BIRKBECK, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Module/Occurrence Code: SCPS090H4ACB

Department: Psychological Sciences

Module Title: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO ATTACHMENT

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

Level/credits: Level 4, 15 credits

Venue: Central London

First class: Tuesday 24th April 2018, 6:30 – 8:30pm

No of classes: 11

Class Dates: 24/04/18 - 03/07/18

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.

AIMS
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.

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. short lectures on the area being studied - students are encouraged to ask questions and discuss points throughout. There will also be small group exercises, sometimes 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 module this equates to 150 hours, most of which is comprised of independent learning. For this module 22 hours would be delivered in the classroom.

Students MUST 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. 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 of these pieces 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.

Each piece of assessment is worth 50% of the total module mark. To pass the module students must achieve a mark of 40% overall.

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 course is part of the Certificate of Higher Education in Psychology. If the course is completed successfully, 15 credit points will be awarded, which may be transferred to some degree courses.

Students who complete the core modules on the Certificate of Higher Education in Psychology may be considered for entry onto the second year of Birkbeck’s part-time BSc Psychology programme. For more information see: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2017/certificates/programmes/UEHPSYCH/

READING

This reading list offers a selection of books which are particularly appropriate for this module. It is not expected that students will read them all. Weekly readings will be provided by your course lecturer, who will also recommend other reading during the course.

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:


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

STUDENT SERVICES
The Student Advice Centre is located on the ground floor of the main Birkbeck building on Malet Street (entry via Torrington Square).

For more information about Birkbeck’s range of student support services visit: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/student-services/

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’

Please refer to the Course Handbook for more information.

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/2017/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

Revised August 2017