BIRKBECK, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Module/Occurrence Code: FFPS094H4ACB

Subject Area: Psychology

Module Title: PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING AND LEARNING STYLES

Award Designation: Psychology (Certificate of Higher Education)
Applied Psychology (Certificate of Higher Education)

Class Venue: Central London

First Meeting: Tuesday 10th January 2017, 7-9pm

No of Meetings: 11 meetings

Class Dates: 10/01/17 - 21/03/17

Please note that this syllabus is provisional and subject to change prior to the class start date. Enrolled students will be notified of any changes by e-mail.

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. Students new to psychology will benefit from undertaking some preparatory reading as detailed below.

AIM
To review psychological theory that describes and explains human learning in adulthood and to explore ways in which such theory may be applied to support learning in a range of settings.

OBJECTIVES
- Locate the question of how we learn within the discipline of psychology.
- Explain and evaluate the principle theories which can contribute to our understanding of ‘how we learn’.
- Explore the range of factors within the learner and their environment that affect learning.
- Discuss ways in which the psychological perspective on learning may be applied in practice, particularly in professional settings.
- Give an overview of the research methods used within psychology including a basic evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Identify the ethical issues 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

On successful completion of this course you will be able to:
Identify key principles from behavioural, cognitive and humanistic schools of psychology which are useful in explaining 'how we learn' and give examples of these principles in action in a range of settings.

Describe various forms of individual difference in learning and discuss the implications for learners and teachers.

Demonstrate an understanding of the development of ideas within this field, and of contemporary approaches and issues.

Describe, discuss and evaluate a range of research methodologies that might be appropriate to the study of psychology (identifying strengths and weaknesses of core methodologies, including both qualitative as well as quantitative approaches).

Identify the ethical issues when conducting psychological research (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
During the course we are likely to address most of the following topics:

- Principles from humanistic psychology that explain aspects of learning (i.e. concern for human growth and the necessary conditions for this to occur).
- Principles from cognitive psychology that explain aspects of learning (e.g. memory, schemas and theories of learning).
- Principles from behavioural psychology that explain aspects of learning.
- Applications of these principles to real life situations.
- Student motivation, its effects on learning and how it can be enhanced.
- Other features of individual differences that may be relevant to learning (e.g. intelligence, personality and affective factors, sociocultural factors, skills students bring with them for learning and problem-solving,).
- Group dynamics and their effect on both learner and teachers.
- Learning styles: an overview of theories and a more in-depth evaluation and application of one or two theories.

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 15 credit point module this equates to 150 hours most of which is comprised of independent learning. Normally 22 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 two pieces of coursework for assessment. One will be written under timed conditions in the classroom. The other may take a variety of forms such as essays, case studies, reports and possibly class presentations. This piece 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.

Timed Essay:

w/b 27 Feb 2017

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) and Applied Psychology (Certificate of Higher Education) awards. If the module is completed successfully, 15 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 it may be useful to read a chapter from an introductory text that outlines the main schools of thought within psychology and the main approaches to research methods. Particularly useful are:


Introductory books of this type cover similar material. It is the detail in each that will vary. Have a look and see which one you find easy to read, interesting and useful.

*Recommended texts*

You are not expected to read all the books listed below. They are examples of books that you may find interesting or useful. Your tutor will give you further guidance once the course begins.

*Introductory texts:*

*Texts which go into more detail or which are more advanced:*

**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 0203 073 8044 or by e-mail: psychologycert@bbk.ac.uk

Revised July 2015