

## COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

<b>Academic School / Department:</b>	Psychology
<b>Programme:</b>	Psychology
<b>FHEQ Level:</b>	4
<b>Course Title:</b>	Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology
<b>Course Code:</b>	PSY 4205
<b>Student Engagement Hours:</b>	120
Lectures:	30
Seminar / Tutorials:	15
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
<b>Credits:</b>	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 (17<sup>th</sup> 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 (20<sup>th</sup> 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.

Brysbaert, 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

Revision – annual update	May 2023	