Introduction to Psychology

Class code
PSYCH-UA 9001 – 002

Instructor Details
Dr Tim Marsh
tim.marsh@nyu.edu
Consultation by Appointment
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details
Fall 2017

Introduction to Psychology

Monday 9:00 – 12:00pm
4 September to 11 December
Room 202
NYU Sydney Academic Centre

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course aims to provide you with a basic understanding of the psychology of human behaviour, touching on different domains such as emotion, development, personality and cognition. It will introduce you to the basic concepts, terminology, principles and theories that comprise an introductory course. Students are expected to gain knowledge of, and develop a critical approach to, the analysis of current research and theoretical issues in these broad areas. This course will be taught in lecture and discussion formats.

Desired Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Define the term psychology and demonstrate understanding of basic terminology, concepts and principles of the discipline.
- Understand, apply and evaluate basic research methods.
- Recognise that human behaviour is motivated, has multiple causes, and may be adaptive or maladaptive.
- Discuss the ways that psychological theories are used to assess, predict, or change human behaviour and how psychology is applied to influence and improve the lives of humans.
The final grade will be determined by the following:

**An oral presentation (15%)** 5 minutes + 3 minute discussion

**A group project (20%)** [Week 15] 1200 words

2 exams (15% each) [Week 5 & Week 11] 45 mins each

**Final exam (35%)** [Exam Week] 2 hours

The exams will be made up of multiple choice, true and false and short answer questions.

**ORAL PRESENTATION: Research Report**

During the first lecture you will sign up for a topic for your oral presentation. Within the topic area that you chose, find an empirical article from a recent peer reviewed journal (2009 or newer). Use PsychInfo or Medline. Do not select a review article. Some articles are extremely difficult to summarize and some are much easier. Choose an article with interesting results and a clear method that will allow you to demonstrate that you can apply what you have learned in the lectures to new material. Papers with a single study are usually easier to summarize than multi-experiment papers.

The 5 minute (+ 3 minutes to lead a discussion) presentation should have 4 main components: background information/hypotheses, method, results, and conclusion.

- Begin your presentation with a brief introduction that describes what the article is about. Show that you can situate the study in a larger conceptual and/or empirical context. You can take your lead from the ‘introduction’ section of the article, but you can also disagree with the authors regarding the important issues addressed in the article. This section should also include the hypotheses of the study.
- The next section should describe what the researchers did. This description should highlight the design and procedure that are relevant for the results. Weed out the irrelevant details.
- Another section should describe what the researchers found. You should limit yourself to the critical findings that make the paper important and interesting with regard to your argument. I don’t expect you to understand the statistical analyses, but figures or tables may be useful.
- Next you should describe why the researchers think their findings are important. What was their primary interpretation of the results? The final conclusion should include your own point of view. You might criticize some aspects of the article or highlight some aspects that you think are important but that were not touched on by the authors. This is the section where we want to see use of critical thinking skills so make sure it is not just a summary of the author’s points.

**GROUP PROJECT: Research Study and Report (Final report due by 9:00am, 11 December, Week 15)**

You will work in groups of 3-4, which must be decided and elected by Week 6. You will participate in a basic research project, which will be introduced to you in Week 6. The data from your participation will be added to a larger database that will make up the final data
for the project. The data will be analysed by the lecturer, which will then be given to you in Week 10. Your group will need to work together to write a research report, including an abstract, introduction including hypotheses, method section, results, and discussion, which is due in Week 15.

Reports should be no more than 1200 words with double-spaced pages of text, excluding title page, tables and references. Use 12-point font in Times New Roman. Use 1-inch margins on top, bottom and sides of each page. Proof read before submitting your papers. It should not appear that multiple people wrote independent sections. Your paper should be clear and concise and organized in APA format. It should be free of spelling or grammatical errors.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component will result in failure of the class.

For this course your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, is converted to a letter grade without rounding.

Extra Credit: Site policy does not allow grading of work outside of the assignments included in the syllabus. The final grade will only be calculated from the assessment components listed here and no other work, whether additional or substituted, is permitted.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning.

**Grade B:** Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level.

**Grade D:** Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course’s topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations.

**Grade F:** Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Work is weak, unfinished or unsubmitted.

**Grade Conversions**

For this course your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, correspond to the following letter grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 to 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Percentage Range</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>86 to &lt; 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>82 to &lt; 86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>72 to &lt; 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>68 to &lt; 72</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>64 to &lt; 68</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>54 to &lt; 64</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50 to &lt; 54</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>45 to &lt; 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>40 to &lt; 45</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 to &lt; 40</td>
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**Submission of Work**

Assignments (excluding in-class presentations and exams) must be submitted electronically via NYU Classes. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm that the work has been successfully been uploaded. In the unlikely event that a submission to Classes fails, students must immediately submit the work to the Academic Programs Coordinator via email before the original submission deadline accompanied by an explanation of the issue. All in-class presentations and exams must be completed during the scheduled class time. An assessment component is considered completed when the student has met all the terms for that assessment component as outlined by the instructor.

An assessment component completed after the deadline without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) for each day the work is late. Work completed beyond five weekdays after the due date without an agreed extension receives a mark of zero, and the student is not entitled to feedback for that piece of work. Because failure to submit or fulfil any required assessment component will result in failure of the course, it is crucial for students to complete every assignment even when it will receive a mark of zero.

**Plagiarism Policy**

The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University’s plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges.

**Attendance Policy**

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in
discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centres is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students’ semester grades. The class roster will be marked at the beginning of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalised by a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to two unexcused absences. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

Faculty cannot excuse an absence. Requests for absences to be excused must be directed to the Academic Programs Coordinator. Students must provide appropriate documentation for their absence. In the case of illness, students must contact the Academic Programs Coordinator on the day of absence. They must provide medical documentation to Academic Programs Coordinator within three days of the absence in order to be medically excused. The note must include a medical judgement indicating that the student was unfit to attend class/work on the specific day or dates of the absence. Faculty will be informed of excused absences by the Academic Programs staff.

Classroom Expectations

This is a seminar subject and requires the active participation of all students. It also requires engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Your behaviour in class should respect your classmates’ desire to learn. It is important for you to focus your full attention on the class, for the entire class period.

- Arrive to class on time.
- Once you are in class, you are expected to stay until class ends. Leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not acceptable behaviour.
- Phones, digital music players, and any other communications or sound devices are not to be used during class. That means no phone calls, no texting, no social media, no email, and no internet browsing at any time during class.
- Laptop computers and tablets are not to be used during class except in rare instances for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor.
- The only material you should be reading in class is material assigned for that class. Reading anything else, such as newspapers or magazines, or doing work from another class, is not acceptable.
- Class may not be recorded in any fashion – audio, video, or otherwise – without permission in writing from the instructor.

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton
Equity has said, “...not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities.” At NYU Sydney we are committed to creating a learning environment that:

- fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and

- promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavours.

Religious Observance Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Academic Programs Coordinator in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

Provisions to students with Disabilities Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Centre for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

Required Texts

It is a course expectation that you have done the required reading and have prepared sufficiently to discuss them in class.

  ISBN (hardback) 978-0-393-93250-8
  ISBN (paperback) 978-0-393-18045-9

It is a course expectation that you have done the required reading and have prepared sufficiently to discuss them in class.

Internet Research Guidelines

- Students are strongly encouraged to use ‘Psychinfo’ via the NYU electronic library: https://home.nyu.edu/cgi-bin/iSng.pl?current_tab=221
- The group assignment paper must be submitted in the APA format. A quick guide explaining both page-layout and referencing expectations for the APA style can be found here: http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx
The oral presentations, group project and written assignment should be based on journal articles, which makes Psychinfo very important.

### Week 1  Overview + The Biological Basis of Behaviour [Chapter 2]
#### Monday 4 September

Topics:
- What is Psychology?
- Introduction to genetics
- Understanding the importance of genetic influence
- Sex chromosomes
- Heritability

### Week 2  The Brain and The Nervous System [Chapter 3]
#### Monday 11 September

Topics:
- Neural organization
- Divisions of the Nervous System
- Structures of the Brain
- Localization of Function

### Week 3  Research Methods in Psychology [Chapter 1]
#### Monday 18 September

Topics:
- Understanding research
- What is research?
- Methodology & Research designs
- Reliability & Validity
- Ethical Guidelines

### Week 4  Cognition and Memory [Chapter 8]
#### Monday 25 September

Topics:
- Acquisition, storage and retrieval
- Declarative/Procedural Knowledge
- Forgetting, memory gaps
Week 5      Exam 1 + Learning and Behaviour [Chapter 7]
Friday 6 October (Make up class for public holiday)

Topics (Learning and Behaviour):
• Classical conditioning
• Instrumental conditioning
• Different types of learning

Assignment: Exam 1 (15%)

Week 6      Sensation and Perception [Chapters 4 & 5]
Monday 9 October

Topics:
• A basic understanding of the senses
• How is it that we perceive differently?
• Chemosensory (smell & taste) perception
• How our body detects chemosensory stimuli
• How our brain perceives these stimuli
• Taste and smell expertise (e.g., wine experts, perfumiers)
• Pheromones

Additional Reading:

Assignment: Group project data collection

FALL BREAK: 16 – 20 October (Week 7)

Week 8      Motivation and Emotion [Chapter 12]
Monday 23 October

Topics:
• Motivational states
• Motives beyond drives
• Emotion and emotion regulation

Week 9      Developmental Psychology [Chapter 14]
Monday 30 October
Topics:
- Introduction to human development
- Controversial themes
- Prenatal development
- Teratogens

**Week 10  Developmental Psychology (cont.) [Chapter 14]**

**Monday 6 November**

Topics (Developmental Psychology)
- Memory development
- Adolescent development

Topics (Social Development):
- Introduction to social psychology
- Attachment theory in childhood and beyond

**Week 11  Social Psychology [Chapter 13] + Exam 2**

**Monday 13 November**

Topics (Social Psychology):
- Social influence: social conformity, obedience
- Group Dynamics, social facilitation, social loafing

**Assignment: Exam 2 (15%)**

**Week 12  Personality [Chapter 15]**

**Monday 20 November**

Topics:
- The concept of personality
- Approaches to personality
- Is personality all genetically based?

**Week 13  Psychopathology [Chapter 16]**

**Monday 27 November**

Topics:
- Defining mental disorders; DSM-5, ICD-10
- Mood disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Psychological approaches to treatment
• Pharmacological and physical approaches to treatment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Forensic Psychology + Work on Group Projects</th>
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<td>Monday 4 December</td>
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Topics:
- Introduction to forensic psychology
- Witnesses: testimony accuracy and memory suggestibility
- Witnesses: eyewitness identification evidence
- The psychology of juries

Assignment: Work on Group Projects

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<th>Week 15</th>
<th>Review and Exam Preparation</th>
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<td>Monday 11 December</td>
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Assignment: Group Project Reports Due (20%)

FINAL EXAM (35%): Exam Week, Monday 18 December 9:30 – 11:30am

Your Instructor

Dr Tim Marsh (PhD, Macquarie University) completed his PhD in Psychology in 2013. His primary research interests concern the evolved cognitive mechanisms underpinning modern intergroup prejudice, and their role in general moral psychology.

He has taught and assessed both undergraduate and postgraduate psychology subjects, including introductory, social, biological and personality psychology, in addition to research methods, statistics and thesis preparation. He has also taught in interdisciplinary topics, specifically concerning the application of psychology in various health professions. His current research interests include exploring the role outgroup bias and discrete coalition cues play in adaptively negotiating group decision tasks. He is also collaborating with researchers in the field of education, to design interventions intended to help educators understand and negotiate the conflicting moral values in their students.