

AP Psychology 2015-2016

Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to AP Psychology! You have signed up for a course that will be rigorous, interesting, and fun! AP Psychology is an elective, college-level course that will deal with content that will require maturity on behalf of the students enrolled in it. Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior, which requires an in-depth investigation of a variety of concepts. We will be learning about what makes people behave the way that they do; please be mindful that we will be discussing real-life issues that people are dealing with every day. This class will broaden your understanding of the basis of human behavior.

This class not only introduces students to college level rigor, but it will also prepare students for the AP exam with the goal of everyone in the class earning college credit with a passing exam score! This summer assignment will begin this process. You will be assigned to choose a book from list below and complete TWO writing assignments about the book that you selected.

First, you must select a book to read. I encourage you to think about this list below; look at the list and sample the books (you can do this for free on Amazon). Please select a reading that interests you! The books are divided into course topics to help you understand how the reading relates to the content in the course.

All written submissions should adhere to the following format: 12 point font (Times New Roman or Arial), 1 inch margins, double spaced.

Writing Assignment #1: Reading reflections

Write THREE reflections that convey your reactions and thoughts while reading the book. Each reflection should be no more than a page in length. You will have at most 3 pages total of reflections. Each reflection should be based on a specific passage or portion of the book. Designate the passage in your reflection by briefly summarizing what you are responding to. The challenge of the reflection will be keeping this response brief! Your response to the summarized passage may include: critiques, questions, disagreements, items you agree with, ideas you like (explain why), connections to personal experience, etc. Keep in mind that these items are suggestions; you do not have to include ALL of these items in each reflection.

The purpose of this portion of the assignment to make you think WHILE you read. You will appreciate the reading more if you reflect on the book as you are reading; so please do not fabricate reflections after you have finished the book. You will be assessed on the quality of your writing (how clearly you convey your reflection) and not on the ideas that you express in your reflection.

Writing Assignment #2: Critical Review of the book

When you are finished with the book, you will write a 2-3 page review of the book. Your review should include a(n):

- Introduction of the book and the author
- Summary of the main argument and key points in the book
- Explanation of how the book relates to psychology

- Evaluation how well the book makes its argument (or explanation- depending on the book you selected). *Some books will explain a psychological phenomenon, some will argue for or against a psychological theory.*
- Book discussion: includes thoughtful questions you have about the subject of the book and what you learned about psychology while reading this book

Grading: 80 points total

Reflections: 10 points each; 30 points total (for evaluation criteria, see description above).

Critical Review: 50 points total

Each bulleted item in the critical review will receive 10 points. Factual errors will result in a one point deduction for the corresponding bulleted item.

Assignment checklist: please make sure that you have the following items to turn in on the FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:

- 3 reflections (that were completed while you read the book you selected)
- A 2-3 page critical review of the book you selected

Reading List (please select ONE book below).

Experimental Psychology

Slater, L. (2006). *Opening skinner's box, great psychological experiments of the twentieth century*. NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

This author covers 10 different influential and often controversial psychological experiments that had a major impact on the study of psychology. These studies are all still discussed in psychology classes and the stories behind the study are told in this book.

Lemov, R. (2005). *World as Laboratory: Experiments with Mice, Mazes, and Men*. NY: Hill and Wang

Lemov, a historian and anthropologist, addresses nearly a century of study into "human engineering," the idea that behavior can be modified through manipulation of the surrounding environment. She describes not only influential experiments in psychology, but their long term effects on our society.

Abelson, R. P., K. P. Frey, and A. Gregg. (2003). *Experiments with People: Revelations From Social Psychology*. Psychology Press.

Experiments With People showcases 28 intriguing studies that have significantly advanced our understanding of human thought and social behavior.

Rolls, G. (2010). *Classic Case Studies in Psychology*. (2nd ed). Routledge

This collection of case studies provides a compelling insight into the human mind. This is a fascinating collection of human stories. Some are well-known case studies that have informed clinical practice, others are relatively unknown.

Neuropsychology

LeDoux, J. (2002). *Synaptic self How our brains become who we are*. NY: Penguins Books.

Synthesis of recent research in neuroscience to explain how the interactions between nerve cells in the brain creates what we experience as personality.

Sacks, O. (1998). *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. NY: Touchstone.

This book tells the stories of individuals afflicted with fantastic perceptual and intellectual aberrations.

Mason, M.P. (2009). *Head Cases: Stories of Brain Injury and Its Aftermath*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. This book tells the stories of the survivors of brain injuries as they struggle to map and make sense of the new worlds they inhabit.

Language, Intelligence, and Cognition

Hilts, P.J. (1995). *Memory's ghost: The strange tale of Mr. M. and the nature of memory*. NY: Simon & Schuster. Henry M. underwent experimental brain surgery in 1953 and has since lived only in the present. He can talk and read and write, but has no memory for what has just happened -- every minute is a new experience for him.

Hobson, J.A. (2002). *Dreaming An introduction to the science of sleep*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Recent work by one of the foremost experts on sleep and the emergence of dreams.

Seligman, M.E.P. (1990). *Learned optimism*. NY: Pocket Books.

Highly regarded book on optimism, pessimism, and positive thinking based on research and theory in cognitive psychology. The author, a leader in the "positive psychology" movement, believes optimism and pessimism are learned and so can be changed. Includes self-tests and practical advice.

Kenneally, C. (2008). *The First Word: The Search for the Origins of Language*. NY: The Penguin Press.

This book studies the origin and evolution of language, and highlights studies from the major players in the study of linguistics (including Noam Chomsky).

Murdoch, S. (2007). *IQ: A Smart History of a Failed Idea*. Wiley

This book is an account of the ways in which we attempt to measure intelligence, and the mis-steps (according to him) that we have taken in the pursuit to create a reliable measurement tool.

Sensation and Perception

Gregory, R.L. (1990). *Eye and brain: The psychology of seeing* (4th ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Readable account of how we see including lots of visual illusions.

Sacks, O. (2010). *The mind's eye*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Sacks tells the stories of people who are able to navigate the world and communicate with others despite losing what many of us consider indispensable senses and abilities: the power of speech, the capacity to recognize faces, the sense of three-dimensional space, the ability to read, the sense of sight.

Developmental Psychology

Cohen, D.B. (1999). *Stranger in the nest. Do parents really shape their child's personality, intelligence or character?* NY: John Wiley.

An account of the extent to which biology and prenatal influences affect human development, with a discussion of the social and moral implications of those influences.

Segal, N.L. (1999). *Entwined lives: twins and what they tell us about human behavior*. NY: Dutton.

You will not find a more thorough presentation of what is known about twins and how they have contributed to our knowledge of psychology.

Rymer, R. (1994). *Genie: a Scientific Tragedy*. NY: Harper Perennial.

The compelling story of a young woman's emergence into the world after spending her first 13 years strapped to a chair, and her rescue and exploitation by scientists hoping to gain new insight into language acquisition.

Garbarino, J. (2007). *See Jane hit: Why Girls Are Growing More Violent and What We Can Do About It*. NY: Penguin Books.

This book investigates why girls have become more aggressive over time. Combining clinical experience with incisive analyses of social trends, Garbarino traces the factors behind the epidemic: girls' increased participation in sports and greater comfort with their physicality, but also their lack of training in handling aggression.

Psychological Disorders

Wagner, P.S. and C. S. Spiro (2006). *Divided Minds: Twin Sisters and Their Journey Through Schizophrenia*. NY: St. Martin's Press.

Divided Minds is a dual memoir of identical twins, one of whom faces a life sentence of schizophrenia, and the other who becomes a psychiatrist, after entering the spotlight that had for so long been focused on her sister.

Oxnam, R. (2006). *A Fractured Mind: My Life with Multiple Personality Disorder*. NY: Hyperion.

This is the powerful and moving story of one person's struggle with Multiple Personality Disorder.

Aboujaoude, E. (2008). *Compulsive Acts: A Psychiatrist's Tales of Ritual and Obsession*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Elias Aboujaoude, an expert on obsessive compulsive disorder and behavioral addictions, tells stories inspired by memorable patients he has treated, taking us from initial contact through the stages of the doctor-patient relationship.

Cheever, S., J. Hoffman, S. Froemke and S. Nevins. (2007). *Addiction: why can't they just stop?* NY: Rodale Books

Companion book to an HBO documentary assesses our current understanding of addiction, combining expert opinions with personal narratives of impact of this epidemic on addicts, their friends and family, and our society.

Jamison, K.R. (1995). *An unquiet mind*. NY: Knopf.

A beautifully written account of manic bipolar disorder, written by a professor of psychiatry who is a victim of the disorder. A central theme is her reluctance to take the drug lithium even though it will be beneficial because she is afraid to lose the creative energy that comes with the disorder.

Shorter, E. (1997). *A history of psychiatry from the era of the asylum to the age of prozac*. NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Excellent historical narrative of how the treatment of the mentally ill in western society has evolved from the 18th century to the present.

Social Psychology

Kerr, J.H. (2006). *Rethinking violence and aggression in sport*. London: Routledge.

Applies current theory of aggression to sport, *inter alia* how players become acclimatized to physical violence, the psychological benefits of sport violence, the problem of spectator aggression and the moral and ethical dimensions of the issue.

Tavris, C. and E. Aronson. (2007). *Mistakes were made (but not by me)*. NY: Harvest Books.

Interesting review of work by social psychologists to explain self-deception, the human tendency to justify and adhere to mistaken actions and beliefs long after there is reason to admit error.

Zimbardo, P.G. (2007). *The Lucifer effect: understanding how good people turn evil*. NY: Random House.

Zimbardo explains how we are susceptible to the lure of “the dark side” and offers an explanation of a variety of phenomena, from corporate malfeasance to organized genocide to how once upstanding American soldiers came to abuse and torture Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib.

Good luck and I look forward to working with you next year!

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