

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Humanities & Social Sciences
Programme:	Psychology
FHEQ Level:	4
Course Title:	Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology
Course Code:	PSYC 4102
Total Hours:	160 (Lev 3-5) (4 US Credit)
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	15
Independent Learning Hours:	100
Credit	16 UK CATS credits 8 ECTS credits 4 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:

None

Aims and Objectives:

- To introduce students to important conceptual issues relevant for psychological research.
- To introduce students to the recent history of major schools of thought in psychology, linking present day research with the underlying historical debates.
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields (including work in government, international organisations, business and the media) which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of psychology.
- To provide a framework to assist concerned citizens to think critically about issues that are of increasing importance in the 21st century.
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of literature, and the development of both a succinct writing style, and the ability to present complex arguments orally.

Programme Outcomes:

4AI; 4BI; 4CI; 4DI

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

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

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Demonstrates broad knowledge and understanding of the core ethical, conceptual and historical perspectives in psychology.
- Demonstrates a broad understanding of how historical intellectual problems in psychology relate to the modern discipline and its sources of knowledge, theories and systems.
- Demonstrates broad communication skills (including digital literacy) in deploying ideas and information to in a range of different formats and media.
- Demonstrates broad skills that are relevant to the workplace.

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:

This course will be delivered face to face through a combination of lectures and interactive sessions. In addition to classroom activities, there are guided learning elements that are tutor led and arranged through Blackboard. These activities can be asynchronous online sessions, flipped classrooms, set readings with discussion boards or set guest lectures for example. Set activities are monitored by the instructor to ascertain student engagement. Students are encouraged to prepare for class and to play an active part, to raise questions, following-up ideas and interact with a wide range of provided material.

Indicative Text(s):

- Blackmore, S. and Troscianko, E. (2024) *Consciousness: An Introduction*. 4th edn. Routledge.
- Brysbaert, M. and Rastle, K. (2021) *Historical and Conceptual Issues in Psychology*. 3rd edn. Pearson.

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
First edition	Nov 2024	