

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Psychology
Programme:	Psychology
FHEQ Level:	4
Course Title:	Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology
Course Code:	PSY 4205
Student Engagement Hours:	120
Lectures:	30
Seminar / Tutorials:	15
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
Semester:	Fall
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

This course engages students in an overview of the main philosophical, scientific and social ideas that formulated psychology as we know it today. We will cover conceptual and methodological positions underlying different paradigms and research trends in the study of human behaviour. We will examine the following questions: what is science and to what extent is psychology permeated by the characteristics of science; what is the extent of social and cultural construction in psychology; is or can psychology be morally or politically neutral; what can we learn from the history of psychology so far? In addition, this course will address the issues involved in acquiring knowledge through various scientific methodologies, the critique of traditional methods in psychology, the relationship between facts and values and the significance of the standpoint from which values are understood. Finally, we will discuss ethical issues in psychology, their origins, the moral underpinnings of theory, research and practice and how psychologists construct ethically responsible practices within a social environment.

Prerequisites:

PSY 3100

Aims and Objectives:

In this module we will cover important conceptual issues relevant for psychological research, and the recent history of major schools of thought in Psychology, linking present day research with the underlying historical debates.

Programme Outcomes:

Psychology: 4A1, 4Aii, 4Bii, 4C., 4Ciii, 4Di, 4Diii

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of conceptual and historical perspectives
- Develop an understanding of the links between schools of thought in psychology
- Develop an understanding of how issues in modern psychology relate to historical intellectual problems
- Appreciate the ethical decisions made by psychologists and implications of those
- Demonstrate the ability to critical evaluate the sources of knowledge and theories/systems in psychology
- Demonstrate the ability to work in a group and independently to answer critical thinking questions on readings

Indicative Content:

- A bit of History (and Pre-History)
- Scientific Revolution (17th century)
- Psychology as an Independent Discipline
- Behaviourism and Cognitive Psychology
- Input from Brain Research
- Mind-Brain Problem, Consciousness and Free Will
- History of Applied Psychology
- What is science (20th century theories), Is Psychology a Science
- Balance between Biological, Psychological and Social Influences
- Psychology, Politics and Society

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

The course material will be covered in the following ways:

- I. Lecture presentations with the key concepts
- II. Group discussions on journal articles and important questions on the topics discussed
- III. Internet sites related to psychology
- IV. Intra-net access to lecture notes

Bibliography:

See syllabus for complete reading list

Indicative Text(s):

Blackmore, S. (2006). *Conversations on Consciousness*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Brysbart, M. & Rastle, K. (2009). *Historical and Conceptual Issues in Psychology*. Pearson.

Journals

Evolutionary Psychology
 Psychology, Public Policy and Law
 Psychological Inquiry
 Scientific American
 Trends in Cognitive Sciences
 American Psychologist
 Psychological Bulletin
 Journal of Psychiatry & Law
 Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine
 Qualitative Research
 KRITERION
 Professional Psychology: Research & Practice

Web Sites

<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/index.htm>

TED Talks

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Change in pre-requisite, deletion of one pre-req		19/11/2015

