

A-Level Psychology – Linear course 2017-2019

Outline of the course

Psychology is a subject that allows students to have a combined approach of curiosity and scepticism. The course allows you to study the reasons behind behaviour ranging from mental health, gender, cognition ranging all the way to the broad approaches used within the subject to explain human behaviour.

Course content:

Year 1: In the first year of teaching students must complete the following units which will apply to the first two papers in the specification

- **Paper 1: Introductory topics in psychology**
- **Paper 2: Psychology in context**

Paper 1: Introductory topics in psychology

Topics taught in this paper include:

- **Social Influence** – Understanding how the role of social factors such as conformity and obedience can impact on behaviour. Historians will be able to use their knowledge of historical events to explain the key processes behind social change movements.
- **Memory** – Understanding cognition and how the memory works. You get to look into the types of memory and models that are used to explain the key differences between short term and long term memory. Using research in this area to identify the pros and cons of eyewitnesses and most importantly how eyewitnesses can be misled.
- **Attachment** – Early experiences of a child can determine subsequent behaviour in adulthood. In this topic you get to look at the importance of early year development and identify types of attachment. Furthermore, we delve into how disrupted attachments can lead to defiant behaviour along with the extent of Romanian orphanages and again their impact on a child's development.
- **Psychopathology** – This topic allows you to explore mental health in particular depression, OCD and phobias. Mental health is now becoming more and more common in society with more people discussing the implications and severity for individuals who suffer from such disorders. In this topic you are taught about the different definitions of abnormality and explore the key approaches of psychology to explain each of the named above disorders.

Paper 2: Psychology in context

Topics taught in this paper include:

- **Approaches in psychology** – This topic area is of vital importance and is the underpinning concepts behind everything that we study in psychology. This is the first topic area you are taught and it allows you to take basic principles of each approach and apply them to explain human behaviour. In psychology we have several branches that are supported by many psychologists, they include: **biological, behavioural, cognitive, humanistic and psychodynamic**. You will learn to take each of these approaches and make general conclusions about their views of psychology and understanding of human behaviour.
- **Biopsychology** – This topic area is one of the more scientific nature and allows you to branch further into the human brain and the bodies physiology to explain behaviour. You will understand the complexity of the human brain and how each area is associated with key behaviours. Furthermore, you will understand how brain chemicals and hormones are also implicated in behaviour.

- **Research Methods** - This topic area underpins everything we do when it comes to theory construction and most importantly research studies. You will acquire knowledge and understanding of the following research methods, scientific processes and techniques of data handling and analysis, be familiar with their use and be aware of their strengths and limitations: This will include a number of different elements throughout the course.

Year 2 (Post UCAS week and Y13):

In the second year of your study we take all of the knowledge you have acquired from Paper 1 and Paper 2 and now apply it to key issues and specific topic areas within the subject.

Paper 3: Issues and Option

- **Issues and Debates** – This topic area starts to stretch your skill set in the subject and challenges you to apply key debates and issues in psychology to everything you study. This is a synoptic element that assess your ability to interpret, critically evaluate and justify your views.
- **Gender (option 1)** – Gender is another topical subject in the media at the moment especially focusing on transgender individuals. This topic delves into the differences between biological sex and gender. You will look at the reasons behind transgender and how we acquire our gender roles.
- **Schizophrenia (option 2)** – Schizophrenia will build on your prior knowledge from paper 1 and psychopathology. Schizophrenia is a complex disorder which is becoming more prevalent in the population. You will look at key explanations to explain how schizophrenia develops, which builds again upon your knowledge from paper 2 and your approaches.
- **Aggression (option 3)** – Aggression is something every individual can relate to, and similarly to schizophrenia you will look into key explanations that are built from your approaches knowledge to explain why people act aggressively, and why others do not. You will discover knowledge around prison violence and use psychological research to explain different types of aggression including reasons behind aggressive behaviour in relationships.

Assessment Criteria

| <u>Papers</u> | <u>Marks Available</u> | <u>Weighting</u> |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Paper 1 | 96 | 33.3% |
| Paper 2 | 96 | 33.3% |
| Paper 3 | 96 | 33.3% |

- Each paper will consist of different sections. Paper 1 and 3 will have four sections and Paper 2 three. Each section students will complete a combination of multiple choice, short answer and extended (**maximum 16 marks**)
- Each exam is a written exam: **2 hours**

Specification and Examination Board

Psychology 7182, exam board AQA. <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182>. This course is accredited as a SCIENCE.

Useful information for undergraduate study in: Law, Biology, Medicine, Sociology, Sport related courses