

Curriculum overview for Psychology HL, DP1, 3mn, 2026/2027

Teacher: V. Lapaine

Unit title / Month	Key concepts	Content	Objectives	Assessment tasks	ATL skills	Links to other subjects
Introduction, research methods and 1 st practical September/October	Psychology Behaviour Mental processes Biological, cognitive and sociocultural approach Goals of psychology Characteristics of science Theory Hypothesis Psychological literacy Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Introduction to psychology, research methods, observations, interviews, surveys, experiments	Outline course objectives, content, assessment and policies. Define psychology. Contrast mental processes and behaviour. Contrast biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to understanding mental processes and behaviours. Outline goals of psychology. Outline areas of applied psychology (contexts). Contrast hypothesis and theory. Outline key components in following the scientific method. Outline psychological literacy. Explain the concept of responsibility in relation to studies. Describe how an observation was applied in your class practical, including the aim and procedure. Compare and contrast an observation used in your class practical with an experiment, interview, survey/questionnaire. Design a study with a different research method to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your observation class practical. Explain the concept of bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility in relation to your observation class practical. Discuss the following study with reference to concepts.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	SOCIAL - COLLABORATION Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument Recognize unstated assumptions and bias Ask open-ended questions SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for	Sciences, Mathematics, English TOK How do we acquire knowledge? What are the main difficulties that human scientists encounter when trying to provide explanations of human behaviour? Is it possible to eliminate the effect of the observer in the pursuit of knowledge in the human sciences? To what extent are the methods used to gain knowledge in the human sciences “scientific”?

					organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Process data and report results Collect, record, and verify data	Are intuition, evidence, reasoning, consensus and authority all equally convincing methods of justification? To what extent are the methods used in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings? How might the beliefs and interests of human scientists influence their conclusions? What forms of protection against research error and bias are available to human scientists? Are observation and
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						experimentation on the only two ways in which human scientists produce knowledge?
Learning and thinking and 2nd practical October/November	Classical conditioning Operant conditioning Animal research Social learning theory Schema theory Cognitive load theory Dual processing model Confirmation bias Anchoring bias Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Thinking Learning Studies by: Garb and Stunkard (1974) Faith et al. (2001) Sprafkin et al. (1975) Nee et al. (2019) Costa et al. (2014) O'Brien (2009) Englich and Mussweiler (2001)	Examples of classical conditioning as a way of learning. The process of classical conditioning and its role in behaviour. Examples of operant conditioning as a way of learning. Application of operant conditioning to change behaviour. The process of operant conditioning and its role in behaviour. The value of animal research in the study of human behaviour and the ethical considerations in the use of animals in research. The role of social learning theory in learning. Application of social learning theory to change behaviour. The application of social learning theory to explain and change behaviour. The role of schema in behaviour and/or cognition. The role of schema theory in understanding a cognitive process. The role of cognitive load theory in understanding human cognition. The value of the dual processing model for understanding thinking and decision-making. The role of the dual processing theory in understanding decision-making. The role of one or more cognitive biases in decision-making. The role of confirmation bias in decision-making. Describe how an experiment was applied in your class practical, including the aim and procedure.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	SOCIAL - COLLABORATION Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument Recognize unstated assumptions and bias SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for	Biology, Economics TOK What shapes my perspective as a knower? To what extent are the methods used to gain knowledge in the human sciences “scientific”? How do our expectations and assumptions have an impact on how we perceive things? As knowers, do we have a moral duty to examine our own assumptions and biases?

			Compare and contrast an experiment used in your class practical with an observation, interview, survey/questionnaire. Design a study with a different research method to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your experiment class practical. Explain the concept of bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility in relation to your experiment class practical. Discuss the following study with reference to concepts. The role of one or more cognitive biases in decision-making. The role of anchoring bias in decision-making.		organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments SELF-MANAGEMENT - AFFECTIVE Practise strategies to overcome distractions RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Process data and report results	How are metaphors used in the construction of knowledge? Do researchers have different ethical responsibilities when they are working with human subjects compared to when they are working with animals?
Cognitive processes November/December	Cognitive models Localization of function Neuroplasticity Techniques used to study the brain Cultural dimensions Enculturation Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Biological factors in cognitive processes Cognitive models Cultural factors in cognitive processes Environmental influences on cognitive processes Potential for improving a	The value of cognitive models to understand one or more cognitive processes. Compare two cognitive models used in understanding one cognitive process. The role of one or more cognitive models in understanding a cognitive process or behaviours. One or more strategies to improve one or more cognitive processes. The role of one or more biological factors in one or more cognitive processes. The role of localization of function in explaining human behaviour and cognition and the limitations of the argument that behaviour is localized. The role of one or more biological factors in one or more cognitive processes The value of using one or more brain imaging techniques in investigating human behaviour.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment:	COMMUNICATION Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to	Biology TOK What role do models play in the acquisition of knowledge in the human sciences? What shapes my perspective as a knower? To what extent are the methods used

		cognitive process Studies by: Erickson et al. (2011) Weber et al. (1998) Mullen and Yi (1995) Berman et al. (2009)	The process of neuroplasticity and the role of environmental factors on brain development. The role of one or more cultural factors in one cognitive process. The role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding cross-cultural similarities and differences in behaviour. The role of one or more cultural factors in one cognitive process. One theory of enculturation for one or more behaviours. The potential influence of one or more environmental factors on one cognitive process. Discuss bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility..	unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	formulate an argument SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments SELF-MANAGEMENT - REFLECTIVE Identify strengths and weaknesses of personal learning strategies Develop new skills, techniques and strategies for effective learning Demonstrate flexibility in the selection and use of learning strategies Consider personal	to gain knowledge in the human sciences “scientific”? Does our culture determine what we know? How are metaphors used in the construction of knowledge?
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					learning strategies RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Use memory techniques to develop long-term memory	
Group behaviour January/February	Acculturation Social identity theory Conformity Compliance techniques Cultural dimensions Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Group behaviour (Compliance, Conformity, Social loafing, Discrimination, Prosocial behaviour) Studies by: Simpkins et al. (2013) Monteiro et al. (2008) Sherman et al. (2016) Cialdini et al. (1975) Gabrenya et al. (1985)	Different acculturation strategies and their effect on behaviour and mental health. The application of one or more acculturation models to explain the experience of immigrants, refugees or other people taking an extended stay in another culture. The application of social identity theory to explain and change group behaviour(s). The application of social identity theory to change or explain behaviour. The role of conformity in understanding group behaviour(s). The process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour. The application of one or more compliance techniques to change group behaviour(s). The role of one or more compliance techniques in changing human behaviour. The application of social learning theory to change group behaviour(s). The application of social learning theory to explain and change behaviour. The role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding group behaviour(s). The role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding cross-cultural similarities and differences in behaviour.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc.	SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATION Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments COMMUNICATION Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks	TOK Is it possible to eliminate the effect of the observer in the pursuit of knowledge in the human sciences?

Interpersonal relationships and 3rd practical February/March	Neurotransmission Chemical messengers Schema theory Communication Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Interpersonal relationships (Social relationships, Conflicts, Aggression) Studies by: Berman et al. (2009) Grossmann et al. (2010) Borbely et al. (2005) Gordon et al. (2012)	One strategy for improving interpersonal relationships. Describe how a survey/questionnaire was applied in your class practical, including the aim and procedure. Compare and contrast a survey/questionnaire used in your class practical with an observation, interview, experiment. Design a study with a different research method to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your survey/questionnaire class practical. Explain the concept of bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility in relation to your survey/experiment class practical. Discuss the following study with reference to concepts. The role of one or more chemical messengers in interpersonal relationships. The role of one or more chemical messengers in human behaviour. The process of neurotransmission. One or more cognitive explanations for interpersonal relationships. The role of schema in behaviour and/or cognition. The role of communication in interpersonal relationships. Discuss bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	COMMUNICATION Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks SOCIAL - COLLABORATION Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams Listen actively to other perspectives and ideas THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for organizing	Biology, Chemistry, English TOK Is it possible to eliminate the effect of the observer in the pursuit of knowledge in the human sciences? To what extent can polls provide reliable knowledge and accurate predictions? How are metaphors used in the construction of knowledge? What are the main difficulties that human scientists encounter when trying to provide explanations of human behaviour? To what extent are the methods used
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					complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Process data and report results Collect, record, and verify data COMMUNICATION Interpret and use modes of non-verbal communication effectively	in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings? How might the language used in polls and questionnaires influence the conclusions that are reached?
Mental health disorders March/April	Biological explanations Cognitive models Cultural differences Environmental factors Biological treatment Psychological treatment Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement,	Genetic inheritance Diathesis-stress model Cognitive model Cultural dimensions Biological reductionism Emic approach Etic approach Neurotransmission Chemical messengers Classical conditioning studies by:	One or more biological explanations of one mental health disorder. The extent to which human behaviour may be inherited. The role of environmental factors in understanding/explaining mental health disorders. The interaction of environment factors and genetics in human behaviour. The value of cognitive models in understanding a mental health disorder. The role of one or more cognitive models in understanding a cognitive process or behaviours. Factors that may explain the difference in prevalence rates for mental health disorders between cultures and/or populations.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc.	SELF-MANAGEMENT - AFFECTIVE Practise being aware of body–mind connections Practise analysing and attributing causes for failure Practise strategies to deal with	Biology, Chemistry TOK What role do models play in the acquisition of knowledge in the human sciences? What are the main difficulties that human scientists

	perspective, responsibility)	Kendler et al. (2006) Hilsman and Garber (1995) Arrindell et al. (2003) Sugnet et al. (2021) Caspi et al. (2003) Zhong et al. (2024) Garlington and Cotler (1968)	Examples of cultural differences in approaches to mental health. The role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding cross-cultural similarities and differences in behaviour. The strengths and limitations of a reductionist approach to the study of behaviour. The limitations of etic approaches to researching human behaviour. The value of emic approaches in researching human behaviour. The explanation and effectiveness of one or more biological treatments of one or more mental health disorders. The role of one or more chemical messengers in human behaviour. The process of neurotransmission. The explanation and effectiveness of one or more psychological treatments of one or more mental health disorders. The process of classical conditioning and its role in behaviour. .	Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	pressure, stress and anxiety Practise managing self-talk Practise positive thinking	encounter when trying to provide explanations of human behaviour? To what extent are the methods used in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings? Does our culture determine what we know?
Health problems and 4th practical May/June	Social learning theory Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Social learning and health Study by: Monroe (2004)	The role of social learning theory in understanding one or more health problems. Describe how an interview or focus group was applied in your class practical, including the aim and procedure. Compare and contrast an interview or focus group used in your class practical with an observation, survey/questionnaire, experiment. Design a study with a different research method to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your interview or focus group class practical. Explain the concept of bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility in relation your interview or focus group class practical. Discuss the following study with reference to concepts.	Formative assessment: misconceptions on checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc.	SOCIAL - COLLABORATION Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information	TOK How might the beliefs and interests of human scientists influence their conclusions? What forms of protection against research error and bias are available to

				Summative assessment: unit exam and final exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	from multiple sources to formulate an argument SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATION AL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Process data and report results Collect, record, and verify data	human scientists?
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Unit title / Month	Key concepts	Content	Objectives	Assessment tasks	ATL skills	Links to other subjects
HL extensions September/October	Bar graph Box and whisker plot Distributions Frequency table Histogram Line graph Outliers Scatterplot Descriptive statistics Inferential statistics Correlational studies Correlation coefficient Quasi experiments	Data analysis and interpretation Role of culture, motivation and technology on human behaviour	Outline course objectives, content, assessment and policies. Think critically about data analysis and interpretation in psychological research and everyday claims. Understand that data is represented and analysed in different forms based on the design of the study and the nature of the data. Analyse and interpret frequency tables and histograms. Explain issues that limits the interpretation of the data in frequency tables and histograms. Analyse and interpret results of typical measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and measures of dispersion (range, semi-interquartile range, standard deviation). Understand that data is represented and analysed in different forms based on the design of the study and the nature of the data. Analyse and interpret bar charts, line graphs and box and whisker plots. Explain issues that limits the interpretation of data in bar charts, line graphs and box plots. Analyse and interpret results of typical tests of difference between two groups or conditions. Understand the notions of effect size and statistical significance. Analyse and interpret scatter plots. Explain issues that limits the interpretation of the data in scatter plots. Analyse and interpret results of tests of relationship between two variables (correlation coefficients). Understand the notions of effect size and statistical significance. The advantages and disadvantages of different research methods.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	COMMUNICATION Understand and use mathematical notation Use and interpret a range of discipline-specific terms and symbols THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument Interpret data Consider ideas from multiple perspectives Draw reasonable conclusions and generalizations Evaluate evidence and arguments Develop contrary or opposing arguments	Mathematics, Sciences, Economics, Languages TOK What constitutes a “good reason” for us to accept a claim? What are the main difficulties that human scientists encounter when trying to provide explanations of human behaviour? To what extent are the methods used in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying

			The role of external variables in drawing conclusions about causality. The advantages and disadvantages of different research methods. The role of external variables in drawing conclusions about causality.		Differentiate between causality and correlation RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Use critical literacy skills to analyse and interpret media communications	human beings? How can we know if language is intended to deceive or manipulate us? How are unethical practices, such as “data dredging”, used by statisticians to deliberately manipulate and mislead people? What steps can we take to help ourselves avoid being misled by statistics used in unclear or disingenuous ways in the media? How does the use of numbers, statistics, graphs and other quantitative
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						instruments affect the way knowledge in the human sciences is valued? To what extent can the human sciences use mathematical techniques to make accurate predictions?
Internal assessment November	Research methods Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Problem Citations and references Background research and aim Research method and procedure Ethical considerations Data collection Discussion: Findings Discussion: Bias Discussion: Additional method	The problem is described. Why it is a problem and the effect it has on the population of interest is explained. Student clearly distinguishes between their words and those of others by an appropriate citation that denotes an entry in the bibliography. Findings and conclusions of two pieces of research are made directly relevant to, and focused on, the investigation and are explained. These findings and conclusions are explicitly linked to addressing the real-life problem. The aim or research question is presented in the Introduction, is clear and is focused on the problem experienced by the population of interest. The research method is described, and the choice of research method is explained—the student has said why this research method has been chosen and has justified its use for the investigation. Relevant aspects of the procedure are explained and include justification of choices made depending on the method used (e.g. sampling technique, sample characteristics, design, setting, process).	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: Internal assessment report	COMMUNICATION Paraphrase accurately and concisely Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks THINKING - CRITICAL Recognize unstated assumptions and bias SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Select and use technology	Sciences, Mathematics, English TOK How do we acquire knowledge? What shapes my perspective as a knower? How do our expectations and assumptions have an impact on how we perceive things? As knowers, do we have a

			Relevant ethical considerations are described and their choice as appropriate for the investigation is explained. An appropriate tool for measuring behaviour and collecting data has been developed. An explanation of how it will be effective has been given. The student has justified their decisions made when developing the tool for measuring and collecting the data in relation to the aim or research question of the investigation. Problems or difficulties that might be found when collecting data are explained—stating why the problem may occur. This explanation is relevant to the investigation. The student has described in detail the possible findings of the investigation and has explained how they could be applied to policy/practice. One or more examples of researcher bias that are relevant to the investigation are discussed, with their implications for the investigation made explicit. The student discusses one relevant additional research method and how it could be used to increase the understanding of the problem experienced by the population of interest..		effectively and productively Plan short- and long-term assignments; meet deadlines Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments Revise and improve on work previously submitted RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on their appropriateness to specific tasks Create references and citations, use footnotes/endnotes and construct a bibliography according to recognized conventions Build a keyword search strategy	moral duty to examine our own assumptions and biases? What personal traits (such as taking seriously the knowledge of others) do we need in order to be ethical knowers? In what sense, if any, can a machine be said to know something? How has technology had an impact on how we browse, search and filter data and information? How does computation help people to process data and information to gain knowledge?
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					around your research question to narrow down the search	How might the beliefs and interests of human scientists influence their conclusions? What forms of protection against research error and bias are available to human scientists?
HL extensions December/January	Thematic analysis Researcher and participant biases Reflexivity Transferability Credibility Case studies	Data analysis and interpretation Role of culture, motivation and technology on human behaviour	The process of checking for unconscious bias. Strategies for ensuring the credibility of research. Understand that data is represented and analysed in different forms based on the design of the study and the nature of the data. Understand the stages of thematic analysis to uncover patterns in textual data that are then grouped into themes that are relevant to the aim of research engaging in thematic analysis. The role of reflexivity and the process of checking for unconscious bias. Factors that should be considered when generalizing findings to another population or context. The advantages and disadvantages of different research methods.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	COMMUNICATION Use and interpret a range of discipline-specific terms and symbols THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument Interpret data Draw reasonable conclusions and generalizations	Mathematics , Sciences, Economics TOK What constitutes a “good reason” for us to accept a claim? What shapes my perspective as a knower? How do our expectations and assumptions have an impact on how we

					Consider ideas from multiple perspectives Draw reasonable conclusions and generalizations Evaluate evidence and arguments Develop contrary or opposing arguments RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Use critical literacy skills to analyse and interpret media communications SELF-MANAGEMENT - REFLECTIVE Identify strengths and weaknesses of personal learning strategies THINKING - TRANSFER Reflect on subject matter learned and explored Reflect on competencies in the different ATL skills	perceive things? As knowers, do we have a moral duty to examine our own assumptions and biases? Does our culture determine what we know? How might the beliefs and interests of human scientists influence their conclusions? What forms of protection against research error and bias are available to human scientists?
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					SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Self-assess skill development proficiency by using metacognitive awareness	
Health problems January/February	Prevalence of health problems Stress and health Prevention and/or treatment for one health problem Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Acculturation Cognitive dissonance Operant conditioning Studies by: Ng et al. (2013) Li and Liu (2021) Faith et al. (2001)	The role of stress in one or more health problems. One or more factors that may explain changes in the prevalence of one or more health problems in a population. One or more factors that may explain differences in the prevalence of one or more health problems between populations. The explanation and effectiveness of one or more prevention and/or treatment strategies for one or more health problems. The process of operant conditioning and its role in behaviour. The explanation and effectiveness of one or more prevention and/or treatment strategies for one or more health problems. The role of cognitive dissonance in understanding human behaviour. Discuss bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam and mock exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	COMMUNICATION Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments	TOK How does the use of numbers, statistics, graphs and other quantitative instruments affect the way knowledge in the human sciences is valued? To what extent can the human sciences use mathematical techniques to make accurate predictions?

HL extensions March/April	Validity (internal, external, face, construct) Reliability	Data analysis and interpretatio n Role of culture, motivation and technology on human behaviour	The role of external variables in drawing conclusions about causality. Factors that should be considered when generalizing findings to another population or context.	Formative assessment: misconceptio n checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short- answer and extended- response questions	COMMUNICATIO N Use and interpret a range of discipline-specific terms and symbols THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument Interpret data Consider ideas from multiple perspectives Draw reasonable conclusions and generalizations Evaluate evidence and arguments Develop contrary or opposing arguments RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Use critical literacy skills to analyse and interpret media communications	Mathematics , Sciences, Economics TOK What constitutes a “good reason” for us to accept a claim? How are metaphors used in the construction of knowledge?
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Curriculum overview for Psychology SL, DP1, 3mn, 2026/2027

Teachers: V. Lapaine

Unit title / Month	Key concepts	Content	Objectives	Assessment tasks	ATL skills	Links to other subjects
Introduction, research methods and 1st practical September/October	Psychology Behaviour Mental processes Biological, cognitive and sociocultural approach Goals of psychology Characteristics of science Theory Hypothesis Psychological literacy Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Introduction to psychology, research methods, observations, interviews, surveys, experiments	Outline course objectives, content, assessment and policies. Define psychology. Contrast mental processes and behaviour. Contrast biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to understanding mental processes and behaviours. Outline goals of psychology. Outline areas of applied psychology (contexts). Contrast hypothesis and theory. Outline key components in following the scientific method. Outline psychological literacy. Explain the concept of responsibility in relation to studies. Describe how an observation was applied in your class practical, including the aim and procedure. Compare and contrast an observation used in your class practical with an experiment, interview, survey/questionnaire. Design a study with a different research method to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your observation class practical. Explain the concept of bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility in relation to your observation class practical. Discuss the following study with reference to concepts.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	SOCIAL - COLLABORATION Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument Recognize unstated assumptions and bias Ask open-ended questions SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for organizing	Sciences, Mathematics, English TOK How do we acquire knowledge? What are the main difficulties that human scientists encounter when trying to provide explanations of human behaviour? Is it possible to eliminate the effect of the observer in the pursuit of knowledge in the human sciences? To what extent are the methods used to gain knowledge in the human sciences “scientific”?

					complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Process data and report results Collect, record, and verify data	Are intuition, evidence, reasoning, consensus and authority all equally convincing methods of justification? To what extent are the methods used in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings? How might the beliefs and interests of human scientists influence their conclusions? What forms of protection against research error and bias are available to human scientists? Are observation and
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						experimentation on the only two ways in which human scientists produce knowledge?
Learning and thinking and 2nd practical November/December	Classical conditioning Operant conditioning Animal research Social learning theory Schema theory Cognitive load theory Dual processing theory Confirmation bias Anchoring bias Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Thinking Learning Garb and Stunkard (1974) Faith et al. (2001) Sprafkin et al. (1975) Nee et al. (2019) Costa et al. (2014) O'Brien (2009) Englich and Mussweiler (2001)	Examples of classical conditioning as a way of learning. The process of classical conditioning and its role in behaviour. Examples of operant conditioning as a way of learning. Application of operant conditioning to change behaviour. The process of operant conditioning and its role in behaviour. The value of animal research in the study of human behaviour and the ethical considerations in the use of animals in research. The role of social learning theory in learning. Application of social learning theory to change behaviour. The application of social learning theory to explain and change behaviour. The role of schema in behaviour and/or cognition. The role of schema theory in understanding a cognitive process. The role of cognitive load theory in understanding human cognition. The value of the dual processing model for understanding thinking and decision-making. The role of the dual processing theory in understanding decision-making. The role of one or more cognitive biases in decision-making. The role of confirmation bias in decision-making. Describe how an experiment was applied in your class practical, including the aim and procedure.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	SOCIAL - COLLABORATION Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument THINKING - CRITICAL Recognize unstated assumptions and bias SELF-MANAGEMENT -	Biology, Economics TOK What shapes my perspective as a knower? To what extent are the methods used to gain knowledge in the human sciences “scientific”? How do our expectations and assumptions have an impact on how we perceive things? As knowers, do we have a moral duty to examine our own assumptions and biases?

			Compare and contrast an experiment used in your class practical with an observation, interview, survey/questionnaire. Design a study with a different research method to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your experiment class practical. Explain the concept of bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility in relation to your experiment class practical. Discuss the following study with reference to concepts. The role of one or more cognitive biases in decision-making. The role of anchoring bias in decision-making.		ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments SELF-MANAGEMENT - AFFECTIVE Practise strategies to overcome distractions RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Process data and report results	How are metaphors used in the construction of knowledge? Do researchers have different ethical responsibilities when they are working with human subjects compared to when they are working with animals?
Cognitive processes January/February	Cognitive models Localization of function Neuroplasticity Techniques used to study the brain Cultural dimensions Enculturation Six key concepts (bias, causality,	Biological factors in cognitive processes Cognitive models Cultural factors in cognitive processes Environmental influences	The value of cognitive models to understand one or more cognitive processes. Compare two cognitive models used in understanding one cognitive process. The role of one or more cognitive models in understanding a cognitive process or behaviours. One or more strategies to improve one or more cognitive processes. The role of one or more biological factors in one or more cognitive processes. The role of localization of function in explaining human behaviour and cognition and the limitations of the argument that behaviour is localized.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer	COMMUNICATION Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant	Biology TOK What role do models play in the acquisition of knowledge in the human sciences? What shapes my

	change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	on cognitive processes Potential for improving a cognitive process Erickson et al. (2011) Weber et al. (1998) Mullen and Yi (1995) Berman et al. (2009)	The role of one or more biological factors in one or more cognitive processes The value of using one or more brain imaging techniques in investigating human behaviour. The process of neuroplasticity and the role of environmental factors on brain development. The role of one or more cultural factors in one cognitive process. The role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding cross-cultural similarities and differences in behaviour. The role of one or more cultural factors in one cognitive process. One theory of enculturation for one or more behaviours. The potential influence of one or more environmental factors on one cognitive process. Discuss bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility..	feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam and mock exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	information from multiple sources to formulate an argument SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATION AL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments SELF-MANAGEMENT - REFLECTIVE Identify strengths and weaknesses of personal learning strategies Develop new skills, techniques and strategies for effective learning Demonstrate flexibility in the selection and	perspective as a knower? To what extent are the methods used to gain knowledge in the human sciences “scientific”? Does our culture determine what we know? How are metaphors used in the construction of knowledge?
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					use of learning strategies Consider personal learning strategies RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Use memory techniques to develop long-term memory THINKING - REFLECTION Reflect on learning strategies and its impact on learning success Reflect on previous learning experiences and implement new strategic approaches	
Group behaviour March/April	Acculturation Social identity theory Conformity Compliance techniques Cultural dimensions Six key concepts (bias, causality,	Group behaviour (Compliance, Conformity, Social loafing, Discrimination, Prosocial behaviour)	Different acculturation strategies and their effect on behaviour and mental health. The application of one or more acculturation models to explain the experience of immigrants, refugees or other people taking an extended stay in another culture. The application of social identity theory to explain and change group behaviour(s). The application of social identity theory to change or explain behaviour.	Formative assessment: misconceptions on checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and	SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATION AL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information	TOK Is it possible to eliminate the effect of the observer in the pursuit of knowledge in the human sciences?

	change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Studies by: Simpkins et al. (2013) Monteiro et al. (2008) Sherman et al. (2016) Cialdini et al. (1975) Gabrenya et al. (1985)	The role of conformity in understanding group behaviour(s). The process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour. The application of one or more compliance techniques to change group behaviour(s). The role of one or more compliance techniques in changing human behaviour. The application of social learning theory to change group behaviour(s). The application of social learning theory to explain and change behaviour. The role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding group behaviour(s). The role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding cross-cultural similarities and differences in behaviour.	debates, peer feedback, etc.	Create plans to prepare for summative assessments COMMUNICATION Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks	
Interpersonal relationships and 3 rd practical May/June	Neurotransmission Chemical messengers Schema theory Communication Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Interpersonal relationships (Social relationships, Conflicts, Aggression) Studies by: Berman et al. (2009) Grossmann et al. (2010) Borbely et al. (2005) Gordon et al. (2012)	One strategy for improving interpersonal relationships. Describe how a survey/questionnaire was applied in your class practical, including the aim and procedure. Compare and contrast a survey/questionnaire used in your class practical with an observation, interview, experiment. Design a study with a different research method to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your survey/questionnaire class practical. Explain the concept of bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility in relation to your survey/experiment class practical. Discuss the following study with reference to concepts. The role of one or more chemical messengers in interpersonal relationships. The role of one or more chemical messengers in human behaviour. The process of neurotransmission. One or more cognitive explanations for interpersonal relationships.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam and final exam with short-	COMMUNICATION Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks SOCIAL - COLLABORATION Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams Listen actively to other perspectives and ideas	Biology, Chemistry, English TOK Is it possible to eliminate the effect of the observer in the pursuit of knowledge in the human sciences? To what extent can polls provide reliable knowledge and accurate predictions?

			The role of schema in behaviour and/or cognition. The role of communication in interpersonal relationships. Discuss bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility.	answer and extended- response questions	THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Process data and report results Collect, record, and verify data	How are metaphors used in the construction of knowledge? What are the main difficulties that human scientists encounter when trying to provide explanations of human behaviour? To what extent are the methods used in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings? How might the language used in polls and questionnaires influence the conclusions that are reached?
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Curriculum overview for Psychology SL, DP2, 4mn, 2026/2027

Teachers: V. Lapaine

Unit title / Month	Key concepts	Content	Objectives	Assessment tasks	ATL skills	Links to other subjects
Mental health disorders September/October /November	Biological explanations Cognitive models Cultural differences Environmental factors Biological treatment Psychological treatment Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Genetic inheritance Diathesis-stress model Cognitive model Cultural dimensions Biological reductionism Emic approach Etic approach Neurotransmission Chemical messengers Classical conditioning studies by: Kendler et al. (2006) Hilsman and Garber (1995) Arrindell et al. (2003) Sugnet et al. (2021) Caspi et al. (2003) Zhong et al. (2024) Garlington and Cotler (1968)	One or more biological explanations of one mental health disorder. The extent to which human behaviour may be inherited. The role of environmental factors in understanding/explaining mental health disorders. The interaction of environment factors and genetics in human behaviour. The value of cognitive models in understanding a mental health disorder. The role of one or more cognitive models in understanding a cognitive process or behaviours. Factors that may explain the difference in prevalence rates for mental health disorders between cultures and/or populations. Examples of cultural differences in approaches to mental health. The role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding cross-cultural similarities and differences in behaviour. The strengths and limitations of a reductionist approach to the study of behaviour. The limitations of etic approaches to researching human behaviour. The value of emic approaches in researching human behaviour. The explanation and effectiveness of one or more biological treatments of one or more mental health disorders. The role of one or more chemical messengers in human behaviour. The process of neurotransmission.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	SELF-MANAGEMENT - AFFECTIVE Practise being aware of body–mind connections Practise analysing and attributing causes for failure Practise strategies to deal with pressure, stress and anxiety Practise managing self-talk Practise positive thinking	Biology, Chemistry TOK What role do models play in the acquisition of knowledge in the human sciences? What are the main difficulties that human scientists encounter when trying to provide explanations of human behaviour? To what extent are the methods used in the human sciences limited by the ethical

			The explanation and effectiveness of one or more psychological treatments of one or more mental health disorders. The process of classical conditioning and its role in behaviour.			considerations involved in studying human beings? Does our culture determine what we know?
4th practical and Health problems December	Social learning theory Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Social learning and health Study by: Monroe (2004)	The role of social learning theory in understanding one or more health problems. Describe how an interview or focus group was applied in your class practical, including the aim and procedure. Compare and contrast an interview or focus group used in your class practical with an observation, survey/questionnaire, experiment. Design a study with a different research method to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your interview or focus group class practical. Explain the concept of bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility in relation your interview or focus group class practical. Discuss the following study with reference to concepts.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	SOCIAL - COLLABORATION Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for	TOK How might the beliefs and interests of human scientists influence their conclusions? What forms of protection against research error and bias are available to human scientists?

					summative assessments	
					RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Process data and report results Collect, record, and verify data	
Internal assessment January/February	Research methods Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Problem Citations and references Background research and aim Research method and procedure Ethical considerations Data collection Discussion: Findings Discussion: Bias Discussion: Additional method	The problem is described. Why it is a problem and the effect it has on the population of interest is explained. Student clearly distinguishes between their words and those of others by an appropriate citation that denotes an entry in the bibliography. Findings and conclusions of two pieces of research are made directly relevant to, and focused on, the investigation and are explained. These findings and conclusions are explicitly linked to addressing the real-life problem. The aim or research question is presented in the Introduction, is clear and is focused on the problem experienced by the population of interest. The research method is described, and the choice of research method is explained—the student has said why this research method has been chosen and has justified its use for the investigation. Relevant aspects of the procedure are explained and include justification of choices made depending on the method used (e.g. sampling technique, sample characteristics, design, setting, process). Relevant ethical considerations are described and their choice as appropriate for the investigation is explained. An appropriate tool for measuring behaviour and collecting data has been developed. An explanation of how it will be effective has been given. The student has justified their decisions made when developing the tool for measuring and collecting the data	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: Internal assessment report	COMMUNICATION Paraphrase accurately and concisely Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks THINKING - CRITICAL Recognize unstated assumptions and bias SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Select and use technology effectively and productively Plan short- and long-term assignments; meet deadlines	Sciences, English TOK How do we acquire knowledge? What shapes my perspective as a knower? How do our expectations and assumptions have an impact on how we perceive things? As knowers, do we have a moral duty to examine our own assumptions and biases? What personal

			in relation to the aim or research question of the investigation. Problems or difficulties that might be found when collecting data are explained—stating why the problem may occur. This explanation is relevant to the investigation. The student has described in detail the possible findings of the investigation and has explained how they could be applied to policy/practice. One or more examples of researcher bias that are relevant to the investigation are discussed, with their implications for the investigation made explicit. The student discusses one relevant additional research method and how it could be used to increase the understanding of the problem experienced by the population of interest..		Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments Revise and improve on work previously submitted RESEARCH - INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on their appropriateness to specific tasks Create references and citations, use footnotes/endnotes and construct a bibliography according to recognized conventions Build a keyword search strategy around your research question to narrow down the search	traits (such as taking seriously the knowledge of others) do we need in order to be ethical knowers? In what sense, if any, can a machine be said to know something? How has technology had an impact on how we browse, search and filter data and information? How does computation help people to process data and information to gain knowledge? How might the beliefs and interests of human scientists influence
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						their conclusions? What forms of protection against research error and bias are available to human scientists?
Health problems March/April	Prevalence of health problems Stress and health Prevention and/or treatment for one health problem Six key concepts (bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective, responsibility)	Acculturation Cognitive dissonance Operant conditioning Studies by: Ng et al. (2013) Li and Liu (2021) Faith et al. (2001)	The role of stress in one or more health problems. One or more factors that may explain changes in the prevalence of one or more health problems in a population. One or more factors that may explain differences in the prevalence of one or more health problems between populations. The explanation and effectiveness of one or more prevention and/or treatment strategies for one or more health problems. The process of operant conditioning and its role in behaviour. The explanation and effectiveness of one or more prevention and/or treatment strategies for one or more health problems. The role of cognitive dissonance in understanding human behaviour. Discuss bias/causality/change/measurement/perspective/responsibility.	Formative assessment: misconception checks, worksheets, ungraded quizzes, class discussions and debates, peer feedback, etc. Summative assessment: unit exam with short-answer and extended-response questions	COMMUNICATION Use a variety of organizers for academic writing tasks THINKING - CRITICAL Gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from multiple sources to formulate an argument SELF-MANAGEMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL Use appropriate strategies for organizing complex information Create plans to prepare for summative assessments	TOK How does the use of numbers, statistics, graphs and other quantitative instruments affect the way knowledge in the human sciences is valued? To what extent can the human sciences use mathematical techniques to make accurate predictions?

Psychology, ATL Skills, TOK, CAS and International-Mindedness

Through the study of human behaviour and mental processes, students develop critical thinking, research, communication, collaboration and self-management skills. The course promotes international-mindedness by examining psychological phenomena across diverse cultures and perspectives and by exploring the influence of culture on behaviour and cognition. Connections with TOK encourage students to evaluate evidence, methods and the nature of knowledge in the human sciences. Opportunities for CAS arise through engagement with issues related to mental health, wellbeing, social responsibility and community action. Academic integrity underpins all learning through ethical research practices, responsible use of evidence and appropriate acknowledgement of sources.