

**San Bernardino Valley College
Course Outline for Psychology 222
“Special Problems in Psychology I”**

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

- A. PSYCH 222: Special Problems in Psychology I
3 hours laboratory = 1 unit

Assigned problems involving library and laboratory work for selected students who are interested in furthering their knowledge of psychology on an independent study basis. Students are required to devote three hours per week to their project throughout the semester.

Prerequisites: PSYCH 100.

- B. SCHEDULE DESCRIPTION: Assigned problems involving library and laboratory work for selected students who are interested in furthering their knowledge of psychology on an independent study basis.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Identify the topic in psychology, the student wishes to study.
- B. Explain how independent study is the best way to learn about this topic.
- C. Select material on the self-chosen topic.
- D. Analyze and explain to the instructor what the subject has learned, either in written or verbal form.

IV. CONTENT:

The contents are dictated to a large extent by the special interests of the student. However, an example of a special interest might be a phenomenon such as imprinting (i.e., a type of very rapid learning). The student would read the majority of related literature on the subject, and conduct an original experiment on the topic. In other cases, no experiment would be required. The student might be required to research the literature on a topic such as nativism versus empiricism, or any other area of student interest in psychology that a department faculty member agrees to supervise.

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Since this course primarily consists of independent study, the primary method of instruction is one-on-one tutorial contact with the instructor and may include:

- A. Reading suggested by either the instructor or the student
- B. Written assignments agreed to by both the instructor and the student
- C. Experiments engaged in by the student
- D. Relevant videotapes and films
- E. Field trips
- F. Questioning by both instructor and student, and oral examination by the instructor.

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Reading in preparation for paper-writing and oral examination, such as on rebuilding one's personal value system after a loss of faith.
- B. Written descriptions of what the student learned from reading or personal experiments, such as a report on ways to overcome shyness, procrastination, or some other personal problem
- C. Experiments to demonstrate the nature of psychological research methods for answering questions, such as attempts to develop more humor or creativity in one's personal life.
- D. Viewing relevant videotapes and films on the mutually-agreed topic(s) in psychology
- E. Field trips to observe and consider real-life examples and applications of psychology topics
- F. Periodic reports to the instructor in the instructor's office

VII. EVALUATION

A. **Methods of Evaluation:** This will vary from instructor to instructor, but will usually include oral examination and/or written assignments, and may include on-line discussion.

B. **Frequency of Evaluation:** This will depend on the type of evaluation (i.e. “objective” or essay). Evaluation will take place periodically throughout the semester with enough frequency to be sufficient to measure student progress and will be sensitive to the various learning styles of students. Typically, this could be weekly oral reports or papers and/or semester project

Student assignments outside of meeting with the instructor in his/her office are assumed to be the equivalent of 3 hours per week and may include reading, computer-assisted instruction, writing tasks, preparing for oral exams, and/or study group discussions.

Grading may be comparative to other students who took this course or may be based on an absolute standard.

C. **Typical Exam Questions:** These will usually be orally presented by the instructor in the instructor's office and will ask what the student learned from the student's independent project that semester.

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

This is determined by the student and instructor in conference. The text required is a function of the special problem in psychology which the student wishes to study.

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED STUDENTS: None