

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BA Psychosocial Studies with Principles of Psychodynamic Counselling (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE, Cert HE
Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year	Yes
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Science
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (3 years) / Part-time (4 years) / Full-time with Foundation Year (4 years) Part-time with Foundation Year (6 years) October
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for</u> <u>England</u>	Sociology, Social Psychology (within the Psychology benchmark group)
UCAS code	C847, C845
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBAPSPP_C (full-time, 3 years) UBAPSPPC_C (part-time, 4 years) UUBFPSPP_C (full-time with FY, 4 years) UBFPSPPC_C (part-time with FY, 6 years)
HECoS Code	101307
Start date of programme	2017/18
Date of programme approval	Autumn 2016
Date of last programme amendment approval	May 2026
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Date of last revision to document	26.05.2026

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

UCAS tariff: 112 points (48 point for Foundation Year)

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a [tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

Course rationale and aims

This programme will build on the BA Psychosocial Studies programme to give students the opportunity to combine their psychosocial understanding with a study of the basic principles and practice of psychodynamic counselling. It is designed for students who are interested in a future career in psychodynamic counselling or psychotherapy, and/or wish to apply the principles and methods of psychodynamic counselling to their work. A distinctive feature of this programme is that the exploration of the key assumptions and principles of psychodynamic counselling, together with a study of how psychodynamic counsellors and therapist work clinically, will be carried out from a psychosocial perspective. This means looking in particular at how individual identity and unconscious structures and dynamics are developed in conjunction with, and do not exist apart from social categories and processes which shape our experience of who we are.

Course aims:

1. Give students knowledge and understanding of the key theoretical and clinical concepts that underpin and inform psychodynamic counselling
2. Enable students to develop their capacities for self-awareness and emotional sensibility, key elements of being able to practice as a psychodynamic counsellor, through experiential learning
3. Bring a psychosocial perspective and understanding to bear on an understanding of the key principles in the practice of psychodynamic counselling
4. Prepare students for further study in psychodynamic counselling or psychotherapy

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1					
4	SSPA071S4	Love and Hate: an introduction to Psychosocial Studies	30	Compulsory	Autumn-Spring
4	SSPA073S4	Power	30	Compulsory	Spring
4	SSPA074S4	Observation and the Everyday	30	Compulsory	Summer
4	SC04041S4	Career Development and Professional Pathways in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	30	Compulsory	Autumn-Summer
Year 2					
5	SSPA101S5	Bodies	30	Compulsory	Summer
5	SSPA158S5	Psychoanalysis	30	Compulsory	Autumn
5	SSPA159S5	Social Theory	30	Compulsory	Spring
5		Level 5 Option	30	Optional	Summer

Year 3					
6	SSPA098S6	Helping Others	30	Compulsory	Spring
6	SSPA100S6	Psychodynamic Thinking and Helping Practice	30	Compulsory	Spring
6	SSPA097S6	Psychosocial Understandings and Reflective Practice	30	Compulsory	Summer
6	SSPA099S6	Psychoanalytic understanding of groups and organizations	30	Compulsory	Autumn
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1					
4	SSPA071S4	Love and Hate: an introduction to Psychosocial Studies	30	Compulsory	Autumn-Spring
4	SSPA073S4	Power	30	Compulsory	Spring
4	SSPA074S4	Observation and the Everyday	30	Compulsory	Summer
Year 2					
4	SC04041S4	Career Development and Professional Pathways in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	30	Compulsory	Autumn-Summer
5	SSPA101S5	Bodies	30	Compulsory	Summer
5	SSPA159S5	Social Theory	30	Compulsory	Spring
Year 3					
5	SSPA158S5	Psychoanalysis	30	Compulsory	Autumn
5		Option (level 5)	30	Optional	Summer
6	SSPA098S6	Helping Others	30	Compulsory	Spring
Year 4					
6	SSPA100S6	Psychodynamic Thinking and Helping Practice	30	Compulsory	Spring
6	SSPA097S6	Psychosocial Understandings and Reflective Practice	30	Compulsory	Summer
6	SSPA099S6	Psychoanalytic understanding of groups and organizations	30	Compulsory	Autumn
Full-time with Foundation Year - 4 years					
Foundation Year (Year 0)					
3	CASE002S3	Fundamentals of Study	30	Core	Autumn
3	SSSS001S3	Crossing Borders	30	Core	Autumn
3	CASE001S3	Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge	30	Core	Spring-Summer
3	SC04048S3	The Humanities and Social Sciences: Global Issues in Historical Perspective OR Level 4 Language module	30	Option	Spring-Summer or Autumn-Summer
Then Years 1-3 as shown for the full-time route above					
Part-time with Foundation Year – 6 years					
Foundation Year 0A					
3	CASE002S3	Fundamentals of Study	30	Core	Summer

3	CASE001S3	Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge	30	Core	Spring-Summer
Foundation Year 0B					
3	SSSS001S3	Crossing Borders	30	Core	Autumn
3	SC04048S3	The Humanities and Social Sciences: Global Issues in Historical Perspective OR Level 4 Language module	30	Option	Spring-Summer or Autumn-Summer
Then Years 1-4 as shown for the full-time route above					
Indicative level 5 options:					
5	SC05028S5	Restorative and Alternative Justice	30	Optional	Summer
5	SSPA075S5	Creative Archives	30	Optional	Summer

The above option list is indicative only and may vary each year.

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student
 Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)
 Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Teaching on this course is a combination of lectures (pre-recorded and/or live/face-to-face) and seminars. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

How we will assess you

Students will produce a range of assignments to assess their learning that will be both individually and collectively produced. These will include:

1. Short submissions that take a variety of forms (written and oral), which enable students to accrue core psychosocial skills in reading, writing, building an argument, reflexive practice and critical analysis.
2. Longer submissions in the form of traditional academic essays (2000-3000 words)
3. Collectively produced outputs for the assessment of fieldwork modules such as e- journals, blogs, maps, visual ethnographies such as video-diaries and photographic assignments, collective writing assignments and electronic archives, plus individual reflexive work and commentaries on group assignments for the purposes of assessment.
4. Case studies based on observations of psychosocial processes in placement settings.
5. A dissertation in the final year

Teaching:

1. Lectures, seminars, (individual) tutorials

2. Class experiential exercises to develop self-awareness, emotional sensibility and exploration of how individual experience is mediated by social identity
3. Experiential learning through participation in an “experiential group” which studies the processes, structures and dynamics of the experiential group as a form of temporary institution
4. “Work discussion groups”, where students bring examples from their place of work to study the psychodynamic, organizational and psychosocial processes and dynamics in play.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

‘Learning outcomes’ indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

Foundation Year:

By the end of the foundation year, you will be able to:

- Articulate at a foundational level key concepts in some of the disciplines offered by the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy.
- Undertake academic reading, writing, research and assessment skills appropriate to the study of those disciplines
- Understand other key learning skills required for university-level study and know of how to access support at Birkbeck to develop these.

BA Psychosocial Studies with Principles of Psychodynamic Counselling:

On successful completion of the BA programme you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of key psychosocial theory including the complex and shifting relation between the personal/subjectivity and identity, and publics, and social and cultural contexts, including institutional ones.
2. Demonstrate a capacity to engage in psychosocial investigative research practices
3. Be able to work effectively in groups, including navigating peer-led projects and peer-assessment
4. Develop a capacity for Independent Study in the form of a theoretical, empirical or practice based Dissertation
5. Develop reflective skills to enable self-evaluation of learning and development
6. self-evaluation of learning and development

Careers and further study

Graduates can pursue career paths in social research, education, psychotherapy or the media and creative arts. Possible professions include:

- psychotherapist
- higher education lecturer
- community arts worker
- charity officer
- community development worker.

Graduates from the BA Psychosocial Studies with Principles of Psychodynamic Counselling will also develop a set of valuable attributes, including

- The ability to work as part of a team
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English
- Research skills
- Skills in evaluating and assessing types of information
- The ability to present yourself and an argument

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website.](#)

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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