ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
No formal qualifications are required, however, all modules are taught at university level and students should be able to read, write and speak English fluently.

Although this module is open to all, students will benefit from completing the introductory module *Foundations in Modern Psychology*. Students who are new to psychology should ensure that they have undertaken appropriate preparatory reading before the start of the course as detailed below.

AIM
To examine how psychological research contributes to our understanding of individual and group behaviour in a social context.

OBJECTIVES
- Examine the ways in which individuals interact and communicate.
- Evaluate theories of social behaviour including social interaction, attitudes and persuasion, and behaviour in groups in the light of psychological research.
- Give an overview of the research methods used within this area of psychology, including their relative advantages and disadvantages.
- Highlight the ethical issues involved when conducting research [with particular reference to harm] and the issues that arise when trying to generalise results (for example across cultures).
- Support students to take part in the assessment process.
- Support and develop students' study skills, including note taking and essay writing.
- Build students' confidence in presenting their own ideas and in critical thinking.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of the course you will be able to:
- Discuss the ways in which individuals interact and communicate.
- Evaluate theories of social behaviour including social interaction, attitudes and persuasion, and behaviour in groups.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the development of ideas within this field, and of contemporary approaches and issues.
• Recognise a range of research methods that might be appropriate to the study of this area of psychology (identifying strengths and weaknesses of core methodologies, including both qualitative as well as quantitative approaches).
• Identify the ethical issues when conducting research in this area (with particular consideration of harm).
• Demonstrate an appropriate awareness of cultural considerations in the evaluation of theory and research.
• Illustrate the practical applications of research findings.
• Think critically about the subjects covered.
• Present your own ideas about issues addressed on the course.
• Discuss and implement a range of strategies to support your learning.
• Successfully plan and write essays or other assignments which have been set to support your learning on this course.

CONTENT

Introduction
What is Social Psychology? Is it a science? What methods do social psychologists use?

Social Interaction
Under this heading we look at how we perceive people and their actions, who we like and dislike, how we form impressions of others and patterns of relationships. We also examine the channels of communication, both verbal and non-verbal that we commonly use.

Self and Identity

Attitudes
In this part of the course we examine various aspects of attitudes and attitude change, prejudice and discrimination. We shall also discuss the meaning and reliability of opinion polling. We will examine persuasion methods and types of attitude change.

Altruism and Aggression
Why and in what circumstances do we help others? What causes aggressive behaviour? Preventing and controlling aggression

Group Processes
What happens in a group? We consider the influences of the group on the individual and vice versa; conformity and obedience; we look at group processes, such as problem solving, decision making, leadership patterns and inter-group relations. We will look at the elements of cultic and totalitarian social systems including charismatic authoritarian leadership, isolating structures, total ideologies and coercive persuasion.

Applications of Social Psychology
How do we apply the findings of social psychology? We look at some real life situations: in court, e.g. eyewitness testimony; at work, e.g. motivation and job satisfaction; in politics, e.g. attitudes and voting.

It is expected that 75% of the syllabus content will be covered.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS
A range of teaching methods may be used e.g. lectures on the area being studied - students are encouraged to ask questions and discuss points throughout. There may also be small group exercises with feedback to the large group to provide an opportunity for clarification of ideas and discussion. Other methods may include: videos, experiments, student presentations, discussion of published articles, etc. Students will be given help with study skills.
Credit points are used to summarise and describe the amount of learning taking place for a given module. For a 30 credit point module this equates to 300 hours most of which is comprised of independent learning. Normally 44 hours would be delivered in the classroom but it may sometimes be necessary to cover a small part of the learning by other means such as directed independent learning.

As such students should also expect to build on their learning in class by undertaking guided independent study including appropriate reading and research. Further details can be found in the appropriate Course Handbook as detailed below.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT
The assessment process gives students important opportunities to learn, to check their learning and to discuss their progress with the tutor. Consequently, students will be expected to prepare four pieces of coursework for assessment. These may take a variety of forms such as essays, case studies, reports and possibly class presentations. They will be 1,500 words in length (or the equivalent). You are encouraged to discuss with your tutor the particular topics and the type of assignment you would like to focus on in your assessments. It may be possible to accommodate your personal interests within the syllabus.

Regulations regarding assessment are detailed in the appropriate Course Handbook, which will be circulated electronically prior to the course start date. Students are strongly advised to read the Course Handbook prior to commencing their studies.

The module is part of the Psychology (Certificate of Higher Education). If the module is completed successfully, 30 credit points will be awarded, which may be transferred to some degree courses.

READING
Preparatory reading
If this is the first course you have taken in psychology you will find it useful to read an introductory text that outlines the main schools of thought within psychology and the main approaches to research methods. Particularly useful are:


Recommended texts
The key text required for this course is Baron, R.A. and Branscombe (2011) Social Psychology (13th ed.) Pearson Education

You are not expected to read all the books listed below. They are examples of books that you may find interesting or useful.

Introductory texts:

Books that go into more detail or which are more advanced:
INDICATIVE SYLLABUS

Milgram, S. (1997) *Obedience to Authority*, Pinter and Martin

Please note: Psychology books are frequently revised and updated. Any recent edition would be suitable to use.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The My Birkbeck website ([http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/)) is your gateway to accessing all student support services at Birkbeck.

You may find the following links particularly useful:-

- Obtaining your library/ID card: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/you/cards](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/you/cards)
- Accessing IT Services: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/computing/username](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/computing/username)
- Study skills support: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support/study-skills](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support/study-skills)

You can visit the My Birkbeck helpdesk on the ground floor of the main Birkbeck building on Malet Street (entry via Torrington Square). For details of opening hours visit: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/helpdesk/](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/helpdesk/)

You can also call the helpdesk on 020 7631 6316.

LIBRARY AND STUDY SKILLS RESOURCES

Once you have your ID card, you may use the Birkbeck library and associated resources. You may find the following web links helpful:

- For information on how best to access the resources available for psychology students through Birkbeck College Library, students may wish to work through the tutorial available at [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/life/](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/life/)
- For specific guidance for psychologists and psychology students on getting the best out the internet go to: [http://www.vtstutorials.co.uk/](http://www.vtstutorials.co.uk/) - and search for ‘Psychology’
- For specific guidance on how to avoid plagiarism in your course work go to [https://connect.le.ac.uk/p50066682/](https://connect.le.ac.uk/p50066682/) and press the ‘play’ button.

COURSE EVALUATION

During the course students will be asked to complete an evaluation form which gives the opportunity to provide feedback on all aspects of their learning.

WHAT CAN I DO NEXT

It is important you are clear which award the module you are enrolled on counts towards. Our website provides an overview of each Certificate award so you can decide which best suits your needs: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2014/certificates/subject/psychology/](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2014/certificates/subject/psychology/)

Information is available on core and option modules for each Certificate. Your choice of subsequent modules you take should be informed by this information. Modules can be taken in any order although it is recommended that certain core modules are taken first. Not all core modules have to be taken in the same year. If you need further advice you can contact the department by telephone on 0207 631 6669 or by e-mail: psychologycert@bbk.ac.uk

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