

PSYCHOLOGY

The Course

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and human behaviour. Psychology will help to provide answers to questions such as: why we behave in the way that we do, why minds “go wrong”, what causes mental health issues, why do some people not experience mental health issues, does treatment work, which treatments are most effective, what can we do to maintain good mental health, what happens when we fall in love etc.

The course will introduce you to five psychological approaches to studying the brain: biological, behaviourist, psychodynamic, cognitive and positive. Each explores: the psychological assumptions that underpin the approach, supporting evidence, treatment, classic research, how it can be applied to explain relationship formation. You will be taught to evaluate, to make comparisons, judgements about the value, effectiveness and usefulness of each.

If you would like a career about or involving people then Psychology may be for you!

Tasks: Before you start Psychology it is worth doing a little reading around the subject. When you read, consider how the approach/ explanation links to:

Determinism/ free will: is the behaviour controlled by internal or external forces or does the explanation suggest that the person controls their own behaviour;

Nature/ nurture: is the behaviour a result of genes and genetic predisposition or the environment that surrounds the person;

Reductionism/ holism: does the explanation break down the complexity of the human mind into simple parts or consider the system as a whole;

Idiographic/ nomothetic: can behaviour be explained by uniqueness or can we generalise and apply the theory to all humans?

There are many television programmes and films that provide a glimpse into the workings of the brain and mind. A tip for budding psychologists is to watch with a critical eye and consider what causes the behaviour and can that be used to explain, cause and even prevent the symptoms or behaviour?

Pre-Course Reading

Acquisition of a Memory Skill (Chase et al, 1980) <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a084754.pdf>

A fascinating study of how one person, after more than 230 hours of practice in the laboratory, was able to increase his memory span from 7- 79 digits.

Children's Minds (Margaret Donaldson) *Adopts a respectful, creative approach to studying children.*

Alice Through the Looking Glass (Lewis Carroll) *Consider this not as a children's story but as a way of exploring whether logic, perception and previous knowledge influence our idea of consciousness.*

Pre-Course Watching

Louis Theroux: A Different Brain **The Documentary: How our Brains Work** **BBC Ideas: Where do Phobias Come From?**

Useful Website: An Introduction to the brain: https://www.braininjuryhub.co.uk/information-library/an-introduction-to-the-brain?gclid=Cj0KCQjwsYb0BRCOARIsAHbLPhElwD9GZ4hEpOwQ07-DNn7_DR85hsSt-MzBUMgj5OD8cU0FOwpz-