BIRKBECK COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Module/Occurrence Code: SCPS174H4ACB
Module Title: Health Psychology
Award Designation: CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION in:
Psychology
Applied Psychology
Credits: 15 at Level 4
Venue: Central London
First Meeting: Monday 24th April 2017, 6.30-9pm
No of Meetings: 9 Meetings
Class Dates: 24/04/17-03/07/17 (no class: 01/05, 29/05)

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 provide an introductory overview of the way in which the study of psychology may be of benefit in the promotion of health and the provision of health care.

OBJECTIVES
- Introduce the biopsychosocial model of health psychology.
- Explore the possible uses of psychology in promoting beliefs and behaviours which support health.
- Give an overview of the possible uses of psychology in service provision.
- Point to the links between health psychology and psychobiology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, abnormal and personality psychology.
- 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 involved when conducting research in psychology (with particular consideration of 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.
- Identify areas of interest for students that may be pursued in further study.
LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of the course you will be able to:
- Highlight links between health psychology and other branches of psychology.
- Explain how psychological principles may be used to help modify health behaviours.
- Explain the ways in which the study of psychology may impact on the practice of health professionals both in terms of service provision (e.g., the quality of communication) and in terms of treating specific problems (e.g., pain) and conditions (e.g., cancer).
- 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.
- 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.

INDICATIVE COURSE CONTENT

Introduction & Context
The biopsychosocial model of health; inequalities of health and illness; cultural beliefs and influences;
Theoretical models: cognitive, social, learning models of health behaviour;
Research methods and measurement of health behaviour.

Becoming Ill
Illness cognitions; interpreting symptoms
Stress; models and causes of stress.

Being Ill
Pain management & control; placebo effects;
Coping strategies; dealing with chronic illness
Impact of illness on the family;
Doctor-patient communication; patient compliance

Specific Conditions
Addictive behaviours; eating disorders; coronary heart disease; sexual health; cancer

Health Maintenance and Health promotion
Diet and Exercise;
Health education & Attitudes

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS
Teaching and learning methods will be centred on the needs of students. Introductory lectures with the positive and active involvement of students asking questions and discussing points throughout will generally be the starting point. There will also be individual and small group exercises with feedback to the large group to provide further
opportunity for discussion and clarification of ideas. Other methods will include videos and student presentations. Students will be given help and encouragement with study skills.

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 Award Handbook.

**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 1500 words in length (or the 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. In order to successfully complete the module students must attain at least 40% overall for their coursework.

If the module is completed successfully, 15 Credits at Level 4 will be awarded, which may be transferred to some degree courses.

**READING**


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/
- 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/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/2015/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 020 3073 8044/020 7631 6669 or by e-mail: psychologycert@bbk.ac.uk

Revised July 2015