

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Psychology
Programme:	MSc Psychology (Conversion)
FHEQ Level:	7
Course Title:	Conceptual & Historical Issues in Psychology
Course Code:	PSY 7106
Student Engagement Hours:	200
Lectures:	20
Seminar / Tutorials:	20
Independent / Guided Learning:	160
Credits:	20 UK CATS credits 10 ECTS credits 4 US credits

Course Description:

The course examines the major historical figures and historically important systems in psychology, giving special emphasis to the philosophical forerunners of psychology, and the way that certain philosophical questions are still relevant to psychologists today. Key topics include: monism, dualism, reductionism, the mind-body debate, free will versus determinism, artificial intelligence, the integration of Western and Eastern psychological theories, cultural assumptions in psychology, consciousness and intersubjectivity. Contemporary psychological paradigms that will be discussed include: functionalism, psychoanalysis, behaviourism, social theories of mind, and cognitive science.

Prerequisites:

MSc Psychology (Conversion) students only

Aims and Objectives:

The course aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the historical and philosophical backgrounds to contemporary debates in psychology. The course is structured around a number of key questions, such as: what is the mind? To what extent is a scientific study of mind possible? Is psychology a social and cultural construction? The course takes a critical historical approach, tracing the development of psychology from its origins in philosophy and physiology. It also explores the impact that psychological paradigms have

had on contemporary thought and examines the contemporary relevance of different psychological paradigms.

Programme Outcomes:

7A.i, 7A.ii, 7B.ii, 4C.i, 4C.iii, 4Di, 4D.iii

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 a deep and systematic understanding of conceptual and historical perspectives
- Recognise, and demonstrate an understanding of the links between schools of thought in psychology
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of evidence, both contemporary and historical in the development of psychological research
- Appreciate the ethical decisions made by psychologists and understand the implications of these
- Demonstrate the ability to thoroughly critically evaluate the sources of knowledge, and systems in psychology
- Demonstrate the ability to work in a group and independently answer critical thinking questions on readings and/or information presented.

Indicative Content:

- Scientific Revolution
- Psychology as an independent discipline (Wundt/James)
- Behaviourism and Cognitive Psychology
- Brain imaging research
- Mind-Brain debate
- What is science?
- Biological, psychological, and social influences in research
- Psychology, politics and society

Assessment:

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

Teaching Methodology:

The course material will be covered in the following ways:

- Lectures on key topics
- Group discussions on required readings
- Key Internet Sites
- Emphasis on Primary Texts

Indicative Text(s):

- Laing, R. (2010). *The Divided Self: An Existential Study of Sanity & Madness*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex.
- Laing, R. (2010). *The Divided Self: An Existential Study of Sanity & Madness*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex.
- Bermúdez, J. L. (2014). *Cognitive Science*. Cambridge University Press. (Part One)

Web Sites

EBSCOHost and Google Scholar for academic journal searches and reading

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
Revision – annual update	May 2023	