



A-LEVEL – YEAR 13 – PSYCHOLOGY – CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	
Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	
This is our first option topic for paper 3, the only unit that is purely year 2 content. I chose this as I have taught it for many years, and it is a popular option which both Upton and Wirral Girls also teach (makes cross marking easier) I also think it is important in a boys' school to consider issues around gender identity, challenge stereotypes and think holistically about differential treatment of males and females in society. 4.3.3 Gender - Sex and gender. Sex-role stereotypes. Androgyny and measuring androgyny including the Bem Sex Role Inventory. - The role of chromosomes and hormones (testosterone, oestrogen and oxytocin) in sex and gender. Atypical sex chromosome patterns: Klinefelter's syndrome and Turner's syndrome. - Cognitive explanations of gender development, Kohlberg's theory, gender identity, gender stability and	Our second option is Schizophrenia, so we return to Psychopathology. Again, I have taught SZ in various guises over many years, and it is a popular topic nationally. 4.3.5 Schizophrenia - Classification of schizophrenia. Positive symptoms of schizophrenia, including hallucinations and delusions. Negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including speech poverty and avolition. Reliability and validity in diagnosis and classification of schizophrenia, including reference to co-morbidity, culture and gender bias and symptom overlap. - Biological explanations for schizophrenia: genetics and neural correlates, including the dopamine hypothesis. - Psychological	Aggression is our last option – I have also taught this topic over the years. I know forensic psychology is also popular, but it is a huge topic and aggression is more manageable. I always feel that the part of forensic psychology that students want to explore is the violence and aggression anyway! 4.3.8 Aggression - 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	Issues and debates is our final topic. This is mandatory and is what used to be known as the synoptic unit, drawing on examples and illustrations from across the two years to consider the big questions – nature or nurture? Free will or determinism? Holism or reductionism? It is often the topic students struggle with (especially those who are not natural philosophers) There is much debate about whether to teach this at the start or the end of year 2. If taught early, students can use the debates to evaluate and discuss the other topics. If taught at the end, students can draw on topics they have covered to inform the debates. I choose a compromise; I provide students with their debates topic booklet to read over the summer, and then I make clear I expect to see these debates creeping into their evaluation throughout year 2. 4.3 Issues and options in Psychology 4.3.1 Issues and debates in Psychology Gender and culture in Psychology – universality and bias. Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha	Easter onwards is revision time – we start with unit 3, then move onto 2, then 1. Revision timetable available on request!!	



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gender constancy; gender schema theory. • Psychodynamic explanation of gender development, Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Oedipus complex; Electra complex; identification and internalisation. • Social learning theory as applied to gender development. The influence of culture and media on gender roles. • Atypical gender development: gender dysphoria; biological and social explanations for gender dysphoria.	explanations for schizophrenia: family dysfunction and cognitive explanations, including dysfunctional thought processing. • Drug therapy: typical and atypical antipsychotics. • Cognitive behaviour therapy and family therapy as used in the treatment of schizophrenia. Token economies as used in the management of schizophrenia. • The importance of an interactionist approach in explaining and treating schizophrenia; the diathesis-stress model. Research Methods 4.2.3.3 Inferential testing Students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of inferential testing and be familiar with the use of inferential tests.	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 games. The role of desensitisation, disinhibition and cognitive priming.	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. • Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation. • Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity.		
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	• Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test. When to use the sign test; calculation of 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-Whitney, related t-test, unrelated t-test and Chi-Squared test.		Research Methods • The implications of psychological research for the economy. • Reliability across all methods of investigation. Ways of assessing reliability: test-retest and inter-observer; improving reliability. • Types of validity across all methods of investigation: face validity, concurrent validity, ecological validity and temporal validity. Assessment of validity. Improving validity. • Features of science: objectivity and the empirical method; replicability and falsifiability; theory construction and hypothesis testing; paradigms and paradigm shifts. • Reporting psychological investigations. Sections of a scientific report: abstract, introduction,		
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			method, results, discussion and referencing.		
In year two we cover the remainder of the Research Methods unit, as well as two practical investigations that require students to put their RM knowledge to good use by designing, conducting and analysing their own research. Although not required as such, many centres do this as it allows students to really understand the process, reflect on how science works, and prepares them for undergraduate study.					
Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	
Short answer exam questions Application questions Application essay End of topic test RM practical 1 RM test	Short answer exam questions Application questions Application essay End of topic test RM test Mocks 1	Short answer exam questions Application questions Application essay End of topic test RM practical 2 RM test	Short answer exam questions Application questions Application essay End of topic test RM test Mocks 2	Short answer exam questions Application questions Application essay End of topic test RM test Final exams	