V89.9001.001 Introduction to Psychology

Class code
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Instructor Details
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Office Hour: Please e-mail Dr Kovas to arrange an appointment.

Class Details
Spring 2011
Tuesday, 10.00-13.00
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
Introduces and examines the core topics of research in Psychology. What is psychology? What are the methods used to study human behavior? What factors influence human behaviour? Do genetics influence human behaviour? Does human behaviour change in social situations? Can human thinking and behavior be empirically examined and predicted? What are the underlying neural substrates of thought and behaviour?

The format of this course will be lectures, presentations, research exercises, and class discussions.

Desired Outcomes
1. To acquire and be able to articulate a knowledge of the main sub-disciplines of psychology
2. To gain an understanding of the major methodological and theoretical approaches to understanding human thought and behaviour
3. To foster a critical approach to evaluating psychological research and research from related disciplines.

Assessment Components
One short answer test, one oral presentation, one written assignment, one research exercise, one group project, a mock examination, and a final examination. The final grade will be determined by the short answer test (5%), oral presentation (10%), research exercise critique (5%), the group project (20%), the written assignment (20%), and the final examination with essay-type questions (40%). The short answer test will take place in session 4. The research exercise critique (1000-1200 words) is due in session 6. The date for the oral presentation will be arranged individually with each student, but will take place during the time-tabled class time (sessions 7-12). The written assignment (between 1200 and 1500 words) is due in at session 12. The mock examination will take place during session 13. The group project will commence in Week 5 and will develop in the following weeks; the write-up (1000-1200 words) and oral viva (group and individual) is due in Week 14. The final examination will take place in session 15.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations
Grade A: Mastery of theoretical and empirical literature and evidence of independent/critical thought/analysis.
Grade B: Basic understanding of theoretical and empirical literature

Grade C: Sufficient understanding but unsure of theoretical and empirical literature

Grade D: Poor attempt at grasping theoretical and empirical literature

Grade F: Fail

Grade conversion

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the mid point of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

Grading Policy

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results similar to those that prevail at Washington Square. At the College of Arts and Sciences, roughly 39% of all final grades are in the B+ to B- range, and 50% in the A/A- range.

We have therefore adopted the following grading guideline: in any non-Stern course, class teachers should try to insure that no more than 50% of the class receives an A or A-. (Stern has a different grading policy that we follow in all Stern courses, please see below).

A guideline is not a curve. A guideline is just that-it gives an ideal benchmark for the distribution of grades towards which we work.

Stern School of Business classes adhere to the following Stern grading guidelines:

There should be no more than

- 25-35% A's - awarded for excellent work
- 50-70% B's - awarded for good or very good work
- 5-15% C's or below - awarded for adequate or below work
NYU-L has a strict policy about course attendance. **No unexcused absences are permitted.** Students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work but should **NOT** approach them for excused absences. Excused absences will usually only be considered for serious, unavoidable reasons such as personal ill-health or illness in the immediate family. Trivial or non-essential reasons will not be considered.

Please note that you will need to ensure that no make-up classes – or required excursions - have been organised before making any travel plans for the semester.

**All absences due to illness must be reported on the first day of absence via phone (Freephone 0800 316 0469) or email (nyu.in.london@nyu.edu).** Absences due to illness must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Student Life. You will be asked to complete an Excused Absence Form (which can be obtained from NYU in London staff) and you will also need to produce a valid doctor’s note, having sought treatment for the illness within one week of your return to class.

**Absence requests for non-illness purposes** must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs prior to the date(s) in question – no excused absences for non-illness purposes can be applied retrospectively.

Unexcused absences will be penalized by deducting 3% from the student’s final course mark. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from examination (with authorisation, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, viva voce (oral examination), or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.). In the past, students have asked about early departure from the program at the end of the semester. This will not normally be allowed. Under no circumstances will we allow a student to take a final exam at any time other than it has been scheduled - neither before the other students in the class, nor afterwards. Students have been informed not to make return travel plans before the end of the exam week. Exams may not be held during your regularly scheduled class meeting. Please do not make plans during the exam period until you know the exact times of your exams.

NYU-L also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. If timely attendance becomes a problem it is the prerogative of each instructor to deduct a mark or marks from the final grade of each late arrival and each early departure.

Please note that for classes involving a **field trip or other external visit**, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for further details.
Late Submission of Work

(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs in office hours (Mon – Fri, 10:30 – 17:30), who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above. Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

(3) Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

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

(5) Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism: 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.

All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work to www.turnitin.com and hand in a printed copy with the digital receipt to their professor. Late submission of work rules apply to both the paper and electronic submission (see section 12 below) and failure to submit either copy of your work will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.

Electronic Submission

All students must submit an electronic copy of their written work to www.turnitin.com. This database will be searched for the purpose of comparison with other students’ work or with other pre-existing writing or publications, and other academic institutions may also search it. The database is managed by JISC (Joint Information Systems Council) and has been established with the support of the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

In order for you to be able to submit your work onto the Turnitin website, you will need to set up an account:

1) Go onto the Turnitin website http://www.turnitin.com
2) Click ‘New Users’ in the top right hand corner
3) Select user type of ‘student’
4) Enter your class ID & Turnitin class enrolment password (these will be e-mailed to you after the drop/add period, or contact academics@nyu.ac.uk if you have misplaced these.
5) Follow the online instructions to create your profile.

To submit your work for class, you will then need to:

1) Log in to the Turnitin website
2) Enter your class by clicking on the class name
3) Next to the piece of work you are submitting (please confirm the due date), click on the ‘submit’ icon
4) Enter the title of your piece of work
5) Browse for the file to upload from wherever you have saved it (USB drive, etc.), please ensure your work is in Word or PDF format, and click ‘submit’
6) Click ‘yes, submit’ to confirm you have selected the correct paper (or ‘no, go back’ to retry)
7) You will then have submitted your essay onto the Turnitin website.
8) Please print your digital receipt and attach this to the hard copy of your paper before you
submit it to your professor (this digital receipt appears on the web site, immediately after you submit your paper and is also sent to your e-mail address). Please also note that when a paper is submitted to Turnitin all formatting, images, graphics, graphs, charts, and drawings are removed from the paper so that the program can read it accurately. Please do not print the paper in this form to submit to your lecturers, as it is obviously pretty difficult to read! You can still access the exact file you uploaded by clicking on the ‘file’ icon in the ‘content’ column.

Please also see the Late Submission of Work policy, above.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work for one month after their grades are posted online on Albert and must supply an electronic copy of their work if requested to do so by NYU in London. Not submitting a copy of a piece of work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class. NYU in London may submit in an electronic form the work of any student to a database for use in the detection of plagiarism, without further prior notification to the student.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are set out in the Student Handbook.

Required Text(s)


*or later editions

The following additional journal articles are also required:

Session 6


Session 11


Session 13


Reading for Oral Presentations (Sessions 6-13)

Each student will have one more required piece of reading (an article of their choice on the topic of the session in which the student is giving presentation). Students must agree the article with the tutor ahead of presentation. The date and topic of the presentation for each student will be agreed during the first 2 weeks.
Reading for Group Projects (Sessions 6-14)

Each student will have at least one more required piece of reading (a template article of their choice for their proposed group research project). Students must agree the article and the project with the tutor before the project can commence.

Another broad-based psychology text which you might want to refer to is:


The following textbook will be very helpful for sessions 9, 10, 11, and 12. Though not required, it is strongly recommended: Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2007). Personality and individual differences. Oxford: Blackwell.

There is reading set from some more specialised textbooks which you may wish to consult (though these are NOT required)


Students are encouraged to read at least one empirical papers from the last 3 years when preparing their assignments.

Internet Research Guidelines

Students are strongly encouraged to use “Psychinfo” via the NYU electronic library: http://home.nyu.edu/cgi-bin/ISng.pl?current_tab=221

The oral presentation, group projects and written assignments should be based on journal articles, so psychinfo is very important.

It is recommended that students make use of the internet as a resource to guide their research, particularly for their presentation and written assignment. However it is important that resources such as Wikipedia, which are potentially unreliable, are used as direction toward primary source material in peer-reviewed journals. You will be able to access publications via electronic journal catalogue on NYUHome.
Additional Required Equipment

None

Session 1

What is Psychology? (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 1; Supplemental reading: None)

25 January

Session 2

The Biological Basis of Behaviour (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 4; Supplemental reading: Carlson (2005) chapters 2, 3, 4, & 5).

February 1

Session 3

Sensation and Perception (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 5; Supplemental reading: Bruce, Green & Georgeson (2000) chapters 1, 2 & 3).

February 8

This session will be structured as follows:

10-11.30 Lecture

11.30-11.45 Break

11.45-12 Walking to the Wellcome Trust Building (15 minutes walk).

12.00-1 Guided tour of the Medicine Today Exhibition and Discussion

Students can stay after 1pm to see the rest of the Wellcome Trust collection or to ask further questions.

Session 4

Learning and Behaviour (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 7; Supplemental reading: Domjan (2003), chapters 1, 2, 3 & 5)

February 15

Short answer test (35 minutes)

Session 5


February 22

Research Exercise

Session 6

Memory (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 8; Supplemental reading: Eysenck & Keane (2005) chapters 6, 7 & 8)

March 1

Material for Discussion

Students are required to read the following 3 articles and be prepared for discussion.


Research Exercise Critique is due

First Group Project Discussion and Planning, Literature Search for a Template paper (class and homework)
Session 7  
March 8

**Attention and Consciousness** (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 6; Supplemental reading: Eysenck & Keane (2005) chapter 5)

Oral presentations

Group Project Work (agreeing topic the topic, agreeing the template paper, planning the study)

Session 8  
March 15*

*Note that the class starts 30 minutes earlier, and will finish earlier.

**Psychodynamic theories: Visit to Freud Museum (London)**

This session will be organised as follows:

9.30 Class discussion*

10.30 Walk to the Underground and travel to the Museum

11.30 till 12.30 Guided tour (Students can stay longer if they want)

Note that the class will start in the usual location, and will finish at the museum, approximately 30min journey.

**Self-study (guided by the list of questions provided by the professor before the Session).**

Additional reading to be provided via blackboard

**No presentations today**

Group Project: Data Collection

Session 9  
March 22

**Motivation and Emotion** (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 11; Supplemental reading: Chamorro-Premuzic (2007) chapter 9)

Oral presentations

Group Project: Data Collection, Discussion

Session 10  
March 29

**Personality** (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 15; Supplemental reading: Chamorro-Premuzic (2007) chapters 2 & 3)

Oral presentations

Group Project: Data Collection should be completed by the next class

Session 11  
April 5


**Material for Discussion**

Students are required to read the following articles and be prepared for discussion.


Oral presentations

Group Project: Enter/collate the data, analyse the results, discussion

Session 12

April 12

Psychopathology (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 17 & 18; Supplemental reading: Chamorro-Premuzic (2007), chapter 4)

Written assignment due

Oral presentations

Group Project: Enter/collate the data, analyse the results, discussion

Session 13

May 3

Social Psychology (Core reading: Passer et al. (2008) chapter 14; Supplemental reading: None)

Material for Discussion

Students are required to read the following article and be prepared for discussion.


Mock Exam (45 minutes)

Session 14

May 10

Psychology in the Real World (no reading assignment: summary and revision )

Group Project Write-up submission and viva

Session 15

May 17

Final exam (1.5 hours)

Classroom Etiquette

Eating is not permitted in any classrooms in 6 Bedford Square or at Birkbeck College. Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

Required Co-curricular Activities

1. Date: 8 February

Venue: Wellcome Trust Collection

Meeting time: Usual Class time

Meeting point: Usual Class location

2. Date: 15 March

Venue: Freud Museum

Meeting time: 9.30 (30 mins earlier than usual)

Meeting point: Usual Class location
Date: 14 March (Optional): Students are invited to join Goldsmiths and Birkbeck students for the screening of a feature film, followed by discussion of psychological and scientific issues.

Venue: Goldsmiths College, University of London

Meeting time: 5-7.30pm

Meeting point: to be confirmed (a Goldsmiths student will collect the group and will bring them to the students to the location). The group will likely to travel by bus or by train.