Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

PSYCHOLOGY
ATAR YEAR 11

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Disclaimer

Any resources such as texts, websites and so on that may be referred to in this document are provided as examples of resources that teachers can use to support their learning programs. Their inclusion does not imply that they are mandatory or that they are the only resources relevant to the course

Sample course outline

Psychology – ATAR Year 11

Semester 1 – Unit 1 – Biological and lifespan psychology

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below. For named theorists in this unit (Piaget, Bowlby), students should demonstrate an understanding of:

- the specified characteristics and features of their theory
- the strengths and limitations of their theory
- the application of their theory to a real-world context.

For designated studies in this unit (Harlow, 1958; Ainsworth, 1978), students should demonstrate an understanding of:

- the aim of the study
- the method used in the study
- the key findings of the study
- the contribution of the study to psychology
- criticisms/limitations of the study (e.g. findings, methods or ethics).

The purpose of including studies is to explicitly link the process of Science inquiry to the development of psychological theory. Students are not expected to read or memorise published studies written for post-graduate publications. Age-appropriate sources and teacher instruction ensure that the key information listed for studies is provided.

Science inquiry and psychological knowledge and understanding are intrinsically linked. Science inquiry skills are common to both Unit 1 and Unit 2 and are incorporated into all learning and assessment activities.

Week	Key teaching points

1	**Science Inquiry**
	Ethical guidelines and practices for psychological research
	• the role of ethics/ethical guidelines in psychological research
	  ▪ role of ethics committee approval and monitoring of conduct for all psychological research
	Communicating
	• use appropriate psychological terminology
	• acknowledge sources of information using appropriate referencing
	Biological psychology
	• structural organisation of the nervous system
	  ▪ central nervous system – brain and spinal cord
	  ▪ peripheral nervous system – somatic and autonomic
	• role of the functional divisions of the peripheral nervous system
	  ▪ autonomic – sympathetic and parasympathetic
	  ▪ somatic – sensory and motor

Week	Key teaching points
2–4	**Biological psychology** • features of neurons ▪ structure and function of the neuron – dendrites, soma/cell body, axon, axon terminals, myelin sheath ▪ functions of sensory, motor and interneurons • neural transmission ▪ direction of transmission ▪ electro-chemical signal ▪ role of the synapse ▪ role of neurotransmitters • location, structure and function of the brain ▪ hindbrain – medulla, cerebellum ▪ midbrain – reticular formation ▪ forebrain – hypothalamus, thalamus ▪ cerebral cortex ○ left and right hemispheres – contralateral control of the body ○ corpus callosum ○ lobes of the brain – frontal, parietal, temporal, occipital ○ localisation of functions – Broca's area, Wernicke's area, pre-frontal cortex, primary motor cortex, primary sensory cortex, primary auditory cortex, primary visual cortex **Science inquiry – Formulating research** • identify the aim/s of the research • develop a research question based on the aim/s • identify variables – independent, dependent, control, extraneous • construct/formulate a hypothesis and/or inquiry question ▪ directional and non-directional hypothesis (quantitative) ▪ inquiry questions (qualitative)
5–6	**Biological psychology** • historical research on the structure and function of the brain ▪ Phineas Gage – case study illustrating localisation of lobe function ▪ Roger Sperry (1959–1968) – role of the corpus callosum using split-brain experiments ▪ Walter Freeman (1936–1945) – role of the pre-frontal cortex using frontal lobotomy • applications of contemporary methods to improve knowledge of brain structure and function ▪ electroencephalogram (EEG) ▪ computed tomography (CT) ▪ magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) ▪ functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) **Science inquiry** **Ethical guidelines and practices for psychological research** • understand and apply ethical guidelines and practices related to human participants ▪ protection from harm – physical and psychological ▪ informed consent ▪ withdrawal rights

Week	Key teaching points
	▪ deception ▪ confidentiality ▪ privacy ▪ voluntary participation ▪ debriefing • use of animals in research ▪ replacement, reduction, refinement **Methodology** • types of research designs – application, method, strengths and limitations ▪ experimental (control and experimental group) and non-experimental ▪ observational ▪ case study • selection of participants ▪ identification of sample and population ▪ methods to sample participants – application, method, strengths and limitations ○ convenience sampling ○ snowballing • variables ▪ independent ▪ dependent ▪ control ▪ extraneous – participant, environment, researcher ▪ confounding **Task 1: Science inquiry (research) – Biological psychology and Science inquiry**
7–8	**Lifespan psychology** • developmental stages across the lifespan – prenatal, infancy, childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle age, older age ▪ changes across developmental stages ○ physical (gross and fine motor skills) ○ cognitive (language) ○ social and emotional development • role of brain plasticity in infancy and adolescent development ▪ adaptive and developmental plasticity ▪ infancy ○ stages of plasticity – proliferation, migration, circuit formation, synaptic pruning, myelination ▪ adolescence ○ effect of changes in brain structures on behaviour and emotion – cerebellum, amygdala, corpus callosum, frontal lobe ○ effect of changes in frontal lobe development on behaviour and emotion – pre-frontal cortex **Science inquiry** **Methodology** • selection of participants ▪ methods to sample participants – application, method, strengths and limitations

Week	Key teaching points
	○ random sampling ○ stratified sampling • allocation of participants – application, method, strengths and limitations ▪ random allocation
9	**Science inquiry** **Methodology** • types of research designs – application, method, strengths and limitations ▪ correlational ▪ longitudinal ▪ cross-sectional **Data collection** • types of data ▪ qualitative data ▪ quantitative data • methods of data collection – application, strengths and limitations ▪ qualitative ○ interviews – focus group and individual; structured, semi-structured ○ open-ended survey ▪ quantitative ○ objective physiological measures – heart rate, breathing rate, galvanic skin response (GSR) ○ subjective measures – checklists and rating scales, such as Likert scales ▪ mixed methods – data collection may be a combination of qualitative and quantitative data • differences between subjective and objective data **Task 2: Response (Test) – Biological psychology and Science inquiry**
10–12	**Lifespan psychology** • domains of development ▪ theory of cognitive development – Piaget (1936) ○ process of schema formation – assimilation, accommodation, equilibrium and disequilibrium ○ stages and developmental changes - sensorimotor – object permanence - pre-operational – egocentrism, animism, symbolic thinking, centration, seriation - concrete operational – conservation - formal operational – abstract thinking ○ use of Piagetian tasks to determine developmental changes - invisible displacement - three mountains - conservation - pendulum problem

Week	Key teaching points

	Science inquiry
	
	Methodology
	• sources and effects of extraneous variables and confounding variables
	  ▪ experimenter effect
	  ▪ demand characteristics
	• minimise the effects of extraneous and confounding variables
	  ▪ random allocation of participants
	  ▪ single-blind procedures
	  ▪ standardisation of procedures and instructions
	
	Processing and analysing data
	• construct and interpret data displays
	  ▪ graphs – scatterplot, bar, column, line, histogram
	  ▪ tables – summary, frequency
	• calculate and interpret the mean and median as measures of central tendency
	• interpret Pearson's correlation coefficient as a measure of strengths and direction of linear relationships
	
	Drawing conclusions
	• evidence-based conclusions consistent with psychological evidence and relevant to the research question
	
	Evaluation of research
	• application and use of the concept of validity as a measure of evaluating research
	• application and use of the concept of reliability as a measure of evaluating research
	• generalisability of sample to the population
	• suggest relevant improvements to address limitations of research
	• ethical implications
	• critical evaluation of information from a range of scientific sources
	
	Task 3: Science inquiry (practical) – Lifespan psychology and Science inquiry

13–14	**Lifespan psychology**
	• theories of social and emotional development – attachment
	  ▪ study: emotion over physiological needs with Rhesus monkeys (Harlow, 1958)
	  ▪ theory of attachment – Bowlby (1969, 1988)
	  ○ definition of attachment
	  ○ evolutionary perspective
	  ○ monotropy, critical and sensitive periods, maternal deprivation, internal working model
	  ▪ study: Strange situation to measure attachment (Ainsworth, 1978)
	  ○ Type A – insecure avoidant attachment
	  ○ Type B – secure attachment
	  ○ Type C – insecure resistant attachment
	  ▪ findings about cross cultural patterns of attachment according to van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988)'
	  ▪ impact of enriched and deprived environments on development
	  ○ case study – wild/feral child, such as Genie, the wild child

Week	Key teaching points
15	Unit 1 Revision
16	**Task 4: Semester 1 Examination – Unit 1 content (2.5 hours)**

Semester 2 – Unit 2 – Attitudes, stereotypes and social influence

This unit builds on the content covered in Unit 1.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

For named theorists in this unit (Festinger; Tajfel and Turner), students should demonstrate an understanding of:

- the specified characteristics and features of their theory
- the strengths and limitations of their theory
- the application of their theory to a real-world context.

For designated studies in this unit (Festinger and Carlsmith, 1959; Sherif et al., 1961; Milgram, 1963; Asch, 1951; Latane and Darley, 1968), students should demonstrate an understanding of:

- the aim of the study
- the method used in the study
- the key findings of the study
- the contribution of the study to psychology
- criticisms/limitations of the study (e.g. findings, methods or ethics).

The purpose of including studies is to explicitly link the process of Science inquiry to the development of psychological theory. Students are not expected to read or memorise published studies written for post-graduate publications. Age-appropriate sources and teacher instruction ensure that the key information listed for studies is provided.

Science inquiry and psychological knowledge and understanding are intrinsically linked. Science inquiry skills are common to both Unit 1 and Unit 2 and are incorporated into all learning and assessment activities.

Week	Key teaching points

1–2	**Attitudes and stereotypes**
	• function of attitudes – implicit and explicit
	• tripartite model of attitude structure – affective, behavioural, cognitive
	• effect of attitudes on behaviour
	  ▪ theory of cognitive dissonance – Festinger
	  ▪ effect of cognitive dissonance on behaviour – avoidance, reduction, rationalisation
	  ▪ magnitude as a factor affecting cognitive dissonance
	  ▪ responses to cognitive dissonance – change beliefs, change behaviour, change perception of the action
	  ▪ study: Cognitive consequences of forced compliance (Festinger and Carlsmith, 1959)
	Science Inquiry
	Ethical guidelines and practices for psychological research
	• the role of ethics/ethical guidelines in psychological research
	  ▪ the role of ethics committee approval and monitoring of conduct for all psychological research
	Communicating
	• use appropriate psychological terminology

Week	Key teaching points

	• acknowledge sources of information using appropriate referencing
	
	Methodology
	• variables
	  ▪ independent
	  ▪ dependent
	  ▪ control
	  ▪ extraneous – participant, environment, researcher
	  ▪ confounding
	• sources and effects of extraneous variables and confounding variables
	  ▪ experimenter effect
	  ▪ demand characteristics
	• minimise the effects of extraneous and confounding variables
	  ▪ random allocation of participants
	  ▪ single-blind procedures
	  ▪ standardisation of procedures and instructions

3–4	**Attitudes and stereotypes**
	• attribution theory to explain behaviour
	  ▪ situational and dispositional attributions
	• social identity theory – Tajfel and Turner (1979)
	  ▪ social categorisation, social identification, social comparison
	• stereotypes as a form of social categorisation
	  ▪ function of stereotypes
	• relationship between attitudes, prejudice and discrimination
	  ▪ distinguish between prejudice and discrimination
	  ▪ direct and indirect discrimination
	  ▪ examples of prejudice and discrimination in society – gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, mental illness
	  ▪ causes of prejudice – social influence, intergroup competition, social categorisation, just world phenomenon
	  ▪ reducing prejudice – contact hypothesis including intergroup contact; superordinate goals, mutual interdependence, equal-status contact
	  ▪ study: Robbers Cave experiment (Sherif et al., 1961)
	
	Science inquiry
	
	Ethical guidelines and practices for psychological research
	• understand and apply ethical guidelines and practices related to human participants
	  ▪ protection from harm (physical and psychological)
	  ▪ informed consent
	  ▪ withdrawal rights
	  ▪ deception
	  ▪ confidentiality
	  ▪ privacy
	  ▪ voluntary participation
	  ▪ debriefing
	• use of animals in research
	  ▪ replacement, reduction, refinement

Week	Key teaching points

	Formulating research
	• identify the aim/s of the research
	• develop a research question based on the aim/s
	• identify variables (independent, dependent, control, extraneous)
	• construct/formulate a hypothesis or inquiry question
	  ▪ directional and non-directional hypothesis (quantitative)
	  ▪ inquiry questions (qualitative)
	
	Methodology
	• types of research designs – application, method, strengths and limitations
	  ▪ experimental (control and experimental group) and non-experimental
	  ▪ observational
	  ▪ case study
	  ▪ correlational
	  ▪ longitudinal
	  ▪ cross-sectional
	• selection of participants
	  ▪ identification of sample and population
	  ▪ methods to sample participants – application, method, strengths and limitations
	  o convenience sampling
	  o snowballing
	  o random sampling
	  o stratified sampling
	• allocation of participants – application, method, strengths and limitations
	  ▪ random allocation

5	**Science inquiry**
	
	Data collection
	• types of data
	  ▪ qualitative data
	  ▪ quantitative data
	• methods of data collection – application, strengths and limitations
	  ▪ qualitative
	  o interviews – focus group and individual; structured, semi-structured
	  o open-ended survey
	  ▪ quantitative
	  o objective physiological measures – heart rate, breathing rate, galvanic skin response (GSR)
	  o subjective measures – checklists and rating scales, such as Likert scales
	  ▪ mixed methods – data collection may be a combination of qualitative and quantitative data
	• differences between subjective and objective data
	
	Processing and analysing data
	• construct and interpret data displays
	  ▪ graphs – scatterplot, bar, line, histogram
	  ▪ tables – summary, frequency

Week	Key teaching points
	• calculate and interpret the mean and median as measures of central tendency • interpret Pearson's correlation coefficient as a measure of strength and direction of linear relationships **Drawing conclusions** • evidence-based conclusions consistent with psychological evidence and relevance to the research question **Evaluation of research** • application and use of the concept of validity as a measure of evaluating research • application and use of the concept of reliability as a measure of evaluating research • generalisability of sample to the population • suggest relevant improvements to address limitations of research • ethical implications • critical evaluation of information from a range of scientific sources
6	**Task 5: Science inquiry (practical) – Attitudes and stereotypes and Science inquiry**
7	**Social influences** • social influence theory (Kelman, 1958) ▪ compliance ▪ identification ▪ internalisation • obedience ▪ social response to authority ▪ study: Behavioural study of obedience (Milgram, 1963) • conformity ▪ factors affecting conformity – normative and informational influence, culture, group size, unanimity, deindividuation, social loafing ▪ study: Line judgment task (Asch, 1951)
8–10	**Social influences** • antisocial behaviour in response to social influence ▪ factors influencing antisocial behaviour – diffusion of responsibility, audience inhibition, social influence, cost–benefit analysis, groupthink ▪ concept of bystander effect ▪ study: Group inhibition of bystander intervention in emergencies – smoke filled room (Latane and Darley, 1968) ▪ bullying as an example of antisocial behaviour
11	**Task 6: Response (Test) – Attitudes and stereotypes, Social influences and Science inquiry**
12–13	**Social influences** • prosocial behaviour in response to social influence ▪ factors influencing prosocial behaviour – reciprocity principle, social responsibility, personal characteristics (empathy, mood, competence), altruism ▪ helping as an example of prosocial behaviour
14	**Task 7: Response (Scenario-based analysis) – Social influences and Science inquiry – prosocial and antisocial behaviour**
15	Unit 2 Revision

Week	Key teaching points
16	**Task 8: Semester 2 Examination – Unit 1 and 2 content (3 hours)**