**AP Psychology Curriculum Map**

**Northgate High School**

**Mrs. Krnich (**[**krnichj@mdusd.org**](mailto:krnichj@mdusd.org)**) Schedule of Units:**

Unit 1: History and Approaches (2-4%) (August 23—September 11th)

Unit 2: Research Methods (8-10%) (September 12—September 27th)

Unit 3: Biological Bases of Behavior (8-10%) (September 27th—October 4th)

Unit 9: Developmental Psychology (7-9%) (October 5th—October 19th)

Unit 4: Sensation and Perception (6-8%) (October 20th—November 10th)

Unit 5: States of Consciousness (2-4%) (November 10th—November 28th)

Unit 6: Learning (7-9%) (November 29th—December 16th)

Unit 7: Cognition (8-10%) (January 3rd—January 20th)

Unit 8: Motivation and Emotion (6-8%) (January 23rd—February 3rd)

Unit 10: Personality (5-7%) (February 6th—February 21st)

Unit 11: Testing and Individual Differences (5-7%) (February 22nd—March 3rd)

Unit 12: Abnormal Behavior (7-9%) (March 6th—March 17th)

Unit 13: Treatment and Abnormal Behavior (5-7%) (March 20th—March 31st)

Unit 14: Social Psychology (8-10%) (April 3rd—April 14th)

Review for AP Psychology Exam and Final Exam (2-4%) (April 17th—May 3rd)

Final Research Project (May 8th—June 9th)

**Unit I: History and Approaches**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Recognize how philosophical perspectives shaped the development of

psychological thought.

• Describe and compare different theoretical approaches in explaining

behavior:

—structuralism, functionalism, and behaviorism in the early years;

—Gestalt, psychoanalytic/psychodynamic, and humanism emerging later;

—evolutionary, biological, and cognitive as more contemporary approaches.

• Recognize the strengths and limitations of applying theories to explain

behavior.

• Distinguish the different domains of psychology:

—biological, clinical, cognitive, counseling, developmental, educational,

experimental, human factors, industrial–organizational, personality,

psychometric, and social.

• Identify the major historical figures in psychology (e.g., Mary Whiton

Calkins, Charles Darwin, Dorothea Dix, Sigmund Freud, G. Stanley Hall,

William James, Ivan Pavlov, Jean Piaget, Carl Rogers, B. F. Skinner,

Margaret Floy Washburn, John B. Watson, Wilhelm Wundt).

Textbook Reading Assignments: Myers, Unit 1

**Unit II: Research Methods**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Differentiate types of research (e.g., experiments, correlational studies,

survey research, naturalistic observations, and case studies) with regard to

purpose, strengths and weaknesses.

• Describe how research design drives the reasonable conclusions that can be

drawn (e.g., experiments are useful for determining cause and effect; the use

of experimental controls reduce alternative explanations).

• Identify independent, dependent, confounding, and control variables in

experimental designs.

• Distinguish between random assignments of participants to conditions in

experiments and random selection of participants, primarily in correlational

studies and surveys.

• Predict the validity of behavioral explanations based on the quality of

research design (e.g., confounding variables limit confidence in research

conclusions).

• Distinguish the purposes of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

• Apply basic descriptive statistical concepts, including interpreting and

constructing graphs and calculating simple descriptive statistics

(e.g., measures of central tendency, standard deviation).

• Discuss the value of reliance on operational definitions and measurement

in behavioral research.

• Identify how ethical issues inform and constrain research practices.

• Describe how ethical and legal guidelines (e.g., those provided by the

American Psychological Association, federal regulations, local institutional

review boards) protect research participants and promote sound ethical

practice.

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 2

**Unit III: Biological Bases of Behavior**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Identify basic processes and systems in the biological bases of behavior,

including parts of the neuron and the process of transmission of a signal

between neurons.

• Discuss the influence of drugs on neurotransmitters (e.g., reuptake

mechanisms).

• Discuss the effect of the endocrine system on behavior.

• Describe the nervous system and its subdivisions and functions:

—central and peripheral nervous systems;

—major brain regions, lobes, and cortical areas;

—brain lateralization and hemispheric specialization.

• Recount historic and contemporary research strategies and technologies

that support research (e.g., case studies, split-brain research, imaging

techniques).

• Discuss psychology’s abiding interest in how heredity, environment, and

evolution work together to shape behavior.

• Predict how traits and behavior can be selected for their adaptive value.

• Identify key contributors (e.g., Paul Broca, Charles Darwin, Michael

Gazzaniga, Roger Sperry, Carl Wernicke)

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 3A, 3B, and 3C

**Unit IV: Sensation and Perception**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Discuss basic principles of sensory transduction, including absolute

threshold, difference threshold, signal detection, and sensory adaptation.

• Describe sensory processes (e.g., hearing, vision, touch, taste, smell,

vestibular, kinesthesis, pain), including the specific nature of energy

transduction, relevant anatomical structures, and specialized pathways in the

brain for each of the senses.

• Explain common sensory disorders (e.g., visual and hearing impairments).

• Describe general principles of organizing and integrating sensation to

promote stable awareness of the external world (e.g., Gestalt principles,

depth perception).

• Discuss how experience and culture can influence perceptual processes

(e.g., perceptual set, context effects).

• Explain the role of top-down processing in producing vulnerability to

illusion.

• Discuss the role of attention in behavior.

• Challenge common beliefs in parapsychological phenomena.

• Identify the major historical figures in sensation and perception (e.g.,

Gustav Fechner, David Hubel, Ernst Weber, Torsten Wiesel).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 4

**Unit V: States of Consciousness**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Describe various states of consciousness and their impact on behavior.

• Discuss aspects of sleep and dreaming:

—stages and characteristics of the sleep cycle;

—theories of sleep and dreaming;

—symptoms and treatments of sleep disorders.

• Describe historic and contemporary uses of hypnosis (e.g., pain control,

psychotherapy).

• Explain hypnotic phenomena (e.g., suggestibility, dissociation).

• Identify the major psychoactive drug categories (e.g., depressants,

stimulants) and classify specific drugs, including their psychological and

physiological effects.

• Discuss drug dependence, addiction, tolerance, and withdrawal.

• Identify the major figures in consciousness research (e.g., William James,

Sigmund Freud, Ernest Hilgard).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 5

**Unit VI: Learning**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Distinguish general differences between principles of classical

conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning (e.g.,

contingencies).

• Describe basic classical conditioning phenomena, such as acquisition,

extinction, spontaneous recovery, generalization, discrimination, and higherorder

learning.

• Predict the effects of operant conditioning (e.g., positive reinforcement,

negative reinforcement, punishment, schedules of reinforcement).

• Predict how practice, schedules of reinforcement, and motivation will

influence quality of learning.

• Interpret graphs that exhibit the results of learning experiments.

• Provide examples of how biological constraints create learning

predispositions.

• Describe the essential characteristics of insight learning, latent learning,

and social learning.

• Apply learning principles to explain emotional learning, taste aversion,

superstitious behavior, and learned helplessness.

• Suggest how behavior modification, biofeedback, coping strategies, and

self-control can be used to address behavioral problems.

• Identify key contributors in the psychology of learning (e.g., Albert

Bandura, John Garcia, Ivan Pavlov, Robert Rescorla, B. F. Skinner, Edward

Thorndike, Edward Tolman, John B. Watson).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 6

**Unit VII: Cognition**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Compare and contrast various cognitive processes:

—effortful versus automatic processing;

—deep versus shallow processing;

—focused versus divided attention.

• Describe and differentiate psychological and physiological systems of

memory (e.g., short-term memory, procedural memory).

• Outline the principles that underlie effective encoding, storage, and

construction of memories.

• Describe strategies for memory improvement.

• Synthesize how biological, cognitive, and cultural factors converge to

facilitate acquisition, development, and use of language.

• Identify problem-solving strategies as well as factors that influence their

effectiveness.

• List the characteristics of creative thought and creative thinkers.

• Identify key contributors in cognitive psychology (e.g., Noam Chomsky,

Hermann Ebbinghaus, Wolfgang Köhler, Elizabeth Loftus, George A.

Miller).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 7A, 7B**Unit VIII: Motivation and Emotion**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Identify and apply basic motivational concepts to understand the behavior

of humans and other animals (e.g., instincts, incentives, intrinsic versus

extrinsic motivation).

• Discuss the biological underpinnings of motivation, including needs,

drives, and homeostasis.

• Compare and contrast motivational theories (e.g., drive reduction theory,

arousal theory, general adaptation theory), including the strengths and

weaknesses of each.

• Describe classic research findings in specific motivation systems (e.g.,

eating, sex, social)

• Discuss theories of stress and the effects of stress on psychological and

physical well-being.

• Compare and contrast major theories of emotion (e.g., James–Lange,

Cannon– Bard, Schachter two-factor theory).

• Describe how cultural influences shape emotional expression, including

variations in body language.

• Identify key contributors in the psychology of motivation and emotion

(e.g., William James, Alfred Kinsey, Abraham Maslow, Stanley Schachter,

Han Selye).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 8A, 8B

**Unit IX: Developmental Psychology**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Discuss the interaction of nature and nurture (including cultural variations)

in the determination of behavior.

• Explain the process of conception and gestation, including factors that

influence successful fetal development (e.g., nutrition, illness, substance

abuse).

• Discuss maturation of motor skills.

• Describe the influence of temperament and other social factors on

attachment and appropriate socialization.

• Explain the maturation of cognitive abilities (e.g., Piaget’s stages,

information processing).

• Compare and contrast models of moral development (e.g., Kohlberg,

Gilligan).

• Discuss maturational challenges in adolescence, including related family

conflicts.

• Characterize the development of decisions related to intimacy as people

mature.

• Predict the physical and cognitive changes that emerge as people age,

including steps that can be taken to maximize function.

• Describe how sex and gender influence socialization and other aspects of

development.

• Identify key contributors in developmental psychology (e.g., Mary

Ainsworth, Albert Bandura, Diana Baumrind, Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud,

Carol Gilligan, Harry Harlow, Lawrence Kohlberg, Konrad Lorenz, Jean

Piaget, Lev Vygotsky).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 9

**Unit X: Personality**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Compare and contrast the major theories and approaches to explaining

personality: psychoanalytic, humanist, cognitive, trait, social learning, and

behavioral.

• Describe and compare research methods (e.g., case studies and surveys)

that psychologists use to investigate personality

• Identify frequently used assessment strategies (e.g., the Minnesota

Multiphasic Personality Inventory [MMPI], the Thematic Apperception Test

[TAT]), and evaluate relative test quality based on reliability and validity of

the instruments.

• Speculate how cultural context can facilitate or constrain personality

development, especially as it relates to self-concept (e.g., collectivistic

versus individualistic cultures).

• Identify key contributors to personality theory (e.g., Alfred Adler, Albert

Bandura, Paul Costa and Robert McCrae, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung,

Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 10

**Unit XI: Testing and Individual Differences**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Define intelligence and list characteristics of how psychologists measure

intelligence:

—abstract versus verbal measures;

—speed of processing.

• Discuss how culture influences the definition of intelligence.

• Compare and contrast historic and contemporary theories of intelligence

(e.g., Charles Spearman, Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg).

• Explain how psychologists design tests, including standardization

strategies and other techniques to establish reliability and validity.

• Interpret the meaning of scores in terms of the normal curve.

• Describe relevant labels related to intelligence testing (e.g., gifted,

cognitively disabled).

• Debate the appropriate testing practices, particularly in relation to culturefair

test uses.

• Identify key contributors in intelligence research and testing (e.g., Alfred

Binet, Francis Galton, Howard Gardner, Charles Spearman, Robert

Sternberg, Louis Terman, David Wechsler).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 11

**Unit XII: Abnormal Behavior**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Describe contemporary and historical conceptions of what constitutes

psychological disorders.

• Recognize the use of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders (DSM) published by the American Psychiatric Association as the

primary reference for making diagnostic judgments.

• Discuss the major diagnostic categories, including anxiety and somatoform

disorders, mood disorders, schizophrenia, organic disturbance, personality

disorders, and dissociative disorders, and their corresponding symptoms.

• Evaluate the strengths and limitations of various approaches to explaining

psychological disorders: medical model, psychoanalytic, humanistic,

cognitive, biological, and sociocultural.

• Identify the positive and negative consequences of diagnostic labels (e.g.,

the Rosenhan study).

• Discuss the intersection between psychology and the legal system (e.g.,

confidentiality, insanity defense).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 12

**Unit XIII: Treatment of Abnormal Behavior**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Describe the central characteristics of psychotherapeutic intervention.

• Describe major treatment orientations used in therapy (e.g., behavioral,

cognitive, humanistic) and how those orientations influence therapeutic

planning.

• Compare and contrast different treatment formats (e.g., individual, group).

• Summarize effectiveness of specific treatments used to address specific

problems.

• Discuss how cultural and ethnic context influence choice and success of

treatment (e.g., factors that lead to premature termination of treatment).

• Describe prevention strategies that build resilience and promote

competence.

• Identify major figures in psychological treatment (e.g., Aaron Beck, Albert

Ellis, Sigmund Freud, Mary Cover Jones, Carl Rogers, B. F. Skinner, Joseph

Wolpe).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 13

**Unit XIV: Social Psychology**

AP students in psychology will be able to do the following:

• Apply attribution theory to explain motives (e.g., fundamental attribution

error, self-serving bias).

• Describe the structure and function of different kinds of group behavior

(e.g., deindividuation, group polarization).

• Explain how individuals respond to expectations of others, including

groupthink, conformity, and obedience to authority.

• Discuss attitudes and how they change (e.g., central route to persuasion).

• Predict the impact of the presence of others on individual behavior (e.g.,

bystander effect, social facilitation).

• Describe processes that contribute to differential treatment of group

members (e.g., in-group/out-group dynamics, ethnocentrism, prejudice).

• Articulate the impact of social and cultural categories (e.g., gender, race,

ethnicity) on self-concept and relations with others.

• Anticipate the impact of behavior on a self-fulfilling prophecy.

• Describe the variables that contribute to altruism, aggression, and

attraction.

• Discuss attitude formation and change, including persuasion strategies and

cognitive dissonance.

• Identify important figures in social psychology (e.g., Solomon Asch, Leon

Festinger, Stanley Milgram, Philip Zimbardo).

Textbook Reading: Myers, Unit 14