

SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

PSYCHOLOGY (H-AP): COURSE #251

Contact Information

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The Department's Educational Philosophy

The goal of the Social Studies Department is to provide students with the information and skills necessary to act as responsible global citizens. To achieve this goal we facilitate the process whereby students develop an understanding of American culture. Culture includes the unique characteristics of American society – its social structure, economic system and political organization. An understanding of American society must be grounded in a knowledge of the general patterns of western civilization from which American culture evolved. In an age of increasing global interconnectedness, it is vital to develop an awareness of and appreciation for other cultures.

Guiding Principles

All social studies students should:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the major factors involved in the development of civilizations from the Middle Ages to the present.
- Acquire useful and relevant information about the world in which they live.
- Develop the necessary skills to gather further information about whatever interests them.
- Think critically about sources of information, both primary and secondary, recognizing bias and viewpoint and separating fact and fiction.
- Interpret the world around them in such a way that they can make responsible decisions and act upon them effectively.
- Develop personal values and a sense of their own worth and dignity as individuals.
- Respect and appreciate one's own culture and way of life, as well as those of others.
- Be aware of the dependence of humans on their total environment and develop a personal concern for the preservation of an environment worth living in.
- Possess a sense of responsibility toward others and a willingness to work in a cooperative way for the common good.
- Develop a respect for learning and a desire to continue to learn beyond the opportunities provided by formal education.

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Course Frequency: Full-year course, five times per week

Credits Offered: Five credits

Prerequisites: None

Background to the Curriculum

For almost four decades Psychology has remained one of, if not the most, popular electives in the school. The changes in the curriculum of the H/AP section reflect the torrid pace of change in the field itself. The American Psychological Association (APA) spearheaded the introduction of a Psychology AP curriculum with the support of ETS in the early 1990s. Acton-Boxborough Regional High School students encouraged the department to offer an AP option then, and it has continued to do so for an ever-growing number of students, primarily seniors, ever since. As behavioral sciences have not been addressed by the state of Massachusetts under Educational Reform, the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School curriculum is very closely aligned with the spirit and content of the APA National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology, last published in 1999.

Because the content does not rely directly on any specific previous course, a wider range of students has had success in this class than is normally the case within leveled academic classes in the school. The sections are currently taught as large groups, although not technically a lecture class, because dialogue is encouraged throughout the period.

Core Content Domains

- Methods
- Biopsychological
- Cognitive
- Developmental
- Sociocultural

Course-End Learning Objectives

| <u>Learning objectives</u> | <u>Corresponding APA National standards, where applicable</u> |
|---|---|
| <i>Methods Domain</i> | |
| 1] Describe and compare the biological, behavioral, cognitive, and sociocultural perspectives. | 1.1 |
| 2] Identify and evaluate ethical issues in psychological research and professional practice. | 2.2, 5.1 |
| <i>Biopsychological Domain</i> | |
| 1] Identify and describe the structure and function of a neuron, the nervous system and the brain. | 1.1, 2.1 – 2.2, 3.1 – 2 |
| 2] Recognize the effects of heredity and environment on the behavior of the individual and of evolution on the behavior of species. | 7.1, 8.1 |
| 3] Describe the operation of the many sensory systems and the related concepts of threshold, adaptation, constancy and the effect of organism variable on perception. | 1.2, 1.1, 2.3 |
| 4] Describe and evaluate the various biological and environmental factors that have been judged to be the bases of human motivation and emotion. | 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1 |
| 5] Explain the major sources of stress, possible physical and psychological reactions to stress, and successful cognitive and behavioral strategies to deal with stress. | 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1 – 2 |
| <i>Developmental Domain</i> | |
| 1] Outline the stages of development posited by a range of well-known theorists and explain the related issues of critical periods, continuity/discontinuity, and stability/instability. | 3.1, 4.1 – 2 |
| <i>Cognitive Domain</i> | |
| 1] Explain how the traditional paradigms of classical and operant conditioning have been expanded by research on mental processing and biological and cultural contributions to learning. | 2.1, 3.1, 4.1 – 2, 5.1 – 3 |

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| 2] Describe the traditional models of memory and expand on the cognitive, biological and cultural factors now recognized to aid or impede its processing memory. | 1.1 - 5.2 |
| 3] Define thinking as a mental process involved in the manipulation and understanding of information. | 1.1 |
| 4] Analyze the obstacles that inhibit problem-solving and decision-making. | 2.3 |
| 5] Define language as symbols and sounds that convey meaning and evaluate the theories of language acquisition. | 3.1, 4.1 |
| 6] Compare theories of sleeping and dreaming. | 1.1 - 2, 2.1 - 2 |
| <i>Sociocultural Domain</i> | |
| 1] Define and understand the nature of test constructs, such as intelligence, creativity, and personality. | 1.1 |
| 2] Explain how personality and intelligence may be influenced by heredity and environment. | 2.1 |
| 3] Explain the characteristics of the psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic, and trait approaches to personality. | 2.1 |
| 4] Describe the major categories of abnormal behavior. | 3.1 |
| 5] Demonstrate an understanding of person perception and attributions. | 1.1 - 2 |

Assessment

Students are assessed by periodic unit quizzes and tests. Half or more of the weight is likely to be short answer: multiple choice, matching, fill-ins or short answers. The spirit of the Standards seeks to couple student introspection with a rigorous introduction to the field. Consequently, any structure of question may frame an open-ended answer. Essays emphasize application of the major objectives of the unit. "Review Quizzes," combining work from several chapters, help students to synthesize large amounts of material but do not count more than unit tests. Homework, particularly careful reading of supplementary readings, plus a readiness to participate in group work, accounts for the participation component of the grade. The overwhelming majority of students end the class with the administration of the AP psychology test. Students who elect not to take it will take a final exam if they have not exempted themselves through consistently superior grades.

Technology and Health Learning Objectives Addressed in This Course

(This section is for faculty and administrative reference; students and parents may disregard.)

| <u>Course activity: skills and/or topics taught</u> | <u>Standard(s) addressed through this activity</u> |
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| 1] Students are apprised of potentially useful sites to supplement their regular work. | |

Materials and Resources

Text:

Morris, Charles G., Psychology: An Introduction, 8th edition. (1993) Prentice Hall

Review Text:

Weber, Ann L., Introduction to Psychology. (1991) Harper.

Numerous handouts combined into unit packets.