



A level Psychology

Who is this course for?

Psychology is a great choice if you have a genuine interest in learning a scientific approach to understanding human behaviour. Although Psychology is a fascinating subject it demands a thorough, logical and rigorous understanding of methodology which can be used to evaluate human behaviour. Most of our students have not studied GCSE Psychology at school but many of our students do go on to study Psychology at University. A level Psychology offers a great combination for studying many other A levels. Some of our students are studying mainly science programmes and many others take a more social science route. Psychology is also suited to study alongside a set of contrasting subjects such as the Humanities, Languages and the Arts but it is important that you are able to take a logical and scientific approach to understanding behaviour if you wish to study A level Psychology.

What are the entry criteria

Most students aiming to start A level Psychology will have achieved at least B grades in GCSE Science, Maths and English, In addition the average of your main GCSE's will be 5.6 or above. We do consider students who have scores below 5.6 if they have performed well in Science subjects.

The Psychology department at Wyke Sixth Form College

The Psychology department has four dedicated teaching rooms in the Wilson Building which are close to our staff workroom. It is therefore easy to contact a Psychology teacher if you need extra support. We also provide our

timetables on the Psychology notice board so that Psychology students know where to find us and can see if we have a non-teaching slot.

All students receive a booklet for each of the four units in A level Psychology. You will have to bring to every class a ring binder where you can organise extra handouts such as past papers and mark schemes.

To facilitate your independent learning the Psychology department makes good use of interactive online learning resources. In particular we have our own Psychology web site dedicated to the A level course which includes a regularly updated blog providing extra resources and the opportunity to talk to other A level Psychology students at Wyke.

We have a very experienced team of Psychology teachers and most are or have been external examiners for A level Psychology.

The Psychology staff team is:

Mike Belcher

Sharon Brown (Monitor of AS progress)

Jamie Davies

Kim Higgins (Monitor of A2 progress)

Mark Holah (Course Leader)

Exam Board

At Wyke we use the EDEXCEL A level specification. This consists of 4 units.

Course Details

AS (Y12)

Unit 1 – Social and Cognitive Psychology

This unit is designed to introduce the social approach and cognitive approach to Psychology through the development of key content areas.

Within each part, the sections of the unit arise from the content which includes a selection of basic concepts of the social and the cognitive approaches.

Within each approach there is the requirement for students to conduct a short practical investigation.

Assessment will include an examination paper of 1 hour 20 minutes duration, consisting of a section of objective test items, a section of short-answer questions and a section of extended writing.

Unit 1 is taught in the autumn term and examined in January of Y12

Unit 2 – Understanding the Individual

This unit is designed to introduce the psychodynamic, biological and learning approach.

This unit aims to develop your understanding of psychological issues of development, individual difference and biology through the study of these approaches.

Within each approach there is the requirement for students to conduct a short practical investigation.

Assessment will include an examination paper of 1 hour 40 minutes duration, consisting of a section of objective test items, a section of short-answer questions and a section of extended writing.

Unit 2 is taught in the spring term and examined in June of Y12.

A2 (Y13)

Unit 3 – Applications of Psychology

The aim of this unit is to enable you to study how Psychology can be applied to the real world. Each of the two applications within this unit is related to vocational contexts in which a Psychology graduate (with the appropriate training) may operate. In this sense, the unit is intended to further contextualise and make real the understanding of approaches. There is a focus on evaluation, assessment, application and comment as well as on knowledge.

The two applications you will study are Criminological Psychology and Health Psychology.

Assessment will consist of an examination paper of 1 hour 30 minutes duration. Both options will consist of short-answer questions and a section of extended writing.

Unit 3 is taught in the autumn term and examined in January of Y13.

Unit 4 – How Psychology Works

This unit involves studying aspects of clinical Psychology, which looks at, amongst other issues, how the different approaches studied in Units 1: Social

and Cognitive Psychology and Unit 2: Understanding the Individual explain and treat mental health issues.

Applications of Psychology, methodological issues are also considered. There is a focus, too, on How Science Works.

The unit assessment consists of a single 2 hour examination. The examination paper will be divided into two sections, a and b, one focusing on clinical Psychology and one focusing on issues and debates. Each section will contain short-answer questions and a section of extended writing.

Unit 4 is taught in the spring term and examined in June of Y13

How the course is delivered

You will have one teacher for your first year although the department does operate as a team and you will be encouraged to ask any one of the 5 teachers for help.

During your second year you will have two teachers.

Although the course is taught and you will get the opportunity to complete group work in the classroom you will be expected to carry out independent research and learning.

It is worth noting here that very few of the students starting A level Psychology will have studied Psychology at GCSE level and therefore lessons will reflect this.

Departmental Enrichment

AS Psychology is a popular A level at Wyke it is problematic organising trips out of college because of the number of students on course, therefore we arrange for a number of speakers to visit the department. In recent years we have had visits from prison psychologists, health workers, ex-prisoners and principal examiners.

The department offers lunchtime exam clinics and holiday intensive revision days as well as lots of additional help in-between lessons and by email and via our web site smartpsych.co.uk

Student success

The department has helped many students achieve excellent grades and move on to higher education. Below are details of two such students:

Keisha Bentley

Former School:

Newland School for Girls

A level Psychology result:

Grade A*

Where is she now?

University of Nottingham
Studying BSc Psychology and
Cognitive Neuroscience

Hannah Cottrell

Former School:

Wolfreton

A level Psychology result:

Grade A*

Where is she now?

Northumbria University
Studying BSc Psychology

What does this course lead to

Having A level Psychology can open up a world of opportunities in both university choices and career options. If you are considering applying to university to study Psychology then A level Psychology is very desirable. A level Psychology is also desirable if you would like to study a health science, social science such as criminology, or a sport science.

We believe that Psychology will provide you with a set of critical thinking skills that you will be able to draw upon through your further studying and your life.

What can I do now that would help prepare me for this course?

As you will have probably never studied Psychology at school before, we do recommend that you visit our departmental Psychology website at www.smartpsych.co.uk

Smartpsych will give you a much more detailed description about what we actually do in A level Psychology. Hopefully it will demonstrate that A level Psychology is a very challenging and rigorous course which offers great insights into why people behave the way they do.

For the more challenging areas of Psychology you should read about the Experimental Method as it is used in Psychology here www.smartpsych.co.uk/cognitive-how-science-works and if you would like to be fascinated by Psychology you should read here <http://www.smartpsych.co.uk/unit-1/obedience>