## Sample course outline

**Psychology – ATAR Year 12**

**Unit 3 and Unit 4**

### Semester 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Key teaching points</th>
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| **1** | **Introduction to psychology**  
• course structure  
• school assessment policy  
• planning and conducting psychological research  
  ▪ research terminology  
  ▪ ethics in psychology research |
| **2–4** | **Self: Biological influences/bases of behaviour**  
• structure and function of the nervous system  
• process of neural transmission  
• roles of the four lobes of the cerebral cortex  
• factors that affect behaviour, emotion and thought, including heredity, hormones, psychoactive drugs  
**Task 1:** Topic test – Biological influences/bases of behaviour |
| **5–8** | **Self: Cognition**  
• theories and processes of learning  
• techniques for modifying behaviour  
• psychological concepts and processes associated with memory and their relationship to behaviour  
  ▪ multi-store model of memory – Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968  
  ▪ sensory register  
• psychological concepts and processes associated with memory and their relationship to behaviour  
  ▪ short-term memory (working memory)  
  ▪ long-term memory  
  ▪ recall, recognition, re-learning  
  ▪ forgetting: retrieval failure, interference, motivated forgetting, decay  
**Task 2:** Training manual for the family pet – Cognition: learning and behaviour modification |
| **9–11** | **Research methods:** planning and conducting psychological research  
• practical issues associated with planning and conducting research  
• difference between sample and population data  
• features of experimental research methods  
**Research methods:** processing and evaluating psychological research  
• methods of displaying quantitative data – tables, graphs and diagrams  
• data interpretation  
• the concept of statistical significance  
**Task 3:** Examining short-term memory through the serial position effect – an ethically approved investigation based on syllabus content related to cognition  
Other suitable investigations that have been ethically approved:  
• do mnemonic devices improve memory?  
• factors impacting the recall of long-term memories |
| **12–13** | **Others: Relational influences**  
• types of solutions to resolve conflict  
• techniques for resolving conflict  
• socialisation processes observed within families  
**Task 4:** Topic test – Relational influences |
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| 14   | **Others: Communication**  
  • communication styles  
  • features of persuasive communication  
  • features and limitations of theories of language development  
  **Task 5:** In-class essay – Communication |
| 15   | **Task 6:** Semester 1 Examination |

**Semester 2**

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| 1–4  | **Self: Developmental psychology**  
  • stages and characteristics of developmental theories  
  • features of Bandura’s Social Learning Theory  
  **Task 7:** Topic test – Developmental psychology |
| 5–7  | **Self: Personality**  
  • features and limitations of contemporary personality theories  
  **Task 8:** Presentation – Personality |
| 8–9  | Revise research methods from Unit 3  
  **Research methods:** planning and conducting psychological research  
  • features of non-experimental (descriptive) research methods  
  • qualitative methods of data collection  
  • objective quantitative measures in research – physiological measures  
  • subjective quantitative measures in research – checklists and rating scales, such as Likert scales  
  **Research methods:** processing and evaluating psychological research  
  • use of correlation to establish association between variables  
  • sources of error in data and ways of reducing these  
  • evaluation of and ways of improving research  
  **Task 9:** Examining the relationship between personality and participation in sport – an ethically approved investigation based on syllabus content related to personality  
  Other suitable investigations that have been ethically approved:  
  • the influence of birth order on personality  
  • measuring and examining cognitive and behavioural aspects of assertiveness |
| 10–12| **Others: Social psychology**  
  • the influence of groups on behaviour  
  • theories of social psychology  
  **Task 10:** Topic test – Social psychology |
| 13–14| **Others: Culture and values**  
  • sense of community, as defined by McMillan and Chavis  
  • impact of significant events on individuals and communities  
  **Task 11:** In-class essay – Culture and values |
| 15   | **Task 12:** Semester 2 Examination |