CAISL
Carlucci American International School of Lisbon

**INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY**

**THEMES AND CONTENT**

Introduction to Psychology

- Define psychology and identify its goals as a science.
- Describe the emergence of psychology as a scientific discipline and explain why it is sometimes called a "soft science".
- Identify and explain the major approaches in psychology by which behavior is usually explained.
- Describe the major subfields of psychology and their role in society.

Research Methods and Ethics

- Identify the main research methods used into studying human behavior scientifically.
- Understand the parameters of ethical research into human behavior.
- Understand some basic concepts of data collection and data analysis.
- Evaluate research into human behavior, by assessing its validity and reliability.

The Stages of Your Life

- Identify the stages of cognitive, psycho-social, and moral development as presented by Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg.
- Analyze the research methods of each of the above theorists as to validity and reliability.
- Analyze alternate theories which have developed to enhance or contradict the original stage theorists.
- Evaluate the arguments surrounding the "nature vs nurture" debate.

You as an Individual in the Biophysical Domain

- Assess the interplay between the physical and the psychological aspects of individuals in the areas of motivation and emotion, stress, and sensation and perception.

*Motivation*

- Distinguish between primary and secondary motivations.
- Explain and apply the theories of secondary motivation, including achievement, approval, exploratory, arousal.
- Apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
- Define drive reduction.
- Distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

*Emotion*

- Define an emotion.
- Identify different types of emotions.

- Describe theories of emotion including James Lange, Cannon Bard and Singer Schacther.

*Stress*

- Identify and explain the major sources of stress.
- Analyze the positive and negative uses of Defense Mechanisms to control stress.
- Describe Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS).
- Identify ways individuals commonly use to control stress.
- Analyze the positive and negative impact of a variety of ways individuals attempt to control stress.
- Explain and give examples of approach-approach, approach-avoidance, and avoidance-avoidance conflicts.

*Sensation and Perception*

- Define and distinguish between sensation and perception.
- Define attention as it relates to sensation and perception.
- Analyze the validity of multitasking.
- Explain the concepts of threshold, adaptation, and constancy.
- Explain optical illusions.
- Explain Gestalt concepts and principles, such as figure-ground, continuity, similarity, proximity, closure.
- Analyze the factors that influence the validity of eyewitness testimony.

You as an Individual in the Cognitive Domain

- Analyze how our *learning*, our *memory* and our *intelligence* are impacted by our own actions and by environmental factors.

*Learning*

- Define learning.
- Define cognitive learning and describe its components.
- Explain positive learning, transference, and negative learning.
- Define and give examples of learned helplessness.
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of massed versus distributed practice.
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of whole versus partial learning.
- Explain the following learning techniques: Mnemonic device, Overlearning, Chunking.
- Describe the classical conditioning paradigm.
- Describe counterconditioning and avoidance conditioning.
- Discuss Skinner's contributions to popularizing behaviorism.
- Describe the operant conditioning paradigm.
- Describe examples of learning by observation, such as Bandura's bobo doll study.