Understanding Psychology

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of psychology. Major emphasis will be placed on research methods, the science of the brain, learning and cognitive processes, theories of personality and psychological disorders.

Course Objectives:

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify major contributors to the field of Psychology.
- Explain basic methods of psychological research.
- State, label, and describe basic parts and functions of the human brain.
- Compare and contrast functions of the brain’s hemispheres
- Describe the research related to sleep and dreams.
- Outline the principles involved in sensation and perception.
- Break down and illustrate the principles and techniques surrounding classical and operant conditioning.
- Recall and explain the cognitive theorists’ approach to the study of emotions.
- Identify ways of measuring test standardization, reliability, and validity.
- Explain the various views of intelligence.
- Describe and evaluate the major schools of personality theory.
- Summarize the major causes, symptoms, treatment, and prognoses of various psychological disorders including, but not limited to, anxiety, somatoform, dissociative, personality, and mood, as well as schizophrenia.
- Explain and differentiate between the various forms of psychotherapy ranging from psychoanalysis to cutting edge biological approaches to treatment.
- Demonstrate a mastery of the various theories pertaining to Social Psychology.

Required Class Materials:

- Portfolio (spiral notebook)
- Pen or pencil
- Homework (if assigned)

Text:

Understanding Psychology (Publisher: Glencoe: McGraw-Hill)

www.psychology.glencoe.com

Grading:

- Psychology grades are based on an accumulation of points throughout the semester.
- The point values for assignments will vary.
- Grading Scale: 90-100 A, 80-89 B, 70-79 C, 60-69 D, below 59 F.
- 50% of the points are from major assignments and tests. 25% of points come from homework assignments and in-class assignments. 25% of points come from attendance and participation.
- Grades are updated at least once every two weeks. Parents and students can monitor their grades via Edu-Star.

Course Outline:

(Subject to change due to time constraints and individual preference)
First Semester

Introduction to Psychology

1. Why study psychology?
2. A brief history of psychology
3. Psychology as a profession

Psychological Research Methods and Statistics

1. What is research?
2. Problems and solutions in research
3. Statistical evaluation

Psychological Testing

1. Characteristics of Psychological Tests
2. Intelligence Testing
3. Measuring Achievement, Abilities and Interests
4. Personality Testing

Body and Behavior

1. The nervous system: The basic structure
2. Studying the brain
3. The endocrine system
4. Heredity and environment

Altered States of Consciousness

1. Sleep and dreams
2. Hypnosis, biofeedback, and meditation
3. Drugs and consciousness

Sensation and Perception

1. Sensation
2. The senses
3. Perception

Memory and Thought

1. Taking in and storing information
2. Retrieving information

Learning: Principles and Applications

1. Classical conditioning
2. Operant conditioning
3. Social learning

Second Semester

Theories of Personality

1. Purposes of Personality Theories
2. Psychoanalytic theories
3. Learning theories
4. Humanistic and cognitive theories
5. Trait theories

Stress and Health
1. Sources of stress
2. Reactions to stress
3. Coping with stress
4. Stress in your life

Psychological Disorders
1. What are psychological disorders?
2. Anxiety disorders
3. Somatoform and dissociative disorders
4. Schizophrenia and mood disorders

Therapy and Change
1. What is psychotherapy?
2. Psychoanalysis and Humanistic therapy
3. Cognitive and behavior therapies
4. Biological approaches to treatment

Individual Interaction
1. Interpersonal attraction
2. Social perception
3. Personal relationships

Group Interaction
1. Group behavior
2. Conformity and obedience
3. Conflict and cooperation

Attitudes and Social Influence
1. Attitude formation
2. Attitude change and prejudice
3. Persuasion

Psychology: Present and Future
1. Careers in Psychology
2. Psychology’s Contributions