Consciousness CFU quizzes and application questions • Sleep and consciousness guided viewing • Nap Lab and sleep stage reflection • Psychoactive drug classifications and scenario analysis • Practice examination SUMMATIVE: • Consciousness unit examination • Selected video reflections and written applications	• Consciousness unit notes • Crash Course Psychology, Consciousness • Brain Games materials on sleep • Amy Adkins, Why Do We Dream? • Current health information on sleep, addiction, opioids, fentanyl, and other psychoactive drugs	2 to 3 weeks

Course Overview (continued):

Unit Name	Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings / Skills	Common Assessments	Readings / Resources	Length
Mental Health • Stress, Coping & Illness • Understanding Mental Health • Anxiety & Depression • Treatment & Therapy • Happiness & Well Being • Resilience & Growth	• How do stress, appraisal, coping, and health influence one another? • How do psychologists distinguish psychological disorders from normal variation and distress? • How do biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors contribute to mental health? • What do anxiety, depression, OCD, PTSD, and related conditions look like in everyday life? • How do therapy, medication, relationships, habits, and support systems contribute to treatment and recovery? • How can well being, resilience, and growth be developed through evidence based practices?	• Stress responses can be adaptive, but chronic stress can affect physical and psychological health. • Problem focused and emotion focused coping serve different purposes. • Mental health exists on a continuum and should be discussed with accurate, person first language. • The DSM provides shared diagnostic criteria but labels must be interpreted within cultural and personal context. • The biopsychosocial approach explains disorders through interacting influences rather than a single cause. • Anxiety and depression can affect thoughts, emotions, behavior, sleep, relationships, and school performance. • Effective treatment may include CBT, exposure, person centered therapy, group or family support, mindfulness, and medication. • Students identify trusted adults, school supports, professional resources, and crisis resources when help is needed. • Connection, gratitude, kindness, healthy routines, and meaningful action can support well being. • Resilience, neuroplasticity, growth mindset, and grit help explain recovery and growth after difficulty.	FORMATIVE: • Mental Health CFU quizzes and application questions • Stress and coping self reflection • Mental health short video reflections • Crash Course activities on disorders, anxiety, depression, and treatment • Thanksgiving Letter and well being applications • Guided viewing and discussion activities SUMMATIVE: • Mental Health quizzes covering Parts 1 through 3 and Parts 4 through 6 • Selected applied responses, reflections, and written assessments • Mental Health content on the cumulative final examination	• Mental Health unit notes • The Lobotomist • History of the Madhouse • Crash Course Psychology materials on disorders, anxiety, depression, and treatment • Yale materials on happiness and well being • School and community mental health resources, including 988	4 to 5 weeks

Course Overview (continued):

Unit Name	Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings / Skills	Common Assessments	Readings / Resources	Length
Course Review & Final Examination • Cumulative Review • Application & Synthesis	• How do the major psychological concepts from the course connect to one another? • How can psychological knowledge support informed choices beyond the classroom?	• Psychological explanations are strongest when concepts are connected and applied to evidence. • Attention, memory, learning, social influence, consciousness, and mental health interact in everyday behavior. • Students use retrieval practice and reflection to identify strengths, gaps, and useful learning strategies.	FORMATIVE: • Practice Final, Part 1: AML and Social Psychology • Practice Final, Part 2: Consciousness and Mental Health • Cumulative study guide and review activities SUMMATIVE: • Cumulative final examination	• Unit notes and CFU question banks • Practice examinations and final examination study guide • Selected course activities and reflections	About 1 week

Major Course Skills:

Academic Reading & Written Communication	Critical Thinking & Application	Media & Source Analysis	Claim & Evidence Reasoning
Scientific Inquiry & Research Literacy	Data & Basic Statistical Interpretation	Discussion & Collaboration	Self Reflection & Metacognition
Interpersonal & Intrapersonal Awareness	Health Literacy & Decision Making	Problem Solving	Vocabulary in Context

Grade Weights

Category	Types of Assignments	Weight
Summative (Major Assignments)	Final examination, unit examinations, major essays, quizzes, presentations, and recorded group discussions	70%
Formative (Minor Assignments)	CFU quizzes, worksheets, class participation, video quizzes, written drafts, annotations, reflections, discussion posts, peer reviews, notes, and outlines	30%

Pacing ranges are approximate and may be adjusted for the school calendar, student needs, reteaching, and assessment revision.