

AP Psychology

Summer Reading Assignment

2019

Choose, carefully read and complete a written assignment about a book chosen from a list assembled for the course. The assignment is **due on first FULL day of classes**. Instructions follow.

1) **Choosing what to read:** You may read any book from the list below: "[Summer Reading: Annotated Bibliography](#)." The first thing you will notice is that it is a lengthy list. As you explore it, you will begin to appreciate the breadth of psychology as a discipline. You are sure to find several works that pique your interest.

Your first task is to choose one book to read. Don't wait too long to get started. The task is more enjoyable if not done under the pressure that results from procrastinating. Take the time to find and examine several books that interest you. Browse, either in a library or bookstore, or at an online bookseller such as Amazon. Then pick the one you like best. If you cannot decide, ask for guidance, from a parent, a relative, a sibling or a friend, or from your teacher. While some titles can be found in libraries, it would be a good idea to purchase your own copy. Then you can mark it up and take notes in the margin as you read.

Choose a good book and, if you lose interest after starting it, don't force yourself to get through... simply pick another.

2) **Reading:** Well, it is assumed you know how to read! But you should definitely take some form of notes as you read. They will not be turned in and need not be formal. Be guided by the requirements for the written assignment below (which you should examine before you start). Good notes will save you time when you turn your attention to writing.

3) **Written Assignment:** Your written assignment is in two parts. Complete them both, as below.

A. Write three "reflections" which convey your thoughts on specific passages in the book. Each of the three reflections should be at most a page in length (taken altogether, two or three pages in total). Begin with a quote or a synopsis of an issue taken from the book, one that gets you thinking. Then create a well-written response, developing your ideas carefully. Your responses can include critiques, questions, disagreements, ideas you like (explaining why), comparisons to other things you have read, connections to your personal experiences, etc. Have fun with this, but develop your thoughts and express them clearly.

This exercise is designed to get you thinking more deeply as you read (and frankly to give me as your teacher a sense of who you are and how you think). Credit will relate to the quality of your writing (and not the views you express). It would be a good idea, as you read, to journal several possible reflections, i.e. to take a note of passages that seem interesting, and your reasons for thinking so. Then choose the best three to write up formally when you are finished with the book.

B. Write a critical review of the book as a whole. This review should be in the form of a brief essay (one or two pages). The books in the bibliography are very different from one

another, and there is no magic formula for writing this review. But there are some things you should be sure to do (in one way or another).

A critical review should briefly introduce the book, summarizing the author's main argument and key points. It should evaluate how well the book makes its argument: the quality of writing, reasoning, evidence, etc. And it should express your thoughts as a reader on the value of the book, to you and/or to other readers. Ultimately you are trying to decide whether to recommend the book and, if so, to what kind of reader, for what purpose, and with what reservations. It is thus helpful if you go beyond broad generalizations and empty praise or criticism. Elaborate; explain; give specific examples. If someone reading your review can make a well-informed judgment about the book, you've done your job well.

Credit will relate to the quality of your writing (and to repeat, not the views you express). As a student new to psychology, it is understood that your background knowledge is limited, so you should base the review on your perspective as a layperson (not an expert). But your review will suggest what you have learned by reading the book, so be sure to give specific information to illustrate your thinking. Be sure to edit your writing carefully so that your thoughts are well organized and clearly expressed (in grammatically correct sentences, of course). Have some fun with this. Try to make the book come alive.

Due date: Your written assignment is due the first full day of classes and may be submitted using the course Haiku or alternatively as an attachment to an email addressed to Mr. Leath (Jason_leath@ryecountryday.org) or Ms. Doucette (Courtney_Doucette@ryecountryday.org). Please plan accordingly.

AP Psychology 2019-2020
Summer Reading: Annotated Bibliography
Rye Country Day School

The following are well-written, engaging, interesting and readable books that have something worthwhile to say about one or another aspect of psychology. Some are available in the school Library; some might be found in a public library; all can be purchased from any good bookstore. Most but not all are available as paperbacks. Be sure the book you choose is on the list—sometimes another work may be published under a similar or even identical title, so **check author and title**.

(Thanks to friends, colleagues and former students for suggestions, and acknowledgement of the excellent bibliography prepared some years ago by C.G. Morris of the University of Michigan.)

Aronson, E. (2007). *The social animal* (10th ed.) NY: W.H. Freeman. A comprehensive introduction to social psychology, with topics including conformity, mass communication, propaganda, persuasion, aggression, prejudice, attraction and loving. Could be a textbook, but far too readable for that!

Baum, W.M. (2005). *Understanding behaviorism Behavior, culture and evolution*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. Behaviorism has provided some of the most powerful ideas in modern psychology and a foundation for scientific research in this field. The book explains the history and ongoing significance of this approach to understanding human behavior.

Brown, P., Roediger III, H., and McDaniel, M. (2014). *Make it stick: the science of successful learning*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press. Practical, science-based advice for learning and memory in an easy-to-read book filled with interesting case studies. After reading it, you may want to revise your approach to studying and learning.

Budiansky, S. (1998). *If a lion could talk: animal intelligence and the evolution of consciousness*. NY: Free Press. Trying to understand animal behavior and intelligence in human terms is poor science. Anthropomorphism must be rejected if we are to understand the way animals truly think. The author proposes an alternative.

Burton, R. (2008). *On being certain. Believing you are right even when you're not*. NY: St. Martin's Press. An examination of evidence from recent studies in neuroscience that suggests that "being certain" of anything is more a "mental sensation" or neurological state than it is the product of careful reflection and reasoning. What we think we know is not always so.

Chabris, C. and D Simons. (2010). *The invisible gorilla: and other ways our intuitions deceive us*. NY: Harmony. Combine the work of other researchers with the authors' findings on attention, perception, memory, and reasoning to reveal how faulty intuitions often get us into trouble.

Chatterjee, A. (2015). *The aesthetic brain. How we evolved to desire beauty and enjoy art*. NY: Oxford. A recent exploration of what studies of evolution and neuroscience have to contribute to our understanding of the perception, experience and enjoyment of art.

Cialdini, R.B. (2009). *Influence: the psychology of persuasion* (5th ed.). NY: Pearson. This updated classic outlines six basic principles of influence and persuasion. What does psychology have to tell us about selling, marketing and political persuasion?

- Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: the new psychology of success*. NY: Random House. A mindset is "an established set of attitudes" which governs our behaviors. Dweck examines the way mindsets influence our beliefs about our own talents and abilities and as a result affect our success in life.
- Gardner, H. (1996). *Leading minds: an anatomy of leadership*. NY: Basic Books. Applies the author's theory of multiple intelligences to understanding the minds of selected leaders, including Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Eleanor Roosevelt, Margaret Mead and others.
- Gay, P. (1998). *Freud: a life for our time*. NY: W.W. Norton. Seminal biography examines Freud's life in the context of Victorian culture. Although lengthy, if you are interested in European history, this is a wonderful study of how psychoanalysis developed to become one of the most influential theories of the 20th century.
- Gregory, R.L. (1990). *Eye and brain: The psychology of seeing* (4th ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Readable account of how we see including lots of visual illusions.
- Hilts, P.J. (1995). *Memory's ghost: The strange tale of Mr. M. and the nature of memory*. NY: Simon & Schuster. Henry M. underwent experimental brain surgery in 1953 and has since lived only in the present. He can talk and read and write, but has no memory for what has just happened -- every minute is a new experience for him.
- Hobson, J.A. (2002). *Dreaming An introduction to the science of sleep*. NY: Oxford University Press. Recent work by one of the foremost experts on sleep and the emergence of dreams.
- Jamison, K.R. (1995). *An unquiet mind*. NY: Knopf. A beautifully written account of manic bipolar disorder (manic depression) written by a professor of psychiatry who is a victim of the disorder. A central theme is her reluctance to take the drug lithium even though it will be beneficial because she is afraid to lose the creative energy that comes with the disorder.
- Kahneman, D. (2011) *Thinking Fast and Slow*. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Kahneman shared a Nobel prize in economics for his work on cognition and the ways people make decisions. He argues that the human animal is systematically illogical, that we follow predictable patterns in the ways we assess situations and evidence, and that those patterns are rooted in evolution.
- Kandel, E.R. (2006). *In search of memory. The emergence of a new science of mind*. NY: Norton. A personal memoir of the Nobel prize winning neuroscientist, the book describes the development of his interest in the psychology of memory and the brain. He discusses the many breakthroughs that influenced his own work, providing an excellent intellectual history of a century of brain science.
- Kandel, E.R. (2016). *Reductionism in Art and Brain Science: Bridging the Two Cultures*. NY: Columbia University Press. Kandel's most recent work attempts to show how reductionism, often criticized as an oversimplification of complex principles, has been used to open doorways of understanding and expression and lead to productive links between science and art.
- Kerr, J.H. (2006). *Rethinking violence and aggression in sport*. London: Routledge. Applies current theory of aggression to sport, *inter alia* how players become acclimatized to physical violence, the psychological benefits of sport violence, the problem of spectator aggression and the moral and ethical dimensions of the issue.

- Kubler-Ross, E. (1969, 1978). *On death and dying*. NY: MacMillan. Classic study of terminally ill patients and their adjustment, first elaborated "DABDA" stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.
- Lane, H. (1976). *The wild boy of Aveyron*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Critical account of a boy whose early life was spent in the wild forests of Aveyron in southern France in the late 1700s. He was eventually captured, institutionalized, then sent to Paris for study and display.
- LeDoux, J. (2002). *Synaptic self How our brains become who we are*. NY: Penguins Books. Synthesis of recent research in neuroscience to explain how the interactions between nerve cells in the brain creates what we experience as personality.
- Livingstone, M.S. (2002). *Vision and art: the biology of seeing*. NY: Harry N. Abrams. Explains how artists use elements like perspective, luminance, color mixing, shading and chiaroscuro produce certain effects. A Harvard neurobiologist, the author discusses da Vinci's use of contrast, the illusory three-dimensionality of Impressionist paintings and why Mondrian's Broadway Boogie Woogie gives the impression of motion.
- Loftus, E. and K. Ketcham. (1994). *The myth of repressed memory: false memories and allegations of sexual abuse*. NY: St. Martin's Press. Renowned expert on memory attacks the belief in "recovered memories" (particularly repressed memories of alleged sexual abuse). Argues that there is no scientific evidence in support of such memories and that they are in most cases confabulations.
- Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The how of happiness: a scientific approach to getting the life you want*. NY: Penguin Press. Lyubomirsky argues that personal happiness is not entirely dependent on biological predispositions or life's circumstances. Concepts from cognitive and motivational psychology suggest that "mindfulness" and "intentional activity" will allow us to identify "happiness strategies" that she claims will give us the ability to achieve greater happiness.
- Myers, D.G. (2004). *Intuition: its powers and perils*. New Haven: Yale University Press. The book builds on discoveries in cognitive science to explore the concept of intuition, its general strengths and weaknesses, and its relationship to investment, psychotherapy, and employment settings.
- Pinker, S. (2002). *The blank slate The modern denial of human nature*. NY: Viking. Brilliant analysis and critique of how human nature has been viewed throughout history, with defense of the modern biological understanding of what it is to be human.
- Sacks, O. (1989). *Seeing voices: a journey into the world of the deaf*. NY: HarperCollins. Sacks makes the topic accessible to laypersons...a moving account of the world of the deaf.
- Sacks, O. (2008). *Musicophilia: Tales of music and the brain*. NY: Vintage. Sacks explores the place music occupies in the brain and how it affects the human condition. He shows us a variety of what he calls "musical misalignments," neurological conditions which affect a person's experience of music and reveal something of the importance of music to human behavior.
- Sacks, O. (2010). *The mind's eye*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf. Sacks tells the stories of people who are able to navigate the world and communicate with others despite losing what many of us consider indispensable senses and abilities: the power of speech, the capacity to recognize faces, the sense of three-dimensional space, the ability to read, the sense of sight.

- Sacks, O. (2012). *Hallucinations*. NY: Knopf. Sacks latest book weaves together stories of his patients and of his own mind-altering experiences to illuminate what hallucinations tell us about the organization and structure of our brains, how they have influenced every culture's folklore and art, and why the potential for hallucination is a vital part of the human condition.
- Schacter, D.L. (2001). *The seven sins of memory How the mind forgets and remembers*. NY: Houghton Mifflin & Co. Excellent, highly readable discussion of the nature of human memory, where and how it fails us, and why it works so well nonetheless.
- Segal, N.L. (1999). *Entwined lives: twins and what they tell us about human behavior*. NY: Dutton. You will not find a more thorough presentation of what is known about twins and how they have contributed to our knowledge of psychology.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (1990). *Learned optimism*. NY: Pocket Books. Highly regarded book on optimism, pessimism, and positive thinking based on research and theory in cognitive psychology. The author, a leader in the "positive psychology" movement, believes optimism and pessimism are learned and so can be changed. Includes self-tests and practical advice.
- Shorter, E. (1997). *A history of psychiatry from the era of the asylum to the age of prozac*. NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Excellent historical narrative of how the treatment of the mentally ill in western society has evolved from the 18th century to the present.
- Solomon, A. (2002). *The noonday demon An atlas of depression*. NY: Scribner. Solomon examines depression from his own experience as well as interviews and published scientific and historical literature on the course and treatment of this most common psychological disorder.
- Stanovich, K. (1995). *How to think straight about psychology*. NY: Harper Collins. A foundation for one's first effort to understand psychology as a science - a fundamental concept of this course. A readable and engaging argument.
- Sternberg, E.J. (2015) *NeuroLogic The brain's hidden rationale behind our irrational behavior*. NY: Pantheon Books. Sternberg examines the unconscious logic of the brain, describing what recent research in cognitive psychology and neurological case histories reveal about the ways the interaction of neural circuitry creates experiences both real and imagined. You should have a solid background in biology before reading this challenging book.
- Sternberg, E.M. (2001). *The balance within The science connecting health and emotions*. NY: W.H. Freeman. Recent review of what is known about the "mind-body connection" and its implications for mainstream and alternative medicine.
- Tavris, C. and E. Aronson. (2007). *Mistakes were made (but not by me)*. NY: Harvest Books. Interesting review of work by social psychologists to explain self-deception, the human tendency to justify and adhere to mistaken actions and beliefs long after there is reason to admit error.
- Wilson, F.R. (1998). *The hand: how it shapes the brain, language and human culture*. NY: Pantheon Books. Language, intellect, intelligence, communication, expression, writing, painting, creating and playing music, touching, hunting and using tools: the author argues that all these human abilities depend upon and developed from the use of hands.
- Zimbardo, P.G. (2007). *The Lucifer effect: understanding how good people turn evil*. NY: Random House. What makes good people do bad things? How can moral people be seduced to act immorally? Who is in danger of crossing the line between good and evil? Zimbardo explains how we are susceptible to the lure of "the dark side" and offers an explanation of a variety of

phenomena, from corporate malfeasance to organized genocide to how once upstanding American soldiers came to abuse and torture Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib.

Zimmer, C. (2004). *Soul made flesh. The discovery of the brain and how it changed the world*. NY: Free Press. Seventeenth century enlightenment philosophers explored the proposition that more is to be learned about human nature by studying the brain and the body than the soul. Psychology as a result became more the object of science than religion, but no less subject to dispute, in the three centuries since.