**Psychology Syllabus**

Psychology is an elective survey course, designed to expose neophyte students to the basic terminology, applications, and methodology of the discipline. Students should learn to recognize psychological constructs in everyday circumstances, use terms and concepts appropriately, and analyze situations for the proper use of psychological practices. The result, it is hoped, will be a higher quality life for each student who chooses to apply what they have learned with better problem-solving, interpersonal skills, and understanding of the human condition.

The State Standards are indicated in brackets {} below each Unit description. It should be noted that my approach to the course is holistic in nature, resulting in some Standards being taught throughout. This applies particularly to SS.P.17, SS.P.18, and SS.P.19. Relevant textbook chapters are listed in brackets [ ].

**UNIT 1 – The Fundamentals of Psychology**

This unit covers the basic elements of psychology – how it was viewed in past times, how it became a science, how the Scientific Process developed, and how experiments are done. There is a basic discussion of ethics and values, an introduction to terminology that is commonly used, and students will conduct a simple experiment to experience the process by which proper experiments should be done. [Chapter 1 in the text, as well as additional material.] {SS.P.1, SS.P.2}

**UNIT 2 – The History of Psychology**

This unit explores the development of psychological constructs throughout history, up until the present. Early pioneers of psychological study will be investigated, the basic schools of psychological thought will be explored, and the resultant types of counseling evaluated. Students will learn about structuralism, functionalism, behaviorism, and psychoanalysis, attempting to determine the value of each one. They will be asked to decide which types of counseling are best for specific circumstances and choose the school of thought most appropriate to their personality. They will do a project on a personal behavior that they would like to modify. [Elements of Chapters 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 14] {SS.P.1, SS.P.2, SS.P.3, SS.P.15, SS.P.16, SS.P.25, SS.P.26, SS.P.27}

**UNIT 3 – The Biology of the Brain**

This unit examines the systems of the body that affect the ways we think and act. Students will learn the parts of the brain and their functions. They will also explore the way other systems in the body produce neural impulses, hormones, and neurotransmitters that may affect our behavior and thinking ability. Students will examine sleep patterns and disruptions that may cause distress. Students will chart their behavior patterns in an effort to determine the effects of their sleep quality.

[Chapter 2] {SS.P.4, SS.P.5, SS.P.6, and SS.P.7}

**UNIT 4 – What is Consciousness?**

This unit helps students define what it means to be conscious. They will explore the way in which our senses acquire information and transmit it to various parts of the brain. The necessity of sleep will be explored, as well as the effects of sleep disorders and hypnosis. Altered states of consciousness, particularly through the use of drugs will be considered. Students will experiment with a relaxation method and evaluate how it changes their sensory awareness. [Chapters 2, 3, & 5] {SS.P.8, SS.P.9, SS.P.10}

**UNIT 5 – What is Intelligence?**

This unit examines various definitions of intelligence (including Multiple Intelligences), and the methods that have been used to attempt to test it. Students will learn to calculate Intelligence Quotient and evaluate the scientists who have explored it. They will learn about the reliability and validity of various tests, and the possibilities for bias. Students will create their own biased intelligence test to learn about test creation, administration, and evaluation. They will also utilize a Multiple Intelligences survey to determine what unconventional intelligence they might possess. [Chapter 8] {SS.P.13, SS.P.14 – I am astonished to find no Standards specific to the definition, measurement, and implications of Intelligence.}

**UNIT 6 – What is Memory?**

This unit looks at the various types of memory, the stages we experience in encoding them, types of amnesia, and methods we can use to improve our memory. Students will experiment with methods of improving memory. They will also evaluate video examples of individuals with autism or mental retardation to perceive how those persons’ memory might vary from the expected. [Chapter 7] {SS.P.11, SS.P.12, SS.P.13}

**UNIT 7 – Human Development**

Students will examine the basic theories of human development over the lifespan, searching for common patterns that may explain similarities and differences between individuals and groups of people. Attention will also be given to sexual maturation and orientation, in an attempt to understand how people take so many different paths to adulthood. Students will look at their own life histories, to see the ages at which they passed typical milestones and where they might progress in the future.

[Chapters 3, 4, and 11] {SS.P.4, SS.P.5, SS.P.6, and SS.P.7}

**UNIT 8 – Motivation and Emotion**

Students explore the elements of motivation; that which causes us to engage in action. They will also endeavor to explore the realm of emotion, including the origins thereof, variations in different persons, and difficulties experienced by those whose emotions are beyond control. They will conduct an experiment in improving their motivation, and/or controlling their emotions under particular circumstances. [Chapter 9] {SS.P.20, SS.P.21}

**UNIT 9 – Personality**

Students will explore various aspects that comprise human personality, learning to identify traits which are common and those that are more unique. Examination will reveal those characteristics which are indicative of psychological disorders, and those which might merely be described as “eccentric”. Students will delve further into personality testing and discover how it may indicate the presence of a serious condition. They will experiment with a Myers-Briggs type personality indicator and look at some projective types of tests (e.g. Rorschach) [Chapter 12] {There appear to be no State Standards for this Unit. I stand amazed.}

**UNIT 10 – Psychological Disorders**

As a culmination to various preceding units, students will apply all their previous knowledge to characteristics of serious psychological disorders. They will learn the basics of using behavioral analysis, testing, questioning, and observation to formulate simple diagnoses of severe psychological disorders. They will examine case studies of famous people who were diagnosed with serious psychological disorders and create a case study on a fictional character. [Chapter 13 and 14] {SS.P.22, SS.P.23, SS.P.24}

**UNIT 11 – Methods of Therapy**

As an adjunct to the previous unit, students will revisit their earliest ideas about the basic “schools” of psychological thought, and the methods of therapy that derive from them. Once again, they will commit themselves to a particular methodology, and apply its principles to various case studies. They will complete a Counseling Styles survey to verify their choice. Their experiment for this unit will involve role-playing practice utilizing various types of therapy. [Chapter 19…, plus references to Chapters 1 & 2.]{Perhaps SS.P.25, SS.P.26, & SS.P.27, but we go much more in-depth to explore the actual methods of therapy.}

**UNIT 12 – Socialization**

As a conclusion to the course, students will take a closer look at the role of psychology in our daily lives. Application of principles they have learned will be directed toward elements in group attitudes, advertising, prejudices, gender roles, and other social circumstances. Students will evaluate their own thinking and attitudes in an effort to determine the validity of their conceptualizations. [Chapters 20 & 21…]{Some of SS.P.17, SS.P.18, and SS.P.19, but again with more emphasis on the average citizen’s and therapist’s relation to those with psychological difficulties.}

**Materials:** The textbook for the class is Psychology in Everyday Life by David G. Myers and C. Nathan DeWall, 4th Ed. pub. Worth. Additional print materials include articles from the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel*, various popular treatises (such as I’m OK – You’re OK by Thomas Harris), and alternative personal sources (i.e. my college Educational Psychology text, and on-line psychology articles).

In addition, students will view relevant video material from TV series such as *Star Trek* and *Quantum Leap* and movies such as *Rain Man* and *A Beautiful Mind*, as well as many other relevant enactments.