



Office 379B

Introduction to Psychology

Course Profile – Spring 2016

Mr. McMurray

E-mail: mmcmurray@oprfs.org



(708) 434-3979

Contact and Availability

Room: _____

Website: mrmcmurray.com

I can be reached at the email (preferred) and phone listed in the header above. Please allow up to 48 hours for a response. If you would like to meet, I am available before school, 2nd, 4th and 7th periods by appointment. Feel free to drop by anytime, with the expectation that I may be away or unavailable if you have not made prior arrangements. The classroom website will be your best friend...holding assignments, important dates, and other miscellaneous information to assist you. Also, there's a decent bio if you want to learn more about me!

Course Description

"The purpose of psychology is to give us a completely different idea of the things we know best."

~Paul Valery, French poet

Introduction to Psychology is a course designed to introduce you to the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. You will be introduced to the psychological facts, principals, and phenomena associated with some of the major subfields within psychology, as well as methods psychologists use in their research and practice.

During this semester we examine questions from a variety of psychological fields:

- What are the influential and lasting approaches to psychology?
- What is psychology and how is research conducted?
- What is the role of biology and the brain in behavior? How does my brain function and connect with other relevant body systems?
- What is a "phobia" and how do people learn to be afraid of things such as heights or spiders?
- Why do I vividly remember the time I dropped my lunch tray in the 5th grade but can't remember to grab my homework off of my desk?
- Why do some people remember their dreams and others forget them? What happens in my brain and body over the course of a night – or nap? Why do we feel so crummy when we don't get enough sleep?
- What does it mean to be "mentally ill" or to be "normal"? How do mentally ill people become healthy again?

My hope is that all of us will expand our intellectual and emotional horizons during the semester. This course provides the opportunity to reflect on your identity and your thinking. Introspection (knowledge of yourself) is required in this class.



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Course Overview

Units of study are listed below. Expect more detailed information on each individual unit when it begins. There will be more assignments and readings than are listed below. Also, this is a tentative schedule and is subject to change at my discretion.

Units	Content Description	Duration (approx.)
1	Approaches and Personality	3-4 weeks
2	Neuroscience	3-4 weeks
3	States of Consciousness	3-4 weeks
4	Abnormal Psych and Therapy	3-4 weeks

Course Requirements

Writing

There is a writing component to this class. Being an effective, skilled writer is a key to success both inside and out of the classroom, and we will spend time honing your skills.

Reading

Reading comprehension is another important component. Reading different texts requires different skills, therefore many activities and assignments will be geared towards making you a better reader.

Quizzes, Tests, and Projects

Most units will have an exam and a project. You should also expect quizzes, exit slips, polls, or other quick assessments to make sure you understand what we are learning. You will also have a **cumulative final exam**, which will be worth 15% of your semester grade.

Homework

Homework will be assigned regularly in this course. Psychology lends itself to a variety of assignments, so expect that they will vary according to topic.

Participation

Everyone is expected to be engaged in class and participate! I expect you to be on time, be prepared, pay attention, and listen to the ideas of others. You will be **graded on your participation** in this course and a strong performance in this area tends to lead to higher achievement in others. I use Classroom Dojo to monitor your participation in the course throughout the year. This will track data on your day-to-day habits in the class and you will have access to this data. My expectation is that you check your stats and try to amp it up if you are lagging in this area. Remember, I want to hear your voice, it's powerful!



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Learning Goals

Upon successful completion of this course, students will...

- Develop their analytical writing skills.
- Develop their ability to comprehend and analyze complex, scientific texts.
- Identify and utilize research methods in the field of psychology.
- Apply the concepts discussed in class to their everyday lives.
- Construct a new lens through which to view the human psyche and its biological basis.

Materials

- Huffman, Karen. *Psychology in Action*, 9th ed. 2010, Wiley & Sons, Inc. Hoboken, NJ.
 - We will rarely use this book, so feel free to leave it at home for now.

Supplies

- Binder – 1-2”, to store your work.
- Dividers – at least 5 dividers to organize your work.
- Notebook Paper – fill your binder with this. **NO SPIRALS PLEASE!**
- Post-its – for annotations and activities. Please replenish.
- Writing Utensils – pens **AND** pencils.
- Highlighters – whatever color you like.

Grading Policy

Weighting

85% - Semester work

15% - Final Exam

Note: Work is assigned a point value depending on the length and difficulty of the assignment. Points accrue over the semester and your total final points earned in relation to the total final points possible equals your grade.

Scale

A – 90-100

B – 80-89

C – 70-79

D – 60-69

F – 59 and below

Late and Absent Work Policy

Late homework will be accepted for 50% credit within **one week** of its due date. Late projects or papers will lose 10% credit per day up to 50% within one week of its due date. If it's a group project, **ALL** group members will be assessed a penalty regardless of where the blame lies. If you have group chemistry issues, address them promptly, not after showing up unprepared. Remember, it is always best for your learning and your grade to submit work late rather than not at all...don't let a loss of credit deter you from submitting, but motivate you to establish good habits and time management skills.



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Late and Absent Work Policy (cont.)

If you are absent and miss an assignment, I expect you to check the website first, email me second, acquire, and complete the assignment preferably on time or the day you return to class at the latest. “I didn’t know” is **never** an acceptable excuse to miss work. If there are extenuating circumstances that preclude you from doing any work while absent please communicate that with me promptly. If you miss a quiz or exam, I expect you to make it up the day you return. If you are absent for a group project, it may adversely affect your grade or the grade of your group depending on the assignment. If you know that you will be absent on a particular day, please inform me in advance and make arrangements to makeup your work.

Course Expectations

I like to keep things simple, so here is a brief list of my expectations of you as a student...

- Be prepared
- Be engaged
- Be respectful
- Be accountable
- Be collaborative

I will follow all school-wide policies as per the OPRFHS Handbook. Here are a few rules to keep in mind...

- Come on time, and if you are tardy, you promptly get a plasco pass (remember that there are two opportunities per day to be late in this class).
- Enter the room with appropriate attire, no hats.
- Enter the room with your ID around your neck.
- Consume food elsewhere. Water bottles are permitted, please be tidy.
- Use a bathroom ticket to get a pass to the bathroom (you will get two per quarter, and they can be turned in unused at the end of the semester for extra credit).
- **Do not use a cell phone at any time during class.** First offense, the cell phone is taken until the end of the period. Second offense, the cell phone is kept until the end of the day. Third offense and subsequent offenses, the cell phone is given to the dean to be picked up by the parent. If cell phone is not immediately given to Mr. McMurray, the student will go to his or her dean and receive a referral.

Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism is a serious breach of academic integrity and will not be tolerated in my courses. Upon first offense I will arrange a conference to discuss the issue and accept a rewrite at 20% reduction in credit. Any further offenses will result in a zero on the assignment, a disciplinary referral, and a parent conference to discuss the issue. We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism so that there aren’t any misunderstandings.

Cheating on homework will result in a zero on the assignment. Cheating on an exam or quiz will result in at least a 10% reduction in credit, up to a zero on the assessment depending upon the extent of the breach. Any violations of this policy may result in parent contact about the issue. Bottom line, so be honest and do your own work.



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Other Helpful Suggestions

- Organize and save all of your materials, including graded work, until the end of the term. There is a cumulative final; to best prepare it would be useful to have all resources at your disposal. Also, mistakes can be made with your scores. Neither Skyward nor I are perfect so be ready to verify scores in the event you encounter a grade discrepancy.
- Have fun! We are going to study some really interesting things so enjoy it, explore, inquire, and bring your personality, interests, and experience into the class!
- Ask questions! If ever you need anything come and see me. Also, be accountable for your learning and performance. If you need help, initiate and don't wait until it's too late! I am here to serve you and help you to excel in the course so take advantage.



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Please complete, sign, date and return this page. This counts as your first homework **grade** and is due on Monday, January 11, 2015.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in Mr. McMurray's Psychology syllabus.

Student's **Printed** Name

Student's Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian's **Printed** Name

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Note to Parents

Here are some things you can expect of me as your child's instructor...

*Your communications will be returned within 48 hours, ideally much sooner.

*I will contact you promptly with concerns, questions, and praise.

*I will employ an individualized and holistic approach to educating your child.

*I will strive to ensure your child meets the learning goals established in this syllabus and performs to the best of their abilities in the course.

~Mr. McMurray

1. For parents and guardians, please provide the best way for me to reach you. (cell phone, email, etc.)

Daytime –

Evenings –

2. Also, as we begin this new school year together, please share with me anything you think I should know about your child to help me facilitate their instruction: