This course is designed to present basic psychological concepts and to introduce students to the scientific study of behavior. Core topics include methods of psychological research, the biological bases of behavior, principles of learning, memory and cognition, personality, and psychopathology. Other selected topics to be covered would include the following: motivation and emotion, life-span development, social psychology, health psychology, sensation and perception, intelligence, human sexuality, statistics, and altered states of consciousness. Credits: 3 (3,0)

PSY 101 Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of PSY 101, students will be able to:

1. Define psychology and describe the main focus of each major area of applied psychology including clinical, counseling, school, and industrial/organizational psychology.
2. Summarize the major tenants of the various psychological perspectives including the psychodynamic, behavioral, humanistic, cognitive, and biological schools of thought.
3. Outline the steps of the scientific method.
4. Identify the differences between correlational and experimental research methods including the advantages and disadvantages/potential confounds of each.
5. Identify the key functions of the neurotransmitters and brain structures described in the course as they relate to human behavior.
6. Describe the processes of classical and operant conditioning.
7. Describe the key processes of memory including encoding, storage, and retrieval and strategies to enhance these processes to reduce forgetting.
8. Identify the major perspectives on how personality traits develop including the psychodynamic, behavioral, humanistic, and biological perspectives.
9. List the defining symptoms of psychological disorders including anxiety, mood, somatoform, dissociative, personality, and schizophrenic disorders.

Note: Students completing this course may not receive credit for PSY 130 or PSY 131
PREREQUISITES: None


GENERAL EDUCATION: This course satisfies 3 credits of the Social and Behavioral Science competency area of the General Education requirements at Farmingdale State College.

ELECTIVE FOR: All curricula with a social science elective

PSY 101 JUSTIFICATION

Psychology 101 fulfills the intent of both the Social and Behavioral Science and Science competency areas by applying a research and scientific perspective to the study of human behavior.

Psychology is a way of asking and answering questions about the similarities (What is crowd behavior?) as well as the intra (Do I have an eating disorder?) and interpersonal variations (Why are some people phobic?) in the human experience. As psychology students study how sociocultural and environmental factors shape human behavior and mental processes, they will come to understand the effect of culture on their individual values and attitudes and on the society in which they live. In learning about psychology, students will trace its evolution from physiology and philosophy into a modern science significantly influenced by technological progress, especially in the areas of neuroscience and behavioral genetics. The sociocultural perspective will encourage students to critically evaluate popular notions of psychology in terms of gender bias, ethnocentrism, ageism, racism, and heterosexism. In its use of multicultural examples to explore contemporary societal problems (e.g., domestic violence, road rage, child abuse, anxiety/depression), Introductory Psychology imparts a respect for the parallel phenomena of human unity and diversity. With their increased knowledge of both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes students will have a better awareness and understanding of the motivation for, effect of, and ethics of their personal, social, and political actions. This in turn will make them both more productive citizens and more effective at resolving both personal and contemporary societal problems.

Psychology has been defined as the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. Throughout the course an emphasis is placed on understanding human behavior from a scientific perspective. Students learn to separate the ideas of pop psychology from those established through research, and to appreciate how our current knowledge develops through scientific inquiry. The scientific method is the common thread that both unites the disparate subfields of psychology and runs throughout the course. It is explored in depth and employed to understand individual differences and similarities.

The scientific method and specific research methodologies are covered in their own right and are then revisited throughout the rest of the course as various content areas are explored. Specifically, we discuss research conducted in the different subfields of psychology (e.g., perception, motivation, learning, personality) and critically evaluate both the methodologies and results. Students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate ideas and information coming from a variety of sources. Thus, they will be able to critically evaluate public policy outcomes as well as the efficacy of their own behavior and the behavior of others that is aimed at resolving the problems of contemporary society and producing productive, functioning members of society.
COURSE OUTLINE

Core Topics

Introduction to Psychology
Research Methodology
Biological Bases of Behavior
Learning
Memory & Cognition
Personality
Abnormal Psychology

Optional Topics To Be Selected From Among The Following:

Statistics
Altered states of consciousness
Motivation
Emotion
Life-Span Development
Human Sexuality
Social Psychology
Health Psychology/Stress Management
Sensation
Perception
Cognition/Memory
Intelligence
COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, the student should be able to define and discuss concepts such as:

What Psychologists do
Goals of Psychology
Scientific method
Techniques of Research
Gender bias in psychological research
Experimenter and Subject Bias
Pseudopsychologies
Critical thinking when reviewing scientific studies
The Nervous System: Neurons and nerve impulses
Structure and function of the brain
The Brain and Behavior
Neurotransmitter
Images of the brain: diagnostic technology
Hemispheric Specialization
Brain Damage: Behavioral effects
Gender differences in neuroanatomy
Perceptual constancies
Perceptual organization
Perceiving depth and distance
Optical Illusions
Perceptual Learning
Attention, habituation and motives
Expectancies and sets
Evaluating Parapsychology
Principles of classical conditioning
Antecedents and Consequences
Reinforcement theory
Anxiety and conditioned emotional responses
Principles of operant conditioning
Negative reinforcement and punishment
Superstitious behavior
Schedules of reinforcement
Stimulus control
Learning, feedback and programmed instruction
Observational learning
Behavioral self-management
Defining personality
Traits, types, theories
Structure of personality: id, ego, superego
Psychosexual stages of development (Freud)
Humanistic theory: Maslow, Rogers
Impact of society and culture on the establishment of identity
Assessment: interviews, questionnaires
Inventories and projective techniques
Historical background: from superstition to science
Definition of abnormality; concepts of normality
Culture barriers to effective psychotherapy
The effect of labeling on behavior
The stigma of mental illness
Impact of culture on stress
The cultural relativity definition of normal behavior
Psychiatric labeling, self-fulfilling prophecy
Stereotyping
Mental health professionals
Models of psychopathology
Assessment and classification (DSM-IV)
Cultural bias in intelligence and personality testing
Culture fair versus culture free testing
Mental disorders: anxiety, depression, substance abuse, psychosis (schizophrenia), paraphilias, dementia, dissociation, somatoform disorders
Etiology, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness
Institutionalization; legal issues
Community mental health programs; self-help groups
Impact of politics on mental health care
Types of therapy: individual, group, family and marital
Psychoanalysis; concept of the unconscious mind
Humanistic therapy; client-centered therapy
Behavior therapy: desensitization, reinforcement
Cognitive therapy
Psychopharmacological therapy, ECT, psychosurgery