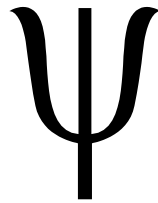


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BSc (Hons) Psychology



Module M4X00905
Experimental Psychology

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Module Handbook

2017-2018

**Module M4X00905
Experimental Psychology**

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This handbook has been designed to provide you with the necessary information required for your progression throughout the module. It is very important that you refer to this handbook and the associated Moodle site regularly as it is your essential guide to module content and the learning outcomes required to complete the module.

Good luck with your studies. If you have any queries regarding this module, please contact the module leader.

Regards,

Dr. Kate Williams

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Introduction to the Module

MODULE CODE:	M4X00905
TITLE:	Experimental Psychology
MODULE LEADER:	Dr. Kate Williams
LEVEL:	4
SEMESTER:	1
CREDITS:	20

AIM(S)

The aim of this module is to:

- provide students with an awareness of the evolution of psychology as a scientific discipline;
- develop a strong understanding of historical, ethical and research design issues in experimental psychology; and
- develop students' awareness of critical thinking skills and the importance of the "timeline" of psychology.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

1. understand the historical roots of the development of psychology as a science;
2. show knowledge of the development of different experimental techniques over time and the ethical issues associated with them;
3. demonstrate understanding of the modern integration of multiple perspectives within experimental psychology; and
4. the ability to present work through appropriate media.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

Module content will focus around the emergence of psychology as a science, starting with discussion of the philosophical roots of many of the issues that we explore in psychology. Specific content coverage mapping on to BPS core curriculum areas will include:

- The study of psychology as a science
- Political and ethical issues in psychology
- The historical paradigm of experimental psychology

It will focus upon the empirical foundations and timeline of psychological science; exploring key developments, clashes and controversies in experimental psychology such as:

- research fraud,
- the file-drawer problem,
- issues of statistical testing,
- ethical issues in experimental psychology.

Students will also be introduced to new developments in experimental psychology such as cognitive neuropsychology. A key element of the module will be to encourage understanding of how and why dominant perspectives emerged at certain times. An underpinning theme of the module will be consideration of whether psychology through the ages has fitted a paradigmatic view of science.

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Topics will be introduced in two-hour weekly lectures, and consolidated through seminars which will vary in format from group exercises and discussions to practical tasks in order to support the application, discussion, and critical evaluation of the principles and methods of experimental psychology.

Allocation of teaching to deliver the module are:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning - Lectures = 20 hours - Seminars = 20 hours	40	20%
Independent learning	160	80%
Placement learning	-	-
TOTAL	200	100%

ASSESSMENT

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria <i>To achieve each outcome a student must demonstrate the ability to:</i>
1. Understand the historical roots of the development of psychology as a science	Identify important developments in experimental psychology
2. Show knowledge of the development of different experimental techniques over time and the ethical issues associated with them	Describe specific experimental techniques and associated methodological and ethical debates and issues.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the modern integration of multiple perspectives within experimental psychology	Recognise the multiple perspectives and founding concepts upon which modern experimental approaches are based.
4. The ability to present work through appropriate media	Present work through the required media

Assessment Component 1 – 50%

A two hour seen exam will allow students to display their understanding of the key module topic areas within a traditional written essay-exam format.

Assessment Component 2 – 50%

1,500-word written assignment – this will allow students to display their depth of understanding in a written assignment asking them to discuss different perspectives used within experimental psychology.

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written exam	50
Coursework	50
Practical	-
TOTAL	100%

READING LIST (EXEMPLI GRATIA)

Essential Reading

Farrell, M. (2014). *Historical and philosophical foundations of psychology*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Background Reading

Fairholm, I. (2012). *Issues, debates and approaches in psychology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Example Journals

Annual Review of Psychology

Current Directions in Psychological Science

Perspectives on Psychological Science

Psychological Science

Websites and other sources: At level four, students will be directed to additional appropriate sources of information (e.g. websites, appropriate journal articles, podcasts, education programmes and debates) as they arise through module handbooks and the VLE system.

Module Assessment

The Experimental Psychology module is assessed through two components, each worth 50% of your overall module mark. The first assessment is a written word essay to be completed during Semester One. The second assessment will be a two-hour seen examination paper at the end of Semester One. Three weeks prior to the exam taking place, the examination paper, consisting of four essay-type questions, will be released on Moodle. You will be required to research your answers prior to the exam and then answer two of the questions during the two-hour exam, under examination conditions. This format will enable you to display your ability to research specific topics, engage with the course materials, and synthesise information and show your knowledge of the theoretical issues covered in the module.

Whilst it is recognised that you may fall behind at some points in the semester with your reading, and it is not expected that you will necessarily understand or absorb absolutely everything that is covered in lectures and essential readings at the time of coverage, there is an expectation that you will have covered all necessary information by the time of the examination.

In the Module Series Information section of this handbook you will see that you have been allocated a minimum of 48 hours of individual study to each assessment. This should provide you with ample time to complete your assessment but also emphasises the need to plan ahead and ensure that you spend the required time on your assessed work; you only get one opportunity at each assessment to maximise your marks, there are no second tries (unless you fail completely!) so give each piece of work the due care and attention that it deserves. We set high standards, we have high expectations – follow the guidance provided and put the effort in that is required and you can do well.

Please see the Assessment Proformas on the Experimental Psychology Moodle page for specific information regarding assessment questions, requirements, and submission deadlines.

For this module you must complete both pieces of work for assessment, but to pass the module you require a combined mark of 40% or higher.

Please see assessment criteria for Level 4 below:-

Level Four Assessment Criteria

At **Level 4** it is expected that the student will demonstrate the following qualities:

- **Achievement at Level 4 reflects the ability to use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine. It includes taking responsibility for overall courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives or approaches within an area of study or work.**
- **Use practical, theoretical or technical understanding to address problems that are well-defined but complex and non-routine.**
- **Analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.**
- **Be aware of the nature and approximate scope of the area of study or work.**
- Have an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.
- **Address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally well-defined.**
- Identify, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills.
- **Initiate and use appropriate investigation to inform actions.**
- Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.
- **Take responsibility for courses of action, including where relevant, responsibility for the work of others.**
- **Exercise autonomy and judgement within broad but generally well defined parameters.**

The items highlighted in bold show that, at Level Four engagement with suggested literature and course materials, time management, and the development of a strategy for engaging with the topic are form key elements of assessment. Whilst the topics covered in the module may be complex there are clearly-defined expectations regarding assessment that give scope to a Level Four student. For example, you may be asked to 'discuss' competing theories on a given topic that allows you to provide an argument drawing upon evidence; this is a lower-level form of assessment than the 'critically discuss' and 'critically evaluate' descriptors that you will engage with at Levels Five and Six when you will be expected to interpret and critique the evidence. However, if you wish to apply critical thinking and discussion at Level Four this will be good practice for these later Levels, even though it is not necessary for a pass mark at Level Four.

Taught and Independent Study

Taught Sessions

The taught lectures and seminars are delivered separately in this module and the structure may vary from week to week, depending upon the topics we are covering to allow us to explore them in different ways. This handbook clearly sets out the requirements for your individual learning and it is expected that students will engage in the readings set out in this handbook.

Please note: Lectures will start promptly at 5 past the hour and finish on the hour. We will take a short break roughly half way through the lecture (this has to be flexible to fit with content delivery) and a time for the restart will be decided upon at that time. Late entry will only be permitted at points where the academic staff feel it is appropriate, as it is unfair on students who have arrived on time when their lecture is disrupted by late-attending students. Please note that no materials will be repeated for those arriving late.

Readings

Readings/preparation for this module follow the chapters of your core textbook and, as such, should be easy to identify. The core text is available through the university library system. Therefore, everyone on the course has equal access to the readings.

Lectures can only provide you with a scaffold of information – it is your wider reading that will help you to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topics and discussions covered in this module. All readings for this module classed as 'essential' may be used as a source of assessment. It is suggested that you carry out the essential readings as we go along as this will enhance your understanding of the overall topic. It is often best to read the associated reading in the week prior to the taught session and then again afterwards, as this will enable you to have an understanding of what will be covered in the session and then to consolidate that knowledge and clarify your learning afterwards. This module has been structured in such a way that the readings and lectures are highly integrated; someone who has prepared by carrying out the reading, attending the lectures and then reviewed the materials should develop a good understanding of the module. A student who attends the lectures but does not carry out any of the readings will, in all likelihood, struggle to even understand what is being talked about in the lecture; they certainly will not develop the knowledge that will be required at more advanced levels of their degree. Additional reading suggestions will be posted on Moodle from time to time, which will provide further depth to your knowledge if you choose to read them.

Preparation chapters refer to the core text: Farrell, M. (2014). *Historical and philosophical foundations of psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Semester One		
Date	Lecture Title	Preparation Reading
Thursday 5 th October 12pm – 2pm	Induction and Overview	Chapters 1, 2, & 3 3 hours
Thursday 12 th October 12pm – 2pm	Philosophy of mind and philosophy of science	Chapters 4, 5, 6, & 7 4 hours
Thursday 19 th October 12pm – 2pm	Beginnings of Experimental Psychology	Chapters 8 & 9 + 11 to 15 10 hours
Thursday 26 th October 12pm – 2pm	The rise of behaviourism	Chapter 16 2 hours
Thursday 9 th November 12pm – 2pm	Behaviourism II	* Pearce, J.M. (1997). Animal learning and cognition - Chapter 2 7 hours
Thursday 16 th November 12pm – 2pm	The Cognitive Revolution	Chapter 17 3 hours + Ch. 1 of Eysenck & Keane (2015) Cognitive Psychology - 3 hours
Thursday 23 rd November 12pm – 2pm	Cognitive Neuroscience	Chapter 18 3 hours + Seminar Readings - 4 hours
Thursday 30 th November 12pm – 2pm	Issues with Experimental Psychology	Catch-up Reading 3 hours
Thursday 7 th December 12pm – 2pm	Case Study: Experimental study of memory	Seminar Readings 8 hours
Thursday 14 th December 12pm – 2pm	Setting-up Experimental studies: Introduction to SuperLab	SuperLab documents 3 hours + catch-up reading 7 hours
Total Year Contact Hours = 40 (Lectures =20 hours + Seminars = 20 hours)		Total Year Reading Hours = 60

*** Please see Weekly Planner for dates/times of Seminars ***

***Seminar Readings will be posted on Moodle ***

Assessment – Independent Study

1 x written word essay (1500 words) = 50%

1 x two-hour seen examination = 50%

<i>Suggested plan for written word essay</i>		
Task	What it entails	Time assigned for task
Research how to write an academic essay.	Finding and reading information in relation to writing an academic essay.	6 hours
Research essay topic	Finding and reading information on the essay question through books and journal articles.	Basic info/journal articles = 11 hours Advanced info/journal articles = 8 hours
Writing first draft	This should be done in Word, start writing your basic arguments	11 hours
Writing second draft	Checking for coherence of argument and that the structure of the arguments flow throughout the essay	6 hours
Writing final draft	Writing the version that is to be submitted, complete with citations and full reference list	4 hours
Proofread and check	Proofread for structure and errors, check for presentation + submit to draft Turnitin portal to check for plagiarism.	4 hours
<i>Time allocated to assessment = 50 hours</i>		

<i>Suggested plan for Seen Exam Preparation</i>		
Task	What it entails	Time assigned for task
Research Exam Question topics	Finding and reading information in relation to the exam question topics	10 hours
Decide on questions to answer	Using the information gathered to make a decision on the questions to answer	1 hour
Further research chosen questions	Further finding and reading of information in relation to the exam questions you have chosen to answer	Basic info/journal articles = 10 hours Advanced info/journal articles = 8 hours
Writing first draft of both questions	Start writing your basic arguments (suggest doing this in word so that you can easily rearrange your essay)	10 hours
Writing second draft of both questions	Checking for coherence of argument and that the structure of the arguments flow throughout the essay	5 hours
Writing final draft of both questions	Writing the final version on paper in preparation for the exam, complete with citations.	4 hours
Practice writing out both questions	Re-writing your essays on paper and without any notes as practice in preparation for exam conditions.	2 hours
<i>Time allocated to assessment = 50 hours</i>		

LECTURE SERIES INFORMATION

Lectures (Weekly):

Thursday, 12pm-2pm (2 hours), Room: TK338/9

Seminars (see Weekly Planner for specific dates):

Tuesday, 2pm-4pm (2 hours), Room TK268.

Week 1: Introduction and Overview

In Week One you will be introduced to a broad overview of the topic that we will cover over the next 10 weeks. We will start by considering why it is important to the field of psychology to have an understanding of both the history of psychology and the subjects and discussions that form an integral part of contemporary psychology (e.g., philosophy, biology). In addition, we will gauge your understanding of these issues as a new student to psychology to try to understand the lay perception of psychology as a field of research and as a science.

The opening lecture will also run through the timetable for the module, the handbook, where and how to find information on Moodle, and what is expected of you as a student in regards to your active engagement in your studies. The lecture will also set out the module assessment details and criteria.

There is no accompanying seminar to the lecture this week.

Essential Reading: Farrell, M. (2014). *Historical and philosophical foundations of psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, & 3.

Week 2: The Philosophy of Mind and Philosophy of Science

In this second lecture we will examine one of the great philosophical debates of all time; the issue of whether what we like to call our 'mind' is just a term for brain activity, or whether it is 'something else' – something that we currently cannot understand or measure. We will discuss Descartes's writings on the mind (often called the 'mind-body problem' and consider what it means for us as humans – and as psychological researchers. This will lead us into the second part of our lecture, where we will consider the philosophy of science. Psychology considers itself to be scientific, but science has a method of doing things. Can psychology measure things like other sciences? Where do we draw the line of what is and is not science?

There will be no formal seminar this week. However, you are expected to use the time to read the first few chapters of the core text in preparation for the lecture. Try to get a general feeling for the topics being covered. You can go back to them after the lecture so that hopefully things will begin to slot into place. Then, when it comes to revision, you will be able to use the readings in more depth where required.

Essential Reading: Farrell, M. (2014). *Historical and philosophical foundations of psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4, 5, 6, & 7.

Week 3: Beginnings of Experimental Psychology

The lecture will explore how philosophical questions that had existed for thousands of years started to be explored in different ways; through biology where Spinoza and von Helmholtz were exploring human behaviour and perception; Ebbinghaus who explored human memory; Wundt used introspection to measure thought processes; Darwin made discoveries leading to the theory of evolution; and James considered issues of consciousness and attention. We will examine how their methods laid the foundation for the ways that we examine phenomena in modern psychology.

In the seminar you will be carrying out some thought experiments; scenarios designed to make you consider issues without physically carrying them out. The Prisoner's Dilemma, The Ship of Theseus, and other thought experiments are designed to help us consider our humanity and the implications of our actions. But sometimes we find ourselves in a position where we can actually turn thought experiments into actual experiments – what happens then? You will look at how obedience experiments did just that.

Essential Reading: Farrell, M. (2014). *Historical and philosophical foundations of psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 8 & 9 + 11 to 15.

Week 4: The Rise of Behaviourism

The fourth lecture will explore what was arguably the most powerful and, in scientific terms, most robust of the early experimental psychology perspectives; behaviourism. The idea that all human actions were behaviours, and that those phenomena that could not be quantified should not be considered the territory of 'the science of psychology', stirred some of the most vociferous debate in the history of our discipline. We will explore the theories, studies and arguments of some of the giants of psychology; Titchener, Watson, Pavlov, Thorndike, and Skinner.

The seminar will focus on the first assignment, which will involve you producing an academic essay. You will be provided with the essay title and be shown where to find the assignment proforma on Moodle, which provides the specifications of the assignment, and further information/guidance on how to answer the essay question.

Essential Reading: Farrell, M. (2014). *Historical and philosophical foundations of psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 16.

Week 5: Behaviourism II

During this lecture we will continue to discuss the influence of the behaviourist approach to Psychology and we will look at the behavioural theories of scheduling and reinforcement in action. We will then move on to start looking at some of the problems and pitfalls of the behavioural approach and the questions that were beginning to arise in terms of the suitability of the approach in being able to explain all aspects of behaviour. At this point there will be a particular focus on the difference between human and animal learning.

No seminar this week. Instead you will meet with your Personal Tutor.

Essential Reading: Pearce, J.M. (1997). *Animal learning and cognition*. Chapter 2

Week 6: The Cognitive Revolution

This lecture will examine how dissatisfaction with behaviourist explanations of the mind and workings of the brain brought about the rise of cognitivism and the demise of behaviourism; led largely by two names in modern psychology and philosophy, Noam Chomsky and Ulrich Neisser. We will examine how cognitive psychology started to provide explanations for human behaviour and thought, and how it combined with social psychology to create social cognition.

In the seminar you will be expected to discuss behaviourism with the aid of the reading was made available to you on Moodle last week. In it, John Pearce explains some of the intricacies of behaviourism such as scheduling, extinction and pairing. It is important that you read this book chapter fully before attending the seminar as you will be leading the discussion on associative learning.

Essential Reading: Farrell, M. (2014). *Historical and philosophical foundations of psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 17.
Also, Eysenck, M. W., & Keane, M. T. (2015). *Cognitive psychology: A student's handbook* (7th ed.). Hove: Psychology Press. Chapter 1.

Week 7: Cognitive Neuroscience

In this lecture we will examine how modern technology has brought new techniques to our exploration of human behaviour. With the advent of brain imaging techniques such as PET, fMRI, we can now see the brain in action; but what does this tell us about our behaviour? At this point we must also return to some of the issues from the first two lectures; if we know something is happening in the brain, does it tell us 'why'? If there is a mind can we now see it?

The seminar will explore change blindness, the inability to detect changes in the environment. Links are on Moodle to two important empirical papers in this field of study. In preparation for the seminar you must read the papers and consider how change blindness may impact upon our day-to-day interactions in the real world.

Essential Reading: Farrell, M. (2014). *Historical and philosophical foundations of psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 18.
Also, two seminar paper readings provided on Moodle.

Week 8: Issues within Experimental Psychology

This lecture will explore the issues of experimental psychology that cause reflection upon its usefulness. We will discuss issues of replication, the file-drawer problem, and consider the strengths/limitations of carrying out experimental research.

In this seminar you will discuss how consciousness and mental representation provided further complications for the behaviourist approach. You will then actively participate in a visual imagery and memory task to start getting you to think about how and why there was a shift in Psychology from the outward-environmental stimulus-response learning paradigm of the behaviourists to the study of internal mental states and representations of Cognitive Psychology.

Essential Reading: Opportunity for catch-up reading

Week 9: Experimental Study of Memory

In the penultimate lecture in this series we will examine a specific area of interest to psychological researchers; that of memory. We will examine the different types of memory, the theories proposed to explain how we forget, the real-life implications when memory fails, look at individuals who have impaired memory resulting from head-injuries or have exceptional memory and the reasons why their memory may be so exceptional. Finally, we will ask ourselves whether having the perfect memory is something to be desired or not.

In the seminar you will examine the issue of research fraud and discuss the case of Deiderik Stapel. You will also critically consider the role of experimental psychology in science and as a tool to explore issues in the world.

Essential Reading: You should engage with the compulsory reading for this week's seminar as you will be expected to lead the seminar discussion. Three papers are provided on Moodle to give you a critical understanding of the lecture topics.

Week 10: Setting-up Experimental studies – Introduction to SuperLab + Exam preparation and guidance

In the final lecture of the module series you will be introduced to SuperLab; an experiment generator and stimulus presentation package that enables researchers to run experimental studies and collect data. We will run through the basics of the interface and you will have the opportunity to practice setting-up your own simple experiments.

The final seminar in the module series will provide you with information regarding your seen examination, which will take place during the January assessment period. During the seminar you will be provided with the examination questions and you will be provided with further information and guidance on what is required to answer each of the questions. We will also be working through how to go about revising for a seen exam. Therefore, it is essential that you ensure to attend this seminar.

Essential Reading: SuperLab documentation + opportunity for catch-up reading.