

History and Social Sciences
Curriculum Overview

*Course Description:
Introduction to Psychology*

This elective course is a nonleveled study of the basics of Psychology. This course is open to students in grades 10 -12, but recommended for students in grades 11 and 12 due to the mature nature of the subject matter. Students will be introduced to the various theories that are applied to the studies of human development, human relationships, mental and emotional disorders, dream analysis, and treatments in these fields. The course will investigate the physiological state, the cognitive state, personality, learned behavior, fixations/phobias, and mental illness. Students will gain insight into behavior and practical knowledge on how to deal with situations in every day life.

Students enrolled in this course have the opportunity to examine their own personality and gain knowledge of themselves. In class and outside assignments and studies will provide students with the occasions necessary to explore the vast area of human behavior. Research and case studies will play a major role in the course. Students will engage in active learning, critical and creative thinking,, and simulations to further their understanding of the subject matter.

*Major Course Objectives:
When students have completed Psychology, they will better understand and be able to:*

- analyze the causes and course of the study of human behavior
- analyze the impact on emotional state and behaviors of technology, social and cultural trends, and events of significance (i.e.; 9/11, fear of nuclear war, etc.)
- communicate about fundamental health concepts and skills that foster healthy habits of mind and body
- understand and communicate health information clearly for self-management and health promotion
- utilize fundamental mental health concepts to assess risk, consider potential consequences, and to make health enhancing decisions
- work in a positive manner with families, peers, school staff, and community members to enhance personal health and well-being and create a safe and supportive environment where individual similarities and differences are acknowledged

Relationship to Massachusetts Frameworks for History and Social Sciences

- identify and describe the experience of different feelings (grief, joy, elation, rage, etc.) and how feelings affect daily functioning (5.7)
- identify the causes & effects of depression and how to seek help (5.8)
- describe the relationship among physical appearance, changes in the body, and self-concept and esteem (5.9)
- describe the contribution of a personal support system to good mental health (5.10)
- analyze the healthy ways to express emotions and to cope with feelings, including the common causes of stress, its effects on the body, and managing stress (5.11)
- identify the factors that help people deal with grief (5.12)
- analyze research on health behaviors and brain chemistry and emotional functioning (5.13)
- describe theories of personality development, including identity formation, and differentiate among the concepts of ideal self, private self, and public self (5.14)
- describe the influence of gender on identity and self-concept (5.15)
- describe the signs of destructive behavior, and identify intervention strategies and methods of professional intervention and treatment (5.16)
- identify common mental health disorders (anxiety, schizophrenia, and mood, including depression and bipolar) and appropriate treatments (psychological, biomedical) (5.17)

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- identify the ways in which decision making is influenced by sound character, family, and personal beliefs (5.18)
- explain positive techniques for handling difficult decisions (5.19)

This course, while a traditional offering of the Social Sciences Department, relates closely with many of the standards of (1) *Massachusetts Frameworks for Health and Family/Consumer Science* and (2) APA Standards.

Assessment Tools

Success in Psychology will be assessed by the following methods:

1. Outside assignments will be graded and homework will be assessed for completeness, accuracy, and understanding
2. Class work will be evaluated by the instructor and by class members for cooperative learning activities
3. Tests are primarily summative, and will consist ordinarily of multiple choice and essay questions
4. Research papers and research projects that may be long and/or short term assignments; all written papers must be properly cited and documented
5. Outside readings and the student's understanding and application to class study
6. Emphasis is to be placed on organization, accuracy, thoroughness, and proficiency of student work. Such work will result in successful understanding and correct answers
7. Rubrics will be incorporated for all research and outside reading assignments, as well as for a final assessment of the student performance and progress
8. Students will complete a "Dream Journal"
9. Final exam will consist of primarily multiple choice and open response essays; a final project may be substituted at the instructor's discretion

Materials and Resources:

Wade and Tavris. *Invitation to Psychology*. Pearson/Prentice Hall. 2005
Gormly et al. *Understanding Psychology*. Glencoe. 1992
American Psychology Assn. (APA) Standards and Units of Study
Videos/films (see Course Units Outline)
Various collected reading articles (see Course Units Outline)

Relationship to Scituate High School Students Expectations

Scituate High School students will have the opportunity in *Introduction to Psychology* to become:

- effective readers (1)
- effective writers (2)
- effective presenters (written, oral, visual) of their research, their interpretations, and solutions to historical problems (3)
- effective problem solvers (4)
- effective information gatherers/researchers (5)
- effective contributors to the community at large