



# St John's Curriculum Overview – Year 13



<b>Subject title</b>	<b>Psychology</b>
Setting arrangements	Mixed prior attainment
Time allowance each fortnight	9 hours

<b>Introduction</b>
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
<b>Term 1 into 2</b>	How are relationships formed and maintained?	<p><b>RELATIONSHIPS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evolutionary explanations for partner preferences, including the relationship between sexual selection and human reproductive behaviour.</li> <li>• Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: self-disclosure; physical attractiveness, including the matching hypothesis; filter theory, including social demography, similarity in attitudes and complementarity.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Virtual relationships in social media: self-disclosure in virtual relationships; effects of absence of gating on the nature of virtual relationships.</li> <li>• Parasocial relationships: levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation.</li> </ul>	1 x internal End of Unit – exam conditions using past paper Qs 2 x short assessments (e.g. essay question, short answer Qs)

<p><b>Term 1 into 2</b></p>	<p>How can we explain aggression in humans?</p>	<p><b>AGGRESSION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neural and hormonal mechanisms in aggression, including the roles of the limbic system, serotonin and testosterone. Genetic factors in aggression, including the MAOA gene.</li> <li>• The ethological explanation of aggression, including reference to innate releasing mechanisms and fixed action patterns. Evolutionary explanations of human aggression.</li> <li>• Social psychological explanations of human aggression, including the frustration-aggression hypothesis, social learning theory as applied to human aggression, and de-individuation.</li> <li>• Institutional aggression in the context of prisons: dispositional and situational explanations.</li> <li>• Media influences on aggression, including the effects of computer</li> </ul>	<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><b>Term 2 into 3</b></p>	<p>What mathematical methods do Psychologists used to describe and analyse data collected from research carried out?</p>	<p><b>RESEARCH METHODS (part 2):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative and qualitative data; the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques.</li> <li>• Primary and secondary data, including meta-analysis.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Presentation and display of quantitative data: graphs, tables, scattergrams, bar charts, histograms.</li> <li>• Distributions: normal and skewed distributions; characteristics of normal and skewed distributions.</li> <li>• Analysis and interpretation of correlation, including correlation coefficients.</li> <li>• Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal and interval.</li> <li>• Content analysis and coding. Thematic analysis.</li> <li>• Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test.</li> <li>• Probability and significance: use of statistical tables and critical values in interpretation of significance; Type I and Type II errors.</li> <li>• 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-</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>• Correlations. Analysis of the relationship between co-variables. The difference between correlations and experiments.</li> <li>• Content analysis.</li> </ul> <p>Case studies.</p>	
<b>Term 2 into 3</b>	How can biology explain our behaviour?	<p><b>BIOPSYCHOLOGY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic).</li> <li>• The structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons. The process of synaptic transmission, including reference to neurotransmitters, excitation and inhibition.</li> <li>• The function of the endocrine system: glands and hormones.</li> <li>• The fight or flight response including the role of adrenaline.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Ways of studying the brain: scanning techniques, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI); electroencephalogram (EEGs) and event-related potentials (ERPs); post-mortem examinations.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>Term 3 into 4</b>	What different perspectives do psychologists use to explain behaviour? Is their one right way?	<p><b>ISSUES AND DEBATES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender and culture in psychology – universality and bias. Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias; cultural bias, including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.</li> <li>• Free will and determinism: hard determinism and soft determinism; biological, environmental and psychic determinism. The scientific emphasis on causal explanations.</li> <li>• The nature-nurture debate: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour; the interactionist approach.</li> <li>• Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation in psychology. Biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism.</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>• Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation.</li> <li>• Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity.</li> </ul>	
<b>Term 3 into 4</b>	How can we explain where stress comes from and its impact on us as individuals?	<b>STRESS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The physiology of stress, including general adaptation syndrome, the hypothalamic pituitary-adrenal system, the sympathomedullary pathway and the role of cortisol.</li> <li>• The role of stress in illness, including reference to immunosuppression and cardiovascular disorders.</li> <li>• Sources of stress: life changes and daily hassles. Workplace stress, including the effects of workload and control.</li> <li>• Measuring stress: self-report scales (Social Readjustment Ratings Scale and Hassles and Uplifts Scale) and physiological measures, including skin conductance response.</li> <li>• Individual differences in stress: personality types A, B and C and associated behaviours; hardiness, including commitment, challenge and control.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	1 x internal End of Unit – exam conditions using past paper Qs 2 x short assessments (e.g. essay question, short answer Qs)
<b>Term 5</b>	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
<b>Term 6</b>	Students are taking external examinations for the two-year full A – Level course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paper 1 (2 hours) – Memory, Social influence, Attachment &amp; Psychopathology</li> <li>- Paper 2 (2 hours) – Approaches, Research methods (double weighted), Biopsychology</li> <li>- Paper 3 (2 hours) – Issues &amp; Debates, Relationships, Stress &amp; Aggression</li> </ul>		

### **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-Curricular:**

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