BIRKBECK, University of London

Course Code: SCPS090H4ACB
Subject Area: Psychology
Module Title: Critical Approaches to Attachment
Award Designation: Applied Psychology (Certificate of Higher Education)
Psychology (Certificate of Higher Education)

Level/credits: Level 4, 15 credits
Class Venue: Central London
First meeting: Tuesday 25th April 2017, 6.30-8.30pm
No of Meetings: 11 meetings
Course dates: 25/04/17-04/07/17

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 introduce students to attachment theory as it applies to relationships throughout the lifespan.

OBJECTIVES
- Outline the history of theories of attachment with particular reference to the Bowlby-Ainsworth ecological theory of attachment
- Show how attachment theory can explain behaviour under conditions of stress and anxiety
- Describe diverse attachment, separation and exploratory behaviours
- Demonstrate the relevance of attachment theory to an understanding of behaviour in close relationships throughout the lifespan
- Examine evidence for transmission of patterns of attachment behaviours across generations
- Acquaint students with the principle methods used by researchers in the field of attachment
- Introduce students to key debates on the topic of attachment
- Explore popular beliefs about attachment in the light of findings from research
- To encourage critical discussions about the current state of theories of attachment
- Identify ways in which attachment theory might inform better understanding of work and social relationships
- Explore ways in which attachment theory might be applied to portrayals of intimate relationships in film, literature, etc.
- Encourage the development of students’ own observational skills
- 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.
- Build students’ confidence in presenting their own ideas and in critical thinking.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
On successful completion of this course students should be able to:

- Describe attachment theory
- Describe research methods and findings in relation to attachment behaviour
- 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.
- Locate further information about current research and debates
- Think critically about research findings and key conceptual issues in this often controversial field of enquiry
- Discuss popular beliefs about attachment
- Discuss ways in which attachment theory might increase understanding of the emotional development both of young children and of individuals throughout the lifespan
- Discuss ways in which their knowledge of attachment theory might increase their understanding of human behaviour in close relationships
- Describe the extent to which attachment theory can explain behaviour in social relationships (both at work and in more intimate settings) and the need for further research in particular areas
- 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.

COURSE CONTENT

NB. This may be subject to slight alteration depending on needs/interests of student group

- What is attachment behaviour?
- What did John Bowlby really say?
- Researching attachment behaviour
- Relationships between infant attachment patterns and later behaviour
- The inner world
- Methods for researching adult attachment behaviours
- Intergenerational transmission of attachment patterns
- Couple relationships
- Other relationships and influences
- Therapy and interventions

Also included over the period of the course:

Study skills

- Building capacity for confident enquiry
- How to make sense of research papers
- Understanding the use of research tools in psychology
- Introduction to literature and Internet searches
- Practice at essay-writing and/or composition of aural presentation pieces
- Creating systems for keeping information (use of indexing systems, note-taking, referencing)

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.
Attendance at local International Attachment Network events will be recommended as will relevant films/plays, media programmes and literature.

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. These may take a variety of forms such as essays, case studies, reports and possibly class presentations. Each piece will be 1,500 words in length (or the equivalent). Students may be able to negotiate with the tutor to complete one longer piece of work (3,000 words or equivalent). You are encouraged to discuss with your tutor the particular topics and the type of assignment they 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.

If the course is completed successfully, 15 credit points will be awarded, which may be transferred to some degree courses.

GENERAL 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. You will find one or two introductory chapters on the main schools of thought and research methods in most general introductions to psychology e.g.

NB This is slightly easier to read than the book by Atkinson et al.

Introductory books of this type covers 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. It would be best if you could borrow such a book from a library as it is only particular parts that you will need for this course.

The following provide a good overview of attachment theory


*Key texts on attachment:*

It is highly recommended that students take a look at any of Bowlby's articles or books, especially Volumes 1 and 2 of his trilogy. Some titles are listed below:

INDICATIVE SYLLABUS


Further reading will be suggested by your tutor.

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/) 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
- Accessing IT Services: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/computing/username
- Contacting our disability office: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability/disability-office
- Study skills support: 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/

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 Pirkbeck College Library, students may wish to work through the tutorial available at 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/ - and search for ‘Psychology’
- For specific guidance on how to avoid plagiarism in your course work go to https://connect.le.ac.uk/p500666682/ 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/

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 2014