VCE Psychology

Year 11
Unit 1: What is Psychology?
In this unit students are introduced to the development of psychology from its philosophical beginnings to a scientific study of the human mind and behaviour. Students explore the scope of psychology, its specialist disciplines such as neuropsychology, cognitive, social and human developmental psychology, and its fields of application. Students consider influences on perception and human behaviour from biological, behavioural, cognitive and socio-cultural perspectives. They examine the contribution classic and contemporary studies have made to the development of different psychological theories used to predict and explain the human mind, and behaviours associated with particular stages of development over a lifespan. Students analyse research methodologies associated with classic and contemporary theories, studies and models, consider ethical issues associated with the conduct of research and the use of findings, and apply appropriate research methods when undertaking their own investigations.

Unit 2: Self and Others
A person’s attitudes and behaviours affect the way they view themselves and the way they relate to others. Understanding what influences the formation of attitudes of individuals and behaviours of groups can inform and contribute to explanations of individual aggression or altruism, the positive and negative power of peer pressure and responses to group behaviour. Differences between individuals can also be ascribed to differences in intelligence and personality, but conceptions of intelligence and personality and their methods of assessment are contested. Differences between individuals, groups and cultures can be analysed in varied ways through different psychological perspectives informed by both classic and contemporary theories. In this unit students analyse research methodologies associated with classic and contemporary theories, studies and models, consider ethical issues associated with the conduct of research and the use of findings, and apply appropriate research methods when undertaking their own investigations.

Year 12
Unit 3: The Conscious Self
This unit focuses on the study of the relationship between the brain and the mind through examining the basis of consciousness, behaviour, cognition and memory. Brain research methods used to understand the relationship between mind, brain and behavior are studied and include traditional and invasive methods as well as more recent neuroimaging techniques. Students study the structure and functioning of the human brain and nervous system, and explore the nature of consciousness and altered states of consciousness including sleep. Students consider the function of the nervous system in memory and investigate the ways in which information is processed, stored and utilised. They apply different theories of memory and forgetting to their everyday learning experiences. Students analyse research methodologies associated with classic and contemporary theories, studies and models, consider ethical issues associated with the conduct of research and the use of findings, and apply appropriate research methods when undertaking their own investigations.
Unit 4: Brain behaviour and experience
This unit focuses on the interrelationship between learning, the brain and its response to experiences, and behaviour. Students investigate learning as a mental process that leads to the acquisition of knowledge, development of new capacities and changed behaviours. Students build on their conceptual understanding of learning to consider it as one of several important facets involved in a biopsychosocial approach to the analysis of mental health and illness. They consider different concepts of normality, and learn to differentiate between normal responses such as stress to external stimuli, and mental disorders. The intent of the study is not that of diagnosis and treatment but to explore causes of mental illness, avenues of assistance and factors that promote mental wellbeing. Students analyse research methodologies associated with classic and contemporary theories, studies and models, consider ethical issues associated with the conduct of research and the use of findings, and apply appropriate research methods when undertaking their own investigations.

Assessment
Each Unit in Psychology consists of two Outcomes that students need to satisfactorily complete in order to gain an S for each Unit of the subject. Key skills include the ability to investigate and inquire scientifically, apply scientific understandings, and communicate psychological information.

Suggested Pre-requisites
There are no pre-requisites for the study of Psychology. It is recommended that students wishing to complete Units 3 and 4 complete units 1 and 2 Psychology to ensure genuine interest, motivation and awareness of expectations.