

A Comprehensive Information Resource

By David Webb

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INTRODUCTION



A very warm welcome to the Psychology Student Survival Guide, my name is David Webb and I've had a passionate interest in psychology for over 20 years. I began studying psychology in 1990, and I've been teaching psychology in some capacity or another since 1998. In March 2008 I launched a website designed for anybody looking for informed and detailed information on psychology.

ALL-ABOUT-PSYCHOLOGY.COM

www.all-about-psychology.com

A primary aim of the website is to make psychology accessible and open to all, and from day one it has sought to embrace the spirit of web 2.0. Web 2.0 links people, it's a place where people contribute, share, collaborate and learn.

By drawing on the very best that the website has to offer, the Psychology Student Survival Guide is offered with this same spirit very much in mind.

The Thinking Behind The Guide

In putting the Psychology Student Survival Guide together, I've kept one main thought in mind; namely, if I was to go through my psychology education again - beginning when I first started considering studying the topic, right through to graduation and beyond - what information and resources would I most like to have at my disposal?

The primary aim of the Psychology Student Survival Guide, therefore, is to provide an easy to use online reference tool that people can use to quickly locate the information they require.

Finding Your Way Around



(Photo Credit: Graham Alsop)

I've attempted to organize the information as logically as possible by presenting material chronologically as far as the timeline of a typical psychology student is concerned (general interest, undergraduate, graduate).

I've also included a detailed contents section at the beginning of the guide to help people quickly establish where the information they're after is most likely to be found.

I sincerely hope that you find the Psychology Student Survival Guide useful and engaging whatever your connection with the subject; student, educator, professional or general interest.

All the very best,

David Webb.

www.all-about-psychology.com

www.all-about-forensic-psychology.com

www.all-about-forensic-science.com

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Psychologists

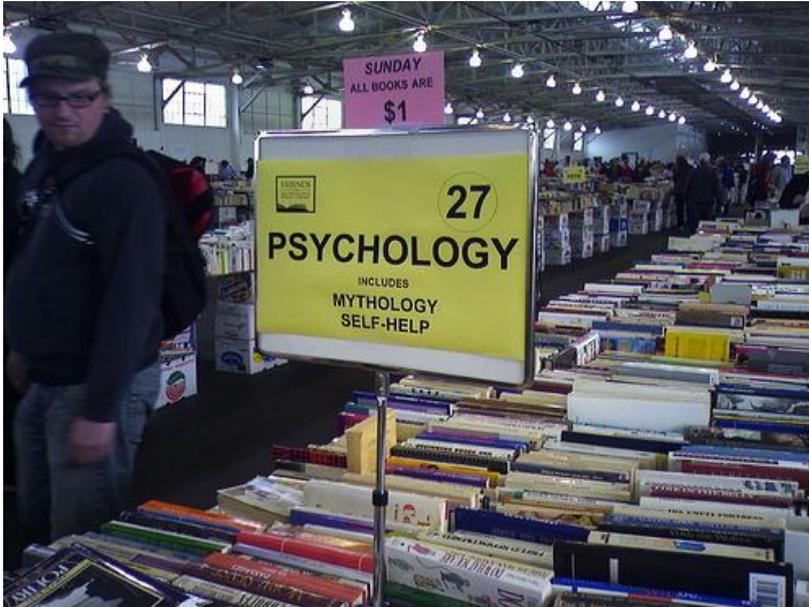
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What is Psychology?



(Photo Credit: Peter Merholz)

Having a good grasp of what psychology is all about is essential for anybody wanting to study the topic in greater depth. Now this may sound like a really obvious thing to state but psychology is a term that is often misunderstood and used around without any real consideration as to its actual meaning.

A classic case in point being the usual response you get from people when you tell them that you teach psychology; namely, "I better be careful what I say", or "so do you know what I'm thinking then?"

Confusion over the meaning of psychology is not restricted to members of the public. When I first started teaching I met a number of psychology students coming towards the end of their degree that admitted that they were still not 100% sure what psychology was!

Psychology Definitions

To help understand the ambiguity surrounding psychology, let's start by taking a look at a couple of definitions.

Psychology is the scientific study of people, the mind and behaviour. It is both a thriving academic discipline and a vital professional practice. (The British Psychological Society)

The scientific study of the behavior of individuals and their mental processes. (American Psychological Association)

The constant theme across these definitions is that psychology is fundamentally concerned with understanding Behavior.

So What's The Problem?

Basically, a lack of unity. Within psychology there are multiple and often competing levels of explanation when it comes to understanding behavior. When you begin studying psychology you quickly realize what a disparate topic area it is, and at times it can almost be overwhelming.

Keep It Simple

Particularly when you're starting out. Just keep hold of the notion that psychology is basically about behavior. You can't be expected to know all the different ways there are to explain behavior straight away; but as you are introduced to more and more you'll find that you'll soon be able to place a behavioral explanation within an appropriate psychological framework.

Not To Be Confused With Psychiatry

A common misconception about psychology is that it is synonymous with psychiatry. It is not. Psychiatry is a distinct medical specialism (all psychiatrists have a medical degree) that is fundamentally concerned with mental disorder. Psychology has a much broader focus and is not inextricably linked to the concept of mental illness.

What Do Psychology Students Study?

As you will discover in the types of psychology section below, there are a number of common, often compulsory topics that students traditionally study when doing a psychology course, degree or program.

AP Psychology

A useful frame of reference as to what specific topic areas a psychology student is likely to study can be found in The AP Psychology course description. AP stands for Advanced Placement and consists of a course and exam in psychology equivalent to an introductory college course in psychology. AP is accepted by more than 3,600 colleges and universities worldwide.

AP Psychology Content Areas

- History & Approaches
- Research Methods
- Biological Bases of Behavior
- Sensation & Perception
- States of Consciousness
- Learning
- Cognition
- Motivation & Emotion
- Developmental Psychology
- Personality
- Testing & Individual Difference
- Abnormal Behavior
- Treatment of Abnormal Behavior
- Social Psychology

A detailed description of each of these content areas is provided in the official College Board AP psychology course description. See following link.

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap-psychology-course-description.pdf>

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