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

Spring 2015

Introduction to Psychology

Monday 12:00 – 3:00pm
February 2 to May 11
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.
- Recognize 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%)**

**A group project (20%) [May 11, Week 14]**

2 exams (15% each) [March 2, Week 5 & April 13, Week 10]

Final exam (35%) [Wednesday May 20, 3.00-5.00pm, Exam Week].

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 **15 minute** (+ 5 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. What is the real question? You can take your lead from the ‘introduction’ section of the article, but note that you can disagree with the authors regarding the really 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 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 relate the method or findings to material you learned from lectures or other readings. 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 May 12, Week 14)
You will work in groups of 3-4, which will be assigned to you in 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 analyzed 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 14.

Reports should be no more than 1200 words with double-spaced pages of text, excluding title page 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.*

**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**

A grading rubric will be provided and distributed in class.

**Late Submission of Work**

Written work due in class must be submitted to your instructor during class time.

Late work should be submitted in person to the Academic Coordinator during regular office hours (9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday). In the absence of the Academic Coordinator, another member of the administrative staff can accept the work in person. The NYUS staff will mark down the date and time of submission in the presence of the student. Students
must also submit an electronic copy of late written work to Turn-It-In within 24 hours.

Work submitted after the submission time 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.

Written work submitted beyond five (5) weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a 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.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are severe and are dealt with by the Director, NYU Sydney, not your instructor. Your home school will be notified and you will be dealt with according to the standards of that school. The codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges are outlined in the respective school’s academic resources.

**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 be penalised with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week of classes missed.**

The class roster will be marked in the first five minutes 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. Repeated absences will result in harsher penalties, including failure.

**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.

Required Texts

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

Internet Research Guidelines

• Students are strongly encouraged to use ‘Psychinfo’ via the NYU electronic library:
  [https://home.nyu.edu/cgi-bin/lIsng.pl?current_tab=221](https://home.nyu.edu/cgi-bin/lIsng.pl?current_tab=221)

The oral presentations, group project and written assignment should be based on journal articles, which makes Psychinfo very important.

Session 1: Overview + The Biological Basis of Behaviour [Chapter 2]
Monday 2 February

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

Session 2: The Brain and The Nervous System [Chapter 3]
Monday 9 February

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

Session 3: Research Methods in Psychology [Chapter 1]
Monday 16 February

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

Session 4: Cognition and Memory [Chapter 8]

Monday 23 February

Topics
- Acquisition, storage and retrieval
- Declarative/Procedural Knowledge
- Forgetting, memory gaps

Session 5: Exam 1 + Learning and Behaviour [Chapter 7]

Monday 2 March

Assignment: Exam 1 (15%)

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

Session 6: Sensation and Perception [Chapters 4 & 5]

Monday 9 March

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:
- Yeomans, M.R., Chambers, L., Blumenthal, H., & Blake, A. The role of expectancy in sensory and

**Assignment: Group project data collection**

Semester Break 16-20 March

**Session 7: Motivation and Emotion [Chapter 12]**

Monday 23 March

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

**Session 8: Developmental Psychology [Chapter 14]**

Monday 30 March

Topics:
- Introduction to human development
- Controversial themes
- Prenatal development
- Teratogens

**Session 9: Developmental Psychology (cont.) [Chapter 14] and Social Psychology [Chapter 13]**

Monday 6 April – No Class (Easter Monday Public Holiday)

Make up Class – Friday 10 April

Topics (Developmental Psychology):
- Memory development
- Adolescent development

Topics (Social Psychology):
- Introduction to social psychology
- Social influence: social facilitation, social loafing

**Session 10: Exam 2 + Social Psychology (cont.) [Chapter 13]**

Monday 13 April

Topics (Social Psychology):
- Social influence: social conformity, obedience
Assignment: Exam 2 (15%)

Session 11: Personality [Chapter 15]
Monday 20 April

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

Session 12: Psychopathology [Chapter 16]
Monday 27 April

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

Session 13: Forensic Psychology + Work on Group Projects
Monday 4 May

Topics:
- Introduction to forensic psychology
- Witnesses: testimony accuracy and memory suggestibility
- Witnesses: eyewitness identification evidence
- The psychology of juries

Assignment: Work on Group Projects

Session 14: Review and Exam Preparation
Monday 11 May

Assignment: Group Project Report due
FINAL EXAM: Wednesday May 20, 3.00-5.00pm

Your Instructor

Dr. Tim Marsh (Ph.D., Macquarie University) completed his Ph.D. 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.