



St John's Curriculum Overview – Year 13



Subject title	Psychology
Setting arrangements	Mixed prior attainment
Time allowance each fortnight	9 hours

Introduction
Psychology at St Johns is studied at A-Level only. We cover the AQA specification (7182).

Topics, Skills and Assessment covered during the course

Term Topic	Subject Specific topic Questions	Subject content	Assessment details
Term 1 into 2	How are relationships formed and maintained?	<p>RELATIONSHIPS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evolutionary explanations for partner preferences, including the relationship between sexual selection and human reproductive behaviour. Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: self-disclosure; physical attractiveness, including the matching hypothesis; filter theory, including social demography, similarity in attitudes and complementarity. Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's investment model of commitment, satisfaction, comparison with alternatives and investment. Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown: intra-psychic, dyadic, social and grave dressing phases. Virtual relationships in social media: self-disclosure in virtual relationships; effects of absence of gating on the nature of virtual relationships. Parasocial relationships: levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation. 	<p>1 x internal End of Unit – exam conditions using past paper Qs</p> <p>2 x short assessments (e.g. essay question, short answer Qs)</p>

<p>Term 1 into 2</p>	<p>How can we explain aggression in humans?</p>	<p>AGGRESSION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neural and hormonal mechanisms in aggression, including the roles of the limbic system, serotonin and testosterone. Genetic factors in aggression, including the MAOA gene. • The ethological explanation of aggression, including reference to innate releasing mechanisms and fixed action patterns. Evolutionary explanations of human aggression. • Social psychological explanations of human aggression, including the frustration-aggression hypothesis, social learning theory as applied to human aggression, and de-individuation. • Institutional aggression in the context of prisons: dispositional and situational explanations. • Media influences on aggression, including the effects of computer 	<p>1 x internal End of Unit – exam conditions using past paper Qs 2 x short assessments (e.g. essay question, short answer Qs)</p>
<p>Term 2 into 3</p>	<p>What mathematical methods do Psychologists used to describe and analyse data collected from research carried out?</p>	<p>RESEARCH METHODS (part 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative and qualitative data; the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. • Primary and secondary data, including meta-analysis. • Descriptive statistics: measures of central tendency – mean, median, mode; calculation of mean, median and mode; measures of dispersion; range and standard deviation; calculation of range; calculation of percentages; positive, negative and zero correlations. • Presentation and display of quantitative data: graphs, tables, scattergrams, bar charts, histograms. • Distributions: normal and skewed distributions; characteristics of normal and skewed distributions. • Analysis and interpretation of correlation, including correlation coefficients. • Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal and interval. • Content analysis and coding. Thematic analysis. • Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test. • Probability and significance: use of statistical tables and critical values in interpretation of significance; Type I and Type II errors. • Factors affecting the choice of statistical test, including level of measurement and experimental design. When to use the following tests: Spearman’s rho, Pearson’s r, Wilcoxon, Mann- 	<p>1 x internal End of Unit – exam conditions using past paper Qs 2 x short assessments (e.g. essay question, short answer Qs)</p>

		<p>Whitney, related t-test, unrelated t-test and Chi-Squared test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correlations. Analysis of the relationship between co-variables. The difference between correlations and experiments. • Content analysis. <p>Case studies.</p>	
Term 2 into 3	How can biology explain our behaviour?	<p>BIOPSYCHOLOGY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic). • The structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons. The process of synaptic transmission, including reference to neurotransmitters, excitation and inhibition. • The function of the endocrine system: glands and hormones. • The fight or flight response including the role of adrenaline. • Localisation of function in the brain and hemispheric lateralisation: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language centres; Broca's and Wernicke's areas, split brain research. Plasticity and functional recovery of the brain after trauma. • Ways of studying the brain: scanning techniques, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI); electroencephalogram (EEGs) and event-related potentials (ERPs); post-mortem examinations. • Biological rhythms: circadian, infradian and ultradian and the difference between these rhythms. The effect of endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers on the sleep/wake cycle. 	<p>1 x internal End of Unit – exam conditions using past paper Qs 2 x short assessments (e.g. essay question, short answer Qs)</p>
Term 3 into 4	What different perspectives do psychologists use to explain behaviour? Is their one right way?	<p>ISSUES AND DEBATES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and culture in psychology – universality and bias. Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias; cultural bias, including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. • Free will and determinism: hard determinism and soft determinism; biological, environmental and psychic determinism. The scientific emphasis on causal explanations. • The nature-nurture debate: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour; the interactionist approach. • Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation in psychology. Biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism. 	<p>1 x internal End of Unit – exam conditions using past paper Qs 2 x short assessments (e.g. essay question, short answer Qs)</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation. • Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity. 	
Term 3 into 4	How can we explain where stress comes from and its impact on us as individuals?	STRESS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The physiology of stress, including general adaptation syndrome, the hypothalamic pituitary-adrenal system, the sympathomedullary pathway and the role of cortisol. • The role of stress in illness, including reference to immunosuppression and cardiovascular disorders. • Sources of stress: life changes and daily hassles. Workplace stress, including the effects of workload and control. • Measuring stress: self-report scales (Social Readjustment Ratings Scale and Hassles and Uplifts Scale) and physiological measures, including skin conductance response. • Individual differences in stress: personality types A, B and C and associated behaviours; hardiness, including commitment, challenge and control. • Managing and coping with stress: drug therapy (benzodiazepines, beta blockers), stress inoculation therapy and biofeedback. Gender differences in coping with stress. The role of social support in coping with stress; types of social support, including instrumental, emotional and esteem support. 	1 x internal End of Unit – exam conditions using past paper Qs 2 x short assessments (e.g. essay question, short answer Qs)
Term 5	Revision of all content: see topics above for this year and Year 12 document for others reviewed.		Complete mock examinations 1 x 2 hour paper and 1 x 40 minute paper
Term 6	Students are taking external examinations for the two-year full A – Level course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paper 1 (2 hours) – Memory, Social influence, Attachment & Psychopathology - Paper 2 (2 hours) – Approaches, Research methods (double weighted), Biopsychology - Paper 3 (2 hours) – Issues & Debates, Relationships, Stress & Aggression 		

Resources Recommended for Revision and where they are available:

- All power points and handout resources (including revision mats and revision summaries) are uploaded on to show my homework regularly.
- Revision guides are available from the library but students are encouraged to produce their own revision resources as they go.
- Use of past paper questions on the AQA website
- Lunch time revision sessions run in term 5.

Homework

Expected time allocation for the subject = 3.5 hours per week

Additional support and help for the course

Extra-C . . .

Rebecca Gordon of King's College, London - Memory talk at St John's