

## Visiting Student Modules Semester 1 2023-2024

### PS220 Psychology of Learning (5 ECTS)

**Lecturer:** Dr. Ian Stewart

**Description:** This module introduces students to theory and empirical research on key processes of learning as understood from a behaviour analytic perspective. It provides definitions of basic behavioural terminology and describes experiments from the history of the experimental analysis of behaviour that illustrate basic behavioural principles. In doing so it traces the evolution of behavioural research, starting with laboratory work with animals using simple classical and operant conditioning paradigms, progressing through increasingly complex behavioural processes and finishing with an examination of modern behaviour analytic investigations into language and higher cognition in humans. The strong scientific tradition of behaviour analysis is emphasized, as evidenced by rigorous measurement of behaviour, precise specification of methods and careful interpretation of outcomes.

#### **Module objectives**

Upon completion of this module students should be able to:

- Discuss the differences between a behaviour analytic and a cognitive approach to psychology
- Define basic learning processes and empirical procedures including classical conditioning, operant conditioning, discrimination, generalization, extinction, spontaneous recovery, habituation, reinforcement, punishment, avoidance, shaping, fading, matching-to-sample, schedules of reinforcement
- List and describe key studies demonstrating learning processes and principles
- Describe modern behaviour analytic theory and research on language and cognition in humans including rule governed behaviour, stimulus equivalence and relational frame theory

#### **Basic Reading**

- Chance, P. (1998). First Course in Applied Behavior Analysis. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole. [ISBN-10: 0534339360]
- Torneke, N. (2010). Learning RFT. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger. [ISBN-10: 1572249064; ISBN-13: 978-1572249066]

#### **Additional Reading**

- Catania A. C. (2002). Learning (Interim) 4th Edition. Sloan Publishing. [ISBN-10: 1597380075; ISBN-13: 978-1597380072]
- Baldwin, J.D. & Baldwin, J.I. (2001). Behavior Principles in Everyday Life (4th Edition). NJ: Prentice Hall. [ISBN-10: 0130873764; ISBN-13: 978-0130873767]

Additional, topic-related reading lists of books and papers will be provided online.

#### **Evaluation**

One two-hour examination at the end of Semester 1 (85%); Web-based tutorial to be completed at any time during the semester and before the examination (15%).

### PS322 Health Psychology (5 ECTS)

**Module Co-ordinator:** Dr Sinead Sheehan

**Description:** This course draws on a variety of subfields in psychology to impart an understanding of how psychological factors contribute to and are affected by health, illness, and health care. The course is organised into the following sections: introduction to health psychology and the key models of health and illness; stress and its impact on health and illness, including moderators of the stress experience; health-related behaviour, the factors that influence it and the ability of health-behaviour models to predict it; pain and its management; doctor-patient communication, styles of communication and their impact on patient satisfaction and compliance; and current issues in applied health psychology.

#### **Module objectives**

- To highlight the importance of biological, psychological and social factors acting together on health and illness
- To inculcate an understanding of how health beliefs and habits impact on risky behaviour in young people
- To gain an appreciation of the impact of stress and emotions on health and the development of illness
- To understand the nature of pain and the role of psychology in ameliorating the effects of chronic pain

- To appreciate the nature of doctor-patient communication and its potential impact on patient satisfaction and compliance
- To understand fundamental contributions to the field from diverse subfields within psychology while focusing on recent research in specific applied areas

#### **Basic Reading**

- Morrison, V. & Bennett, P. (2012). *An introduction to health psychology*. 3rd edition, London: Pearson/Prentice Hall
- Additional, topic-related reading lists are provided during the course.

#### **Evaluation**

One two-hour examination at the end of the semester.

### **PS334 Applied Behaviour Analysis (5 ECTS)**

**Co-ordinator:** Dr Aoife McTiernan/Dr Ciara Gunning

**Lecturers:** Dr Aoife McTiernan/Dr Ciara Gunning

**Description:** “Applied Behaviour Analysis” (ABA) is the process of systematically applying interventions based upon the principles of learning theory to improve socially significant behaviours. The effectiveness of ABA has been shown in a wide range of areas including education, special education, organizational management, parent training, occupational safety, sports psychology and clinical psychology. While ABA can be used with a wide range of human behaviours, it is often recommended as the best-practice approach for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or pervasive developmental disorders (e.g., autism). This module provides an introduction to the field of applied behaviour analysis. It will examine the applications of applied behaviour analysis to the field of rehabilitation, education and developmental disorders.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

**On successful completion of this module students should be able to:**

- Understand the theoretical underpinnings of applied behavioural analysis
- Evaluate the principles and procedures of applied behavioural analysis
- Analyse the effectiveness of applied behavioural analysis in education and clinical psychology
- Appraise the effectiveness of early behavioural intervention as a treatment for autism spectrum disorder

#### **Basic Reading**

- Miltenberger, R., G. (2004). *Behaviour Modification: Principles and procedures*, 3rd ed. Belmont, CA: London.
- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. & Heward, W. (2007). *Applied behaviour analysis*. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

#### **Evaluation**

One 2-hour examination at the end of the Semester.

### **PS403 Biological Psychology (5 ECTS)**

**Lecturers:** Dr Tom Burke

**Description:** The aim of this course is to provide students with a good understanding of the biological bases of behaviour from a brain systems perspective. The structure, modes of communication and functions of the nervous system will be reviewed with reference to the following: the biological basis of schizophrenia, the biological rhythms of waking, sleeping and dreaming, and the neural mechanisms of higher level cognitive functions such as language, learning and memory.

#### **Module objectives**

- To introduce the relation between brain and cognition and to thus encourage a physiological perspective on psychological function
- To introduce the concept of localized or modular brain function and to then develop the contrasting but nonetheless key concept of distributed brain function with reference to complex disorders of the brain such as Parkinson's disease and schizophrenia
- To impart to students the distinct roles and contributions of the various brain systems that collectively mediate higher level cognitive functions (e.g., language, learning and memory) and also waking, sleeping and dreaming.
- To encourage students to think in a critically evaluative way about empirical research in the biological psychology field.

#### **Basic Reading**

Carlson, Neil R. (2007). *Foundations of Physiological Psychology*, 7th Edition. Boston: Pearson / Allyn & Bacon.

Additional topic-related reading lists are provided during the course.

#### **Evaluation**

One two-hour examination at the end of the Semester.

### **PS338 Theories of Personality (5 ECTS)**

**Co-ordinator:** Dr Jenny Groarke

**Description:** This course will introduce students to the classic personality theories and theorists in an in-depth manner, and will encourage critical evaluation of same. The major theories will include: psychoanalytic theory; humanistic and existentialist theories; social cognitive theory; behaviourist perspectives; and trait theory. Additionally, the course will review taxonomies such as the DSM-V.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Students will be expected to have an in-depth understanding of each of the above theorists' key ideas about personality development, and evaluate the theories in a thoughtful and critical manner.

They will also be informed about how the personal lives and experiences of theorists may impact on the development of the individual theories of personality, and will demonstrate consideration of these backgrounds in their evaluations of the theories.

Students will also be expected to understand how the DSM-V is used in classifying personalities that present in the disordered range.

#### **Basic Reading**

- Sollod, R. N., Wilson, J. P. & Monte, C. F. (2009). *Beneath the Mask: An introduction to theories of personality*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Other recommended readings will be made available during the module

#### **Evaluation**

The course will be assessed by continuous assessment with one written assignment, and MCQs.

### **PS408 Human Sexuality (5 ECTS)**

**Lecturer:** Dr. Padraig Mac Neela

**Description:** PS408 examines topics that fall under the rubric of human sexuality (e.g., sexual variance, prostitution, and pornography). Through a series of films and interdisciplinary readings, this course details how sociocultural forces may shape individuals' experiences as sexual beings and their interpretations of various sexual practices.

#### **Module objectives**

- To enhance students' understanding of the discourses surrounding diverse aspects of human sexual experience.
- To increase students' familiarity with, and ability to examine critically, historical and contemporary sexological research.
- To expand students' awareness of the study of human sexuality as an interdisciplinary and multi-media endeavour.

#### **Basic Reading**

- Articles will be assigned throughout the course.

**Evaluation** Continuous assessment, based on performance on "thought question" assignments and quizzes.

### **PS214 Developmental Psychology 1 (5 ECTS)**

**Lecturers:** Dr Mairead Foody

**Description:** The history of developmental psychology is reviewed and the main theoretical perspectives and special methodologies employed in the area are examined. The content also includes the psychology of infant development, with particular reference to cognitive development; social and emotional development; moral development and gender development.

#### **Module objectives**

- To highlight the importance of a life-span perspective on development
- To encourage awareness of change and growth as ongoing processes
- To acquire familiarity with the ecology of development
- To understand and explain the interaction of biological and environmental influences on development
- To understand factors that contribute to developmental change

- To appreciate and appraise competing perspectives on cognitive and psychosocial development

### **Basic Reading**

- Shaffer, D. & Kipp, K. (2007). *Developmental Psychology, Childhood and Adolescence*. Wadsworth.

Additional, topic-related reading lists are provided during the course.

### **Evaluation**

One two-hour examination at the end of Semester.

## **PS409 Psychology, Science & Pseudoscience (5 ECTS)**

**Lecturer:** Prof. Brian Hughes

**Description:** Pseudoscience refers to a practice or body of knowledge that purports to be scientific but which diverges from the quality-standards conventionally applied to science and scientists. Examples include supposedly scientific claims surrounding telepathy, clairvoyance, psychokinesis, the abduction of humans by aliens, the treatment of diseases using crystals, communication with the dead, neurolinguistic programming, Primal Scream Therapy, reincarnation, and perpetual motion machines. This module seeks to consider: (a) the distinctions (and occasional overlaps) that exist between psychology and pseudoscientific treatments of psychological subject matter; and (b) the psychological nature and appeal of pseudoscience. After considering the nature of scientific inquiry, the module seeks to describe the history of pseudoscience as well as unsubtle (e.g., ESP) and subtle (e.g., assumptions about "normality") examples of psychology-related pseudoscience. The module then looks at the appeal of pseudoscience, the psychology of evidentiary reasoning (e.g., the unreliability of anecdotal testimony, the counter-intuitive nature of randomness, and the nature of heuristics) and methodological issues to be considered when researching extraordinary claims (e.g., blinding, placebo controls, and meta-analysis).

### **Module objectives**

- To explore the nature and scope of pseudoscience and its demarcation from mainstream science
- To highlight areas of pseudoscience that are frequently but erroneously conflated with mainstream psychology
- To explore the psychological appeal of pseudoscience
- To examine the psychology of evidentiary reasoning
- To consider the requirements for conducting rigorously sceptical research and for evaluating extraordinary claims

### **Basic Reading**

- Compulsory reading: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudoscience> (and linked entries).
- Targeted reading lists will be provided over the course of the module.

### **Evaluation**

End-of-term written examination (2 hours). Candidates will be required to answer two questions. The first will be compulsory but broad-ranging in scope, allowing students to base their responses on the module as a whole and/or areas of their own choosing. For the second, students will be given a wide choice of several (more traditional) questions that target specific topics.

## **PS415 Perception, Attention & Performance (5 ECTS)**

**Lecturer:** Dr Mark Elliott

**Description:** The course aims to provide an introduction to sensory and perceptual processes, blending classical and contemporary approaches to basic information processing. The course will outline key theoretical issues and methodological contributions in perception and cognition generally. In addition, it will demonstrate the scope for the application of knowledge of sensory and perceptual processes to other areas of cognitive psychology and neuroscience. The course aims to cover the following topics: basic sensory processes and psychophysics; pattern recognition and visual search; object recognition; colour perception; visual and auditory attention; subliminal perception; multiple task performance; perceptual mechanisms and dynamics; models of information processing; applications of cognitive psychology.

### **Module objectives**

- Students should be able to specify the main theories, models, concepts or methods concerning the psychology of perception and human performance
- Critically evaluate each of the theories in relation to any rival theories citing research evidence to support or refute each idea

- Provide examples of experimental and modeling techniques used in perception and attention research
- Review the contributions of perception research to general psychology
- Discuss the applicability of research (data, theories, methods, concepts) on perception, attention and action to real-world problems

**Basic Reading**

- Styles, E.A. (1997). *The Psychology of Attention*. Hove, UK: The Psychology Press.
- Goldstein, E.B. (2001). *Sensation and Perception. (6th Edition)*. New York: Brooks/Cole.

**Evaluation**

Written Exam.