

School administrators and Heads of Learning Area – Science and teachers of Psychology ATAR Year 11 are requested to note for 2025 the following courses that have minor syllabus changes. These syllabuses are now available on course pages and labelled as 'For teaching from 2025'.

Psychology | ATAR Year 11 | Summary of minor syllabus changes for 2025

The content identified by ~~strike through~~ has been deleted from the syllabus and the content identified in *italics* has been revised in the syllabus for teaching from 2025.

Unit 1

Psychological knowledge and understanding

Lifespan psychology

- developmental stages across the lifespan – ~~prenatal~~, infancy, childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle age, older age
- role of ~~brain neural~~ plasticity in ~~infancy and adolescent~~ development *through the lifespan*
 - adaptive and developmental plasticity
 - ~~infancy~~
 - stages of plasticity – proliferation, migration, ~~circuit formation~~ *synaptogenesis*, synaptic pruning, myelination
 - ~~adolescence~~
 - effect of changes in brain structures on ~~behaviour and emotion~~ *during adolescence* – cerebellum, amygdala, corpus callosum, *and pre-frontal lobe cortex*
 - ~~effect of changes in frontal lobe development on behaviour and emotion~~ – *pre-frontal cortex*
- domains of development
 - theory of cognitive development – Piaget (1936)
 - stages and developmental changes
 - sensorimotor – object permanence
 - pre-operational – egocentrism, animism, symbolic thinking, centration, ~~seriation~~
 - concrete operational – conservation, *seriation*
 - formal operational – abstract thinking

Science inquiry

Formulating research

- ~~develop a research question based on the aim/s~~
- identify variables – ~~independent, dependent, control, extraneous~~
 - *independent*
 - *dependent*
 - *control*
 - *extraneous* – *participant, environment, researcher*
 - *confounding*

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*

- ~~variables~~

- ~~independent~~
- ~~dependent~~
- ~~control~~
- ~~extraneous – participant, environment, researcher~~
- ~~confounding~~

- sources and effects of extraneous variables and confounding variables
 - *placebo effect*
 - experimenter effect
 - demand characteristics
- minimise the effects of extraneous and confounding variables
 - random allocation of participants
 - *use of a placebo*
 - *single-blind and double-blind* procedures
 - standardisation of procedures and instructions

Data collection

- subjective measures – ~~checklists and~~ rating scales, such as Likert scales

Processing and analysing data

- graphs – scatterplot, ~~bar~~, column, line, histogram

Drawing conclusions

- evidence-based conclusions consistent with psychological evidence and relevant to the ~~research question~~ *hypothesis or inquiry question*

Evaluation of research

- application and use of the concept of validity as a measure of evaluating research
 - *internal validity*
 - *external validity*
- application and use of the concept of reliability as a measure of evaluating research
 - *test-retest reliability*
 - *inter-rater reliability*

Unit 2

Unit content

For designated studies in this unit (Festinger and Carlsmith, 1959; Sherif et al., ~~1961~~1954; Milgram, 1963; Asch, 1951; Latane and Darley, 1968), students should demonstrate an understanding of:

Psychological knowledge and understanding

Attitudes and stereotypes

- effect of attitudes on behaviour
 - theory of cognitive dissonance – Festinger
 - ~~responses to~~ ways cognitive dissonance *is reduced* – change beliefs, change behaviour, change perception of the action
- attribution theory to explain behaviour
 - situational and dispositional attributions
 - *fundamental attribution error*
 - *self-serving bias and group-serving bias*
- relationship between attitudes, prejudice and discrimination
 - study: Robbers Cave experiment (Sherif et al., ~~1961~~ 1954)

Social influences

- conformity
 - factors affecting conformity – normative and informational influence, culture, group size, unanimity, deindividuation, ~~social loafing~~

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