

Las Positas College  
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## Course Outline for PSYC 1

### GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY

Effective: Fall 2009

#### I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

PSYC 1 — GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY — 3.00 units

Introduces students to the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. Provides an overview of major psychological concepts and theories in such areas as consciousness, learning, memory, motivation, perception, personality, stress, and social behavior. Strongly recommended: Eligibility for English 1 A. 3 hours.

3.00 Units Lecture

#### Prerequisite

ENG 100B - Reading, Reasoning, and Writing II  
or

ENG 104 - Integrated Reading and Writing II

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#### Grading Methods:

Optional

#### Discipline:

	<b>MIN</b>
<b>Lecture Hours:</b>	54.00
<b>Total Hours:</b>	54.00

#### II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT:

#### III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

**Before entering the course a student should be able to:**

##### A. ENG100B

1. use strategies to assess a text's difficulty, purpose, and main idea prior to the act of reading
2. employ strategies that enable a critical evaluation of a text
3. respond critically to a text through class discussions and writing
4. use concepts of paragraph and essay structure and development to analyze his/her own and others' essays
5. respond to texts drawing on personal experience and other texts
6. organize coherent essays around a central idea or a position
7. provide appropriate and accurate evidence to support positions and conclusions
8. demonstrate academic integrity and responsibility, particularly when integrating the exact language and ideas of an outside text into one's own writing
9. utilize effective grammar recall to check sentences for correct grammar and mechanics
10. proofread his/her own and others' prose

##### B. ENG104

#### IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

**Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:**

1. define the various theoretical perspectives that have shaped the study of psychology
2. contrast the unifying themes that underlie the field of psychology
3. distinguish between the goals of scientific psychology and common sense
4. evaluate the various psychological research methods
5. discuss the importance of ethical principles in research
6. summarize the key functions of different brain components
7. describe the role of heredity and environment on behavior
8. describe the processes involved in sensation and perception
9. distinguish between the various states of human consciousness
10. identify the differences between various theories of learning
11. describe the process involved in the encoding, storage and retrieval of memories
12. discuss the theories of intelligence and the goals of psychological testing
13. distinguish between the two major categories of human motives
14. describe the basic components of emotion

15. explain how biological and environmental factors contribute to developmental differences
16. define the construct of personality
17. describe the theoretical approaches to understanding abnormal behavior
18. describe the various models of psychotherapy
19. discuss the situational influences on behavior
20. describe psychological differences and similarities between groups based on gender, sexuality, social, or cultural grouping
21. apply concepts and theories to personal development

## V. CONTENT:

- A. Historical and Current Perspectives in Psychology:
  1. Contemporary perspectives used by psychologists to understand behavior and mental processes
  2. Major subfields in psychology
  3. Careers in the field of psychology
  4. Underlying themes that unify the study of psychology
- B. Research in Psychology:
  1. Research strategies used by psychologists to explore behavior and mental processes
  2. Scientific approach to understanding behavior
  3. Ethical issues in research with human and nonhuman animals
- C. Biological Bases of Behavior
  1. Structure and function of the neuron
  2. Organization of the nervous system
  3. Structure and function of the brain
  4. Interplay of heredity and environment on behavior
  5. The role of evolution in brain and behavior
- D. Sensation and Perception
  1. Capabilities and limitations of sensory processes
  2. Top-down and bottom-up processing
  3. Nature of attention
- E. Variations in Consciousness
  1. Levels of awareness
  2. Biological rhythms and sleep
  3. Theories of dreaming
  4. Hypnosis and meditation
  5. Psychoactive drugs
- F. Learning
  1. Classical conditioning
  2. Operant conditioning
  3. Cognitive process in conditioning
  4. Observational learning
- G. The Construction of Memory
  1. Encoding, storage, and retrieval processes
  2. Types of memory
  3. Physiology of memory
  4. Methods for improving memory
- H. Language and Thought
  1. Structure of language
  2. Approaches to problem solving
  3. Decision-making process
- I. Intelligence and Psychological Testing
  1. Types of psychological testing
  2. Meaning of IQ scores
  3. Interaction of heredity and environment on intelligence
  4. Nature of creativity
- J. Motivation and Emotion
  1. Theories of motivation
  2. Biological and cultural factors influencing motivation
  3. Elements of emotion
  4. Theories of emotion
- K. Lifespan Development
  1. Development as a lifelong process
  2. Theories of development
  3. Issues surrounding the developmental process (nature/nurture, continuity/discontinuity, stability/instability, critical periods)
- L. Personality Theory and Assessment
  1. Personality constructs
  2. Theories of personality
  3. Assessment of personality
- M. Stress, Coping, and Health
  1. Sources of stress
  2. Physiological and psychological responses to stress
  3. Cognitive and behavioral strategies for dealing with stress and promoting health
- N. Psychological Disorders
  1. Characteristics and origins of abnormal behavior
  2. Diagnosing psychological disorders
  3. Major categories of psychological disorders
  4. Impact of psychological disorders
- O. Treatment of Psychological Disorders
  1. Prominent methods used to treat individuals with disorders
  2. Types of practitioners who implement treatment
  3. Legal and ethical challenges involved in treatment
- P. Social Thought and Behavior
  1. Social judgment and attitudes
  2. Social and cultural categories
  3. Group behaviors
    - a. Attraction and relationships
    - b. Altruism and helping behavior
    - c. Conformity and obedience
    - d. Aggression
- Q. Psychological Diversity
  1. Gender and sexuality

2. Socio-cultural differences in psychology
- R. Applying Psychology
  1. Self-understanding
  2. Understanding the behavior and motivations of others
  3. Areas of application such as school psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, forensic psychology, and health psychology

#### VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Written exercises and case studies** - Written assignments
- B. **Audio-visual Activity** - Utilization of video and/or CD-ROM excerpts
- C. Student-led presentations
- D. **Discussion** - Discussion and problem solving of significant or controversial issues
- E. Application of concepts to personal experiences
- F. **Lecture** - Lectures on major themes and concepts
- G. Readings from texts, supplementary materials, primary source materials
- H. **Demonstration** - Demonstrations and simulations

#### VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading and Discussion: 1. Read Module 2, "Research Strategies," Myers, pp. 13-31. Be prepared to discuss the advantages of the scientific approach to the study of behavior. 2. Read Module 29, "Theories and Physiology of Emotion," Myers, pp. 407-432. Be prepared to compare and contrast the different theories concerning the sequence of events in an emotional experience. B. Writing: 1. Research and write a term paper pertaining to one of the primary topic areas discussed in this course. Cite references in proper APA format and include a reference section. 2. After viewing a selected video, such as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, be prepared to write a short paper concerning the major issues and problems of mental institutions as portrayed in the film. 3. Based on the readings concerning mnemonic devices, write a brief summary report discussing how visual imagery can be used to enhance memory recall. 4. Write a brief paper discussing which approach to psychotherapy seems to have the most practical value and application to treatment of psychological disorders. C. Collaborative Learning: 1. As a small group project, select one of the early pioneers in the development of psychological theory, and create a course presentation that will include historical background information and detailed discussion of significant contributions to the field of psychology made by the individual. 2. Working as a small group, visit several websites related to a specific psychological concept that has potential for personal application. Example: stress management. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation that illustrates the most significant practical applications of the psychological principle involved. 3. Working as a small group students, evaluate the accuracy of information presented in Wikipedia by examining primary sources. Students make corrections to Wikipedia entries to present balanced and accurate information on course concepts.

#### VIII. EVALUATION:

##### A. **Methods**

1. Exams/Tests
2. Quizzes
3. Papers
4. Group Projects
5. Class Participation
6. Final Performance
7. Other:
  - a. Participation in class discussions or small group projects
  - b. Essay or opinion papers
  - c. Chapter quizzes and/or midterm examinations
  - d. Final examination, presentation, or project

##### B. **Frequency**

1. Multiple class discussions or small group projects
2. Several essay or opinion papers (at least 25% of final grade)
3. Multiple quizzes or midterm examinations
4. One final examination, presentation, or project

#### IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Myers, David *Exploring Psychology in Modules*. 7th ed., Worth Publishers, 2008.
2. King, Laura *The Science of Psychology: An Appreciative View*. 1st ed., McGraw-Hill, 2008.
3. Gerrig, Richard and Zimbardo, Philip *Psychology and Life*. 18th ed., Allyn & Bacon, 2007.
4. Dewey, Russell A. *Psychology: An Introduction*. 1st ed., <http://www.intropsych.com/>, 2008.

#### X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Computer access