



**Online Courses for High School Students**  
1-888-972-6237

## **Personal Psychology I: The Road to Self-Discovery**

Have you ever wondered why you do the things you do? Have you asked yourself if self-knowledge is the key to self-improvement? Are you interested in how behavior changes as we age? Psychology can give you the answers! In Personal Psychology I: The Road to Self-Discovery, you will trace the development of personality and behavior from infancy through adulthood. You will come to learn more about perception and consciousness and better understand the role of sensation. Are you ready to explore the world of human behavior? Come explore all that psychology can offer to help you to truly understand the human experience.

### **Course Highlights**

- Learn more about the ways that we think, act, and believe as humans.
- Explore the life course and what happens at different stages of our lives, from infants to the elderly.
- Travel around the human brain to see what influences our perceptions and sensations.
- Investigate what happens when we sleep and dream.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Course Length:** One Semester

**Required Text:** There are no required textbook for this course.

**Materials List:** There are no required materials for this course.

### **Course Outline**

#### **Unit 1: An Invitation to the World of Psychology**

Psychology is the study of the mind and behavior. Psychologists may carry out research to learn more about these important areas or use their knowledge of psychology to help people with mental and emotional problems. Most psychologists specialize in a particular subfield, such as clinical or school psychology. Some apply psychology to another area, such as law or

sports. Psychology as a distinct field of study began about 130 years ago. Since then, it has undergone many changes. At various times, different approaches were popular.

## **Unit 2: Research & Ethics in Psychology**

Psychologists undertake research in order to increase knowledge in their field and learn better ways to help people. Like other scientists, psychologists use the scientific method, which includes developing and evaluating hypotheses to answer research questions. Research designs used by psychologists include experimental studies, naturalistic studies, surveys, and case studies. Each type of research design has specific advantages and drawbacks.

## **Unit 3: Infancy & Childhood**

Developmental psychology is the study of how people change as they grow older. Psychologists generally study development with longitudinal or cross-sectional studies. A major goal of research is to learn how heredity and the environment influence development. Physical development begins before birth and continues throughout childhood. Children change in size and shape and develop new motor skills. As infants and children grow older, their cognitive abilities also change. They develop new ways of thinking and learning about the world and how to use language.

## **Unit 4: Adolescence**

Adolescence is the period of life between childhood and adulthood. It is a time of “storm and stress” for some, but not all, individuals. During adolescence, teens go through puberty and develop the ability to reproduce. They also undergo changes in cognitive skills and moral reasoning. In addition, they typically develop a sense of identity and independence and start relating to their parents and peers in new ways. Many teens adopt risk behaviors that jeopardize their health. Depression and eating disorders are relatively common in teens, as well, and suicide is the third-leading cause of teen deaths. Several factors—such as having caring relationships with adults and a sense of purpose in life—promote high self-esteem and resilience in adolescents. These traits, in turn, help protect adolescents from engaging in risk behaviors and developing mental health problems.

## **Unit 5: Adulthood and Aging**

Adulthood is the period of life between adolescence and death. Most psychologists think that psychological development continues during adulthood. For example, Erik Erikson divided adulthood into three stages, each with a different psychosocial task that people must accomplish to become emotionally healthy and well-adjusted. During young adulthood (ages 19–39), people are physically in the prime of their lives. Young adults face new challenges, such as finishing their schooling and starting full-time work. Many young adults also marry. During middle adulthood (ages 40–65), people start to show some declines in physical abilities, and women lose the ability to have children. Some middle adults have a hard time accepting these changes. During late adulthood (above age 65), people continue to decline in physical abilities and start to decline in cognitive abilities. Facing their own death or the death

of a loved one is difficult for virtually everyone. Most people go through five stages of grief as they come to accept these losses.

### **Unit 6: Brain, Body, and Behavior**

The nervous system is the body's control system. It receives and processes information and "tells" the body how to respond. Neurons are the cells of the nervous system. They rapidly send and receive messages called nerve impulses. The brain is the most important organ of the nervous system. It is composed of three major parts: the cerebrum, cerebellum, and brain stem. Each part of the brain has different functions. Scientists learn about the functions of the brain from patients that have had brain injuries or brain surgery and from brain images such as PET scans. The endocrine system is a communication system like the nervous system. It uses chemical messengers called hormones to communicate with other organs and regulate body functions. The endocrine system is controlled by the hypothalamus, which is part of the brain. The nervous and endocrine systems are the biological basis of psychological traits such as intelligence. Psychologists study twins and adopted children to learn about the influence of heredity and environment on psychological traits.

### **Unit 7: Sensation and Perception**

Sensation is the process of taking in information with the five senses of vision, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Perception is the process of interpreting this sensory information. Perception is an additional step that our brain takes to understand the data we gather about the world. It is very different from mere sensation. For example, our eyes sense the world as two-dimensional images, but we perceive the world in three dimensions. Optical illusions show that we sometimes perceive sensations incorrectly. We may see things that are not really there. Subliminal messages show that we sometimes fail to perceive sensations entirely. We may not see things that are really there. Many people believe in extrasensory perception, or the ability to perceive with a sixth, unknown sense. However, extrasensory perception has never been proven to exist.

### **Unit 8: State of Consciousness**

A state of consciousness is the type of mental condition a person is experiencing at a given time. States of consciousness include states of intense concentration and daydreams. Sleep is also a state of consciousness. Sleep occurs in phases that repeat throughout the night. Dreams occur during the phase of sleep called rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. Both sleep and dreams are needed for normal functioning. States of consciousness can be intentionally altered, or changed, through hypnotism, meditation, or biofeedback. Psychoactive drugs, such as alcohol and marijuana, also alter states of consciousness.