

## **Personal Psychology I: The Road to Self-Discovery**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

#### **Personal Psychology I: The Road to Self-Discovery**

Self-knowledge is the key to self-improvement! More than 800,000 high school students take psychology classes each year. Among the different reasons, there is usually the common theme of self-discovery! Sample topics include the study of infancy, childhood, adolescence, perception and states of consciousness. Amazing online psychology experiments dealing with our own personal behavior are featured within this course.

### **COURSE METHODOLOGY**

- This is an inquiry-based course. Students will generate knowledge through online readings, asynchronous discussions with students and their instructor, interactions with online tutorials, and online and hands-on simulations.
- The instructor will act as a guide, a facilitator, an events planner, and a resource advisor. He/she will always be available through course message.
- The student must actively construct and acquire knowledge by being intrinsically motivated to succeed. To succeed, students must participate and complete all readings and activities. This course requires the student's active participation.
- Both formal and informal assessment methods will be used in the course. Informal assessment will include an evaluation of the quality and timeliness of participation in class activities. Formal assessment may include multiple-choice quizzes, tests, discussion board participation, and written assignments. A final exam will be given at the end of the course.

### **COURSE PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES**

This course for which you are registered is a college preparatory, academically rigorous course that covers an entire semester's worth of material. As such, it is important that you adhere to the following guidelines as you manage your time and commit to successfully completing all required coursework:

1. The requirements for this course are equivalent to completion of minimum of 90+ hours of class instruction at a traditional on-site high school
2. Assignments must be submitted for each unit as they are completed so that the teacher may review and assess your performance. Do not hold your work, you must submit each unit's homework as it is completed, demonstrating weekly assignment completions
3. You must log in regularly to your course to demonstrate continued participation, and completion of all course requirements, including assignments, assessments and discussion forums
4. You must complete your individual work and any incident of suspected cheating, plagiarism or collaboration on assignments violates the academic integrity expectations outlined at the time of your enrollment and can result in failure of the course or further action as deemed appropriate

### **Citizenship**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner that reflects sound ethics, honor, and good citizenship. It is the student's responsibility to maintain academic honesty and integrity and to manifest their commitment to the goals of NUVHS through their conduct and behavior. Students are expected to abide by all NUVHS policies and regulations. Any form of academic dishonesty, or inappropriate conduct by students or applicants may result in penalties ranging from warning to dismissal, as deemed appropriate by NUVHS.

### **Communication**

Throughout this course students will need to be in close contact with their instructor and fellow students. Students are expected to communicate via course message and electronic discussion boards. Therefore, students should plan on checking their course messages at least three times a week and participate in the discussion boards during the weeks they are live.

Instructors strongly encourage and welcome open communication. Clear, consistent, and proactive communication will ensure a successful experience in this course. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor immediately if and when a personal situation occurs that affects his/her performance in this class. Being proactive with communication will result in a quick solution to any problems that may occur.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Unit 1: An Invitation to the World of Psychology**

Psychology is the study of the mind and behavior. Psychologists may carry out research to learn more about these important areas or use their knowledge of psychology to help people with mental and emotional problems. Most psychologists specialize in a particular subfield, such as clinical or school psychology. Some apply psychology to another area, such as law or sports. Psychology as a distinct field of study began about 130 years ago. Since then, it has undergone many changes. At various times, different approaches were popular. Past approaches include functionalism and humanism. A few of the key pioneers in the history of psychology are Wilhelm Wundt, Sigmund Freud, and Abraham Maslow. The different approaches and contributions of key pioneers help explain the nature of psychology today. Current perspectives in psychology include biological, cognitive, and cultural psychology. The perspectives differ in important ways, but they have the same basic goals: advancing knowledge of the mind and behavior and using the knowledge to improve people's lives.

### **Learning Objectives**

- State the nature of psychology.
- Describe what psychologists do and how they differ from psychiatrists.
- List major subfields and applied specializations of psychology.
- Explain the importance of studying psychology, including its history.
- Outline how psychology developed and the role of key pioneers.
- Compare six different current perspectives in psychology.

### **Activities**

Unit 1 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 1 Online Lab Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 1 Discussion Assignment 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 1 Discussion Assignment 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 1 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

## **Unit 2: Research and Ethics in Psychology**

Psychologists undertake research in order to increase knowledge in their field and learn better ways to help people. Like other scientists, psychologists use the scientific method, which includes developing and evaluating hypotheses to answer research questions. Research designs used by psychologists include experimental studies, naturalistic studies, surveys, and case studies. Each type of research design has specific advantages and drawbacks. Data gathered in research studies are analyzed to make them easier to interpret and to test hypotheses. Psychological research must follow ethical guidelines, including informing subjects of possible risks of participating in the research.

### **Learning Objectives**

- State reasons psychologists do research, and list steps of the scientific method.
- Define theory and hypothesis, and explain how the two concepts are related.
- Explain how researchers do experiments, and state the pros and cons of experimental studies.
- Describe naturalistic studies, and identify their advantages and drawbacks.
- Explain how researchers undertake surveys, and distinguish between correlation and cause and effect.
- Describe case studies, and list their uses and limitations.
- State how researchers analyze data, test hypotheses, and communicate results.
- Identify ethical guidelines for the conduct of psychological research.

### **Activities**

Unit 2 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 2 Online Lab Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 2 Discussion Assignment 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 2 Discussion Assignment 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 2 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

### Unit 3: Infancy and Childhood

Developmental psychology is the study of how people change as they grow older. Psychologists generally study development with longitudinal or cross-sectional studies. A major goal of research is to learn how heredity and the environment influence development. Physical development begins before birth and continues throughout childhood. Children change in size and shape and develop new motor skills. As infants and children grow older, their cognitive abilities also change. They develop new ways of thinking and learning about the world and how to use language. Children get better at controlling their emotions as they grow older. Their relationships with other people also change. In addition, children learn how to tell right from wrong and how to behave morally.

#### Learning Objectives

- Describe longitudinal and cross-sectional studies, and explain the nature-nurture debate.
- Outline physical developments that occur during the prenatal period, infancy, and childhood.
- Identify Piaget’s stages of cognitive development, explain assimilation and accommodation, and describe how infants and children develop language.
- List Erickson’s stages of psychosocial development, and explain the roles of temperament and parenting style in emotional and social development.
- Describe Kohlberg’s stages of moral reasoning, and explain why Kohlberg’s theory may have gender and cultural biases.

#### Activities

Unit 3 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 3 Online Lab Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 3 Discussion Assignment 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 3 Discussion Assignment 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 3 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

**Unit 4: Adolescence**

Adolescence is the period of life between childhood and adulthood. It is a time of “storm and stress” for some, but not all, individuals. During adolescence, teens go through puberty and develop the ability to reproduce. They also undergo changes in cognitive skills and moral reasoning. In addition, they typically develop a sense of identity and independence and start relating to their parents and peers in new ways. Many teens adopt risk behaviors that jeopardize their health. Depression and eating disorders are relatively common in teens, as well, and suicide is the third-leading cause of teen deaths. Several factors—such as having caring relationships with adults and a sense of purpose in life—promote high self-esteem and resilience in adolescents. These traits, in turn, help protect adolescents from engaging in risk behaviors and developing mental health problems.

**Learning Objectives**

- Define adolescence, and describe how different experts view this stage of life.
- Describe the physical changes of adolescence and possible consequences of early or late maturation.
- Identify cognitive and moral developments that typically occur during adolescence.
- Define identity, and describe Marcia’s states of identity formation.
- Explain how social relationships normally change during adolescence, and describe peer pressure.
- Identify risk behaviors that many adolescents adopt, and explain how adolescents may learn behaviors from other teens.
- Name mental health problems that are relatively common in adolescents, and identify warning signs of suicide.
- List protective factors for adolescents, and explain how the factors relate to self-esteem and resilience.

**Activities**

Unit 4 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 4 Online Lab Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 4 Discussion Assignment 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 4 Discussion Assignment 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 4 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

**Unit 4: Adolescence (Continued)**

**Midterm Exam Objectives**

- Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
- Take a course exam based on material from the first four units in this course (Note: You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

**Midterm Exam Activities**

Midterm Discussion	Discussion	5 points
Midterm Exam	Exam	50 points

### Unit 5: Adulthood and Aging

Adulthood is the period of life between adolescence and death. Most psychologists think that psychological development continues during adulthood. For example, Erik Erikson divided adulthood into three stages, each with a different psychosocial task that people must accomplish to become emotionally healthy and well-adjusted. During young adulthood (ages 19–39), people are physically in the prime of their lives. Young adults face new challenges, such as finishing their schooling and starting full-time work. Many young adults also marry. During middle adulthood (ages 40–65), people start to show some declines in physical abilities, and women lose the ability to have children. Some middle adults have a hard time accepting these changes. During late adulthood (above age 65), people continue to decline in physical abilities and start to decline in cognitive abilities. Facing their own death or the death of a loved one is difficult for virtually everyone. Most people go through five stages of grief as they come to accept these losses.

#### Learning Objectives

- Define adulthood, and outline psychological theories of adult development.
- Identify life challenges and physical changes of young adulthood, and list strategies for making young adulthood the best it can be.
- State how people choose spouses, why couples divorce, and how divorce affects couples and their children.
- Identify physical changes and life challenges of middle adulthood, and list strategies to make middle age a great age.
- Describe physical and cognitive changes of late adulthood, and list strategies for making late adulthood healthy and happy.
- Explain how people come to accept their own death or the death of a loved one.

#### Activities

Unit 5 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 5 Online Lab Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 5 Discussion Assignment 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 5 Discussion Assignment 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 5 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

### **Unit 6: Brain, Body, and Behavior**

The nervous system is the body’s control system. It receives and processes information and “tells” the body how to respond. Neurons are the cells of the nervous system. They rapidly send and receive messages called nerve impulses. The brain is the most important organ of the nervous system. It is composed of three major parts: the cerebrum, cerebellum, and brain stem. Each part of the brain has different functions. Scientists learn about the functions of the brain from patients that have had brain injuries or brain surgery and from brain images such as PET scans. The endocrine system is a communication system like the nervous system. It uses chemical messengers called hormones to communicate with other organs and regulate body functions. The endocrine system is controlled by the hypothalamus, which is part of the brain. The nervous and endocrine systems are the biological basis of psychological traits such as intelligence. Psychologists study twins and adopted children to learn about the influence of heredity and environment on psychological traits.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Distinguish between the central and peripheral nervous systems, and identify their functions.
- Describe the structure of neurons, and explain how neurons carry nerve impulses.
- Distinguish between the parts of the brain, and identify their functions.
- Explain how scientists study the structure and function of the brain.
- Describe the endocrine system, and explain how the hypothalamus provides a link between the nervous and endocrine systems.
- Explain how psychologists study the influences of heredity and environment on psychological traits.

#### **Activities**

Unit 6 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 6 Online Lab Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 6 Discussion Assignment 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 6 Discussion Assignment 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 6 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

### **Unit 7: Sensation and Perception**

Sensation is the process of taking in information with the five senses of vision, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Perception is the process of interpreting this sensory information. Perception is an additional step that our brain takes to understand the data we gather about the world. It is very different from mere sensation. For example, our eyes sense the world as two-dimensional images, but we perceive the world in three dimensions. Optical illusions show that we sometimes perceive sensations incorrectly. We may see things that are not really there. Subliminal messages show that we sometimes fail to perceive sensations entirely. We may not see things that are really there. Many people believe in extrasensory perception, or the ability to perceive with a sixth, unknown sense. However, extrasensory perception has never been proven to exist.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Describe how humans sense stimuli.
- Explain how perception differs from sensation.
- Outline aspects of visual perception, such as depth perception.
- Describe the nature of subliminal messages.
- Define extrasensory perception.

#### **Activities**

Unit 7 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 7 Online Lab Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 7 Discussion Assignment 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 7 Discussion Assignment 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 7 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

### Unit 8: State of Consciousness

A state of consciousness is the type of mental condition a person is experiencing at a given time. States of consciousness include states of intense concentration and daydreams. Sleep is also a state of consciousness. Sleep occurs in phases that repeat throughout the night. Dreams occur during the phase of sleep called rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. Both sleep and dreams are needed for normal functioning. States of consciousness can be intentionally altered, or changed, through hypnotism, meditation, or biofeedback. Psychoactive drugs, such as alcohol and marijuana, also alter states of consciousness.

#### Learning Objectives

- Define consciousness and altered states of consciousness.
- Describe the sleep cycle, and explain why humans need sleep.
- State the nature of dreams, and list possible reasons that people dream.
- Describe hypnosis, meditation, and biofeedback.
- Identify categories of psychoactive drugs, and describe their effects.

#### Activities

Unit 8 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 8 Online Lab Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 8 Discussion Assignment 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 8 Discussion Assignment 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 8 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

**Unit 8: State of Consciousness (Continued)**

**Final Exam Objectives**

- Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
- Take a course exam based on material from units five to eight in this course – the last four units.  
(Note: You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

**Final Exam Activities**

Class Reflection Discussion	Discussion	10 points
Final Exam	Exam	50 points

### **HOW YOU WILL BE GRADED**

**For critical thinking questions**, there are no right or wrong answers. For example, a question on your thoughts on why you think people are shy is a pretty open-ended type of question. Grades will be based on the depth of personal insight you present. **Do not simply agree or disagree** with an insight question. We are looking for critical thinking and possibly a related personal experience with the question.

**It is important to provide detailed answers for insight/opinion questions.**

**For review questions**, you should produce a more academic answer. For example, "What two categories are norms divided into?" This type of direct question requires a specific answer. Please use full sentences and proper grammar.

**When submitting paragraphs**, use these guidelines.

1. The first, second or last sentence contains the main idea and key words from the question or assigned topic.
2. Paragraph contains one to three explanatory sentences.
3. Paragraph contains two to four sentences about specific details related to question.
4. Details are colorful, interesting and appropriate.
5. Paragraph ends with a good closing sentence that refers to the main idea without repeating it.
6. Free of spelling and grammatical errors.

### **GRADE SCALE**

The following grading scale will be used to determine your final letter grade.

Letter Grade	Percentage Earned
A	95%+
A-	90% - 94.9%
B+	87% - 89.9%
B	84% - 86.9%
B-	80% - 83.9%
C+	77% - 79.9%
C	74% - 76.9%
C-	70% - 73.9%
D+	67% - 69.9%
D	64% - 66.9%
D -	60% - 63.9%
F	59% and lower

## **SUPPORT**

At NUVHS you will have access to multiple support teams. Who you contact will depend on the questions you have. Always start by contacting your teacher through the Message Center in the course. Your teacher should be able to answer your question, but if they can't, then they will direct you to another support team. If you have questions about any of the course content, your grades, or course policies, you should contact your instructor.

For questions about your enrollment, transcripts, or general school-wide policies, you can contact **NUVHS Student Services** at [info@nuvhs.org](mailto:info@nuvhs.org) or by phone at 866.366.8847. For example, if you would like to withdraw from your course, you should contact Student Services. Please note that a refund for your course can only be obtained if you drop within the first seven days of enrolling in the course.

For help with login/password issues, or other technical issues specific to the Blackboard website, you can contact the team at [National University Blackboard Learn](#). They can also be reached by phone at (888) 892-9095.

## **EXPECTED SCHOOL-WIDE LEARNING RESULTS (ESLRs)**

### **Engaged Learners**

- Demonstrate self-directed learning skills such as time management, and personal responsibility through the completion of course requirements
- Develop an understanding of their own preferred learning styles to enhance their overall academic potential
- Incorporate effective and relevant internet and multimedia resources in their learning process to broaden their knowledge base

### **Critical Thinkers**

- Effectively analyze and articulate sound opinions on a variety of complex concepts
- Illustrate a variety of problem-solving strategies that strengthen college preparation and workforce readiness
- Formulate a framework for applying a variety of technology and internet-based research to enhance information literacy and collaborative thinking

### **Effective Communicators**

- Demonstrate awareness and sensitivity to tone and voice in multiple forms of communication
- Express concepts and ideas in a variety of forms
- Enhance communication skills through the use of media rich or other technology resources

**Global Citizens**

- Appreciate the value of diversity
- Understand the range of local and international issues facing today's global community
- Demonstrate awareness of the importance of cultural sensitivity and social responsibility in the 21st century