University of Wales Trinity Saint David

School of Psychology

BSc (Hons) Psychology

Module M5X02154 Current Debates in Psychology

Module Handbook

M4X02154 Current Debates in 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 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.

pbh

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Module Leader Overview of Current Debates in Psychology

Welcome to the Current Debates in Psychology module. This is a very different type of module to any other that you will experience, both in terms of the course you are studying and possibly any other course that you take in the future. We wanted this module to be different; to stand out from the usual module format where you sit and listen to a lecturer talk about the main areas of research in a fairly well-covered field of study, much the same as you would on any psychology course in any university across the country. We wanted you, as students, to be faced with the cutting-edge of issues happening in our discipline of psychology and also in the world beyond academic study, to consider and debate these issues with fellow students and academic staff, and to really develop a critical understanding of the topics you are covering.

To achieve this we have asked staff from across our school (and, in Semester Two, also from outside of the school) to deliver a topic area of their choice in a way of their choosing. Therefore, the way the information is covered may differ substantially from what you are used to in a traditional teaching format; there may be conference presentation-style delivery, workshops, debate, tasks – whatever we would do to engage people in the topics that we are passionate about and expert in.

This year we will cover topics such as terrorism, genetics, drug use, emotion, and more; the common theme that drives this module is that it is your opportunity to engage with the research in the company of the very people driving this field – truly tapping into the expertise within the department. This will give you an idea of the type of coverage you will have in Level Six modules when you engage with our specialist areas.

As always, but possibly even more so in this module than any other, your engagement with the course content and the taught sessions is vital – a debate only works when you engage with the materials and know something of the topic in order to debate. However, this is not about coming to the sessions with full understanding; it is also about arguing those points, clarifying confusion or lack of understanding, and critically thinking about the issues. Therefore, we hope that you will all approach these discussions and debates in the spirit that we would like them to convey; friendly, competitive debate, based on open-mindedness and evidence-based support.

Each week the session information will be available on Moodle prior to the session, and we expect all students to engage with the information provided by the staff member leading the session. If you have any particular issues/queries regarding either the content of the sessions or the structure of the taught sessions please get in touch with them beforehand to clarify – we understand that some of the topics that we cover may be sensitive for some people, but this is psychology and we make no apologies for covering them. Where possible we will take every step possible to ensure that we minimise distress, but must also ensure that we work within university regulations regarding attendance monitoring and meeting learning outcomes of the module.

Good luck with your studies on this module and we hope that you enjoy learning about, and debating, the topics that we have chosen for you this year.

pbh

Dr Paul B. Hutchings
Module Leader

M5X02154 Current Debates in Psychology: Module Requirements

AIM(S)

The aim of this module is to:

- provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge of psychological constructs, models and theories to topical areas of interest of relevance to contemporary psychology;
- develop students' critical thinking skills and ability to produce evidence-based debates in relation to real world issues; and
- further develop students' awareness of wider philosophical, political and ethical issues in relation to the study of human beings in society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. discuss the application of psychological knowledge and research to understanding a range of modern-day phenomena using empirical evidence;
2. recognise the need to consider wider ethical, political and philosophical knowledge when understanding modern-day psychological phenomena;
3. evaluate the social and cultural factors underpinning modern-day psychological phenomena; and
4. the ability to present work suitable for an academic audience through appropriate media.

Allocations of teaching in 2016-17 to deliver the module are (actual):

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

Assessment

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria *To achieve each outcome a student must demonstrate the ability to:*
1. Discuss the application of psychological knowledge and research to understanding modern-day phenomena using empirical evidence	Present and critically discuss a given area of psychological debate.
2. Recognise the need to consider wider ethical, political and philosophical knowledge when understanding modern-day psychological phenomena	Identify and discuss the ethical, political and philosophical issues associated with a specific psychological topic.
3. Evaluate the social and cultural factors underpinning modern-day psychological phenomena	Analyse psychological explanations for a given social and cultural phenomenon.
4. The ability to present work suitable for an academic audience through appropriate media	Present work to required conventions using appropriate media

Assessment Component 1: Timed essay (24 hour duration, 2000 words) – 50%

Assessment Component 2: 15 minute individual presentation – 50%

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written Exam	0
Coursework	50%
Practical (Performance)	50%
TOTAL	**100%**

This module is assessed through two assessment components, each worth 50% of your overall module mark.

Your first assessment will be a timed essay. You will be presented with a number of essay questions relating to the topics discussed in presentations throughout the semester. You will be required to choose one of them to answer and you will have 24 hours to write and submit an essay on the topic (maximum 2000

words). In preparation for this assessment your task will be to marshal information relevant to the topic area to allow you to create a coherent answer to the specific question when it is released. Therefore this assessment, in addition to your psychological knowledge, is designed to display your skills at preparing and then responding to information as quickly as possible.

Your second assessment will be a 15 minute, individual presentation on a topic that you will choose from a list of given topics at the start of Semester Two. You will need to research, prepare and practice your talk for presentation at the end of Semester Two.

In the Module Series Information section of this handbook you will see that we have allocated hours of individual study to each assessment. This should provide you with ample time to prepare for your assessments but also emphasises the need to plan ahead and ensure that you spend the required time on your assessed work. Give each piece of work the due preparation, 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 Current Debates in Psychology Moodle page for specific information regarding assessment questions, requirements, and submission deadlines.

For this module you must attempt both assessments, but to pass the module you require a combined mark of 40% or higher.

Level Five Assessment Criteria

At Level 5 it is expected that the student will demonstrate the following qualities:

- **More highly developed ability to complete a variety of written tasks effectively, including discursive essay, reports, and case study presentations.**
- **Be able to participate orally in a variety of different groups and settings in a confident and articulate fashion.**
- **Be able to use language with increasing complexity and sophistication.**
- Be practised in hypothesis formation and knowledgeable about the means for testing hypotheses.
- Have the capacity to develop a major research interest evolving from the course and to prepare for an involvement with it.
- Be able to apply a range of theoretical models.
- **Be able to synthesise theories, concepts and information in relatively novel ways.**
- **To have become more practised in critically appraising the competing claims of alternative primary and secondary sources.**
- **A growing ability to manage learning in a self-organised manner with a particular view to the importance of achieving desired outcomes within limited time periods.**

The items highlighted in bold show that, at Level Five engagement with suggested literature and course materials, time management, and the development of a strategy for engaging with the topic 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 Five student. For example, you may be asked to ‘critically discuss’ theories on a given topic; this should bring with it the automatic assumption that you should not simply be engaging with the theory given in the assessment, but should also be engaging with competing theories to allow you to critique the strengths and weaknesses of your given theory. Therefore,

the expectation that you will go beyond discussion and apply critical thinking to your work at this level is a given; anything less than this in an assessment may result in a fail mark.

Reading List

Essential Reading

The Current Debates in Psychology module does not come with a prescribed core text or reference list. Because of the nature of the topics that will be covered it is expected that students will engage with the weekly readings that will be placed on Moodle by the academic staff who are leading the session.

Background Reading

As above, it is not possible to suggest generic background reading material for this module as each session will be different from others; however, the ability to engage in critical thinking and writing for this module is essential and so texts relating to this should be consulted.

The following journals carry articles that will provide a good level of general background reading that will develop your critical reading and thinking skills in the areas covered during the Current Debates in Psychology module.

Journals

Annual Review of Psychology
British Journal of Social Psychology
Journal of Experimental Social Psychology
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin
Perspectives on Psychological Science
Psychological Science

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

Taught and Independent Study

Taught Sessions

The taught sessions are combined in this module and the structure may vary from week to week, depending upon the topic being covered. This handbook sets out the broad requirements for your individual learning and it is expected that students will then engage with the information provided on Moodle for weekly sessions.

Readings

Readings/preparation for this module will be made available on Moodle at least one week before the associated session. The Current Debates in Psychology module has been designed to engage you all in debate about the topics; therefore your preparation and input into each week is crucial. Each member of academic staff will be presenting an area of psychology that is either in their area of interest, or is not currently covered in traditional lecture programmes. However, it is up to you to provide the critical debate that goes with each session. A student who attends the session but has not carried out any of the readings will, in all likelihood, struggle to even understand what is being talked about; they certainly will not develop the knowledge that will be required to critically debate the subject.

Please note: Taught sessions will start promptly at 9.05am on Wednesdays. 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.

Module Series Information: Semester One

Date	Lecture Title
Wednesday 4th Oct 9am – 10am	Dr Paul Hutchings & Miss Katie Sullivan Overview of the module (no seminar)
Wednesday 11th Oct 9am – 11am	Dr Paul Hutchings: *Right Wing Authoritarianism and the Paris Terror Attacks*
Wednesday 18th Oct 9am – 11am	Dr Ceri Phelps: *Men's Health: Men, Masculinity, and Help Seeking*
Wednesday 25th Oct 9am – 11am	Dr Lymarie Rodriguez-Morales: *No words for feelings: Alexithymia and mental health*
Wednesday 1st Nov	Reading Week – no taught sessions
Wednesday 8th Nov 9am – 10am	Dr Paul Hutchings & Miss Katie Sullivan Assessment One Discussion (no seminar)
Wednesday 15th Nov 9am – 11am	Dr Kate Williams: *"Minority Report" - Science fiction fantasy film or insight into future law enforcement procedures?*
Wednesday 22nd Nov 9am – 11am	Dr Paul Hutchings: *Should Black Lives Matter or All Lives matter? The Psychology of Police Violence Against Black Males*
Wednesday 29th Nov 9am – 11am	Dr Ceri Phelps: *Do we own our genes?*
Wednesday 6th Dec 9am – 11am	Dr Lymarie Rodriguez-Morales*: 'Happiology' or the dark side of happiness: A critical review of the psychology of wellbeing*
Wednesday 11th Dec 9am – 11am	Dr Kate Williams: *Is horse riding really more dangerous than taking ecstasy? Evaluating the evidence that hallucinogenic drugs should be used for therapeutic purposes.*

For each presentation given by academic staff readings will be made available and it is expected that students will engage in approximately 5 hours per week average on these readings. Therefore, we have calculated the following is required for adequate coverage of this module by a student:

Contact time = 18 hours

Assessment 1 = 39 hours

Readings and preparation = 45 hours

Total module hours for Semester One = 103

Assessment 1

1 x Timed essay (max 2000 words) = 50% of overall mark

Suggested plan for assessment: Timed essay		
Task	**What it entails**	**Time assigned for task**
Topic preparation	Brief scanning of each topic area	1 hours per topic area = 9 hours
In-depth topic preparation	Choose two topic areas to focus upon and research in more depth – books, journals, articles.	5 hours per topic area x 2 topics = 10 hours
Assessment preparation	Choose one of your topics (the other will be your reserve) to cover comprehensively – contemporary readings, newspaper articles, discussion.	10 hours
Assessment	Timed essay – you have 24 hours from midday so should look to spend around 10 hours writing over the course of this time. Using the information you have researched, craft your argument, ensure structure and presentation, then submit.	10 hours
Time allocated to assessment = 39 hours		

Module Series Information: Semester Two

Date	Lecture Title
Wednesday 31st Jan 9am – 10am	Dr Paul Hutchings Overview of the module and assessment for Semester Two (no seminar)
Wednesday 7th Feb 9am – 11am	Debate: What makes an activist?
Wednesday 14th Feb 9am – 11am	Debate: Should attempts be made to correct homosexuality?
Wednesday 21st Feb 9am – 11am	Debate: Is it ethical to remotely diagnose Donald Trump?
Wednesday 28th Feb 9am – 11am	Debate: Does the media cause eating disorders?
Wednesday 7th March 9am – 11am	Debate: Are young people today more self-centred than previous generations?
Wednesday 14th March 9am – 11am	Debate: Do video games lead to violence?
Wednesday 21st March 9am – 11am	Debate: Should we care about people's sexual fetishes?
Wednesday 28th March 9am – 11am	Debate: Do ghosts exist?
Tuesday 24th April TBC	Practice presentations (optional)
Wednesday 25th April TBC	Assessed presentations – students will be allocated to a timeslot via Moodle

Readings for these debate topics will be made available on moodle at least one week prior to each session. Please ensure that you engage with the materials in order to engage in debate during the sessions.

Assessment 2

1 x Individual Presentation (15 minutes) = 50%

Suggested plan for assessment: Individual Presentation		
Task	**What it entails**	**Time assigned for task**
Topic reading	Reading related to research areas; scan each question with basic research.	6 hours
In-depth research on chosen topic	In-depth research, incorporating contemporary research and real-world application.	10 hours
Talk preparation	Putting together talk from research carried out, working to the 15 minute timeframe.	12 hours
Slide preparation	Ensuring slides for preparation are accurate, clear and informative.	5 hours
Practice	You should practice your presentation several times, working on timings and ensuring that you know your presentation without having to read from notes (you can have notes to support you).	3 hours
Time allocated to assessment = 37 hours		

Semester Two

Contact time = 17 hours staff-led, four hours student-led (presentations)

Assessment 2 = 37 hours

Readings and preparation = 42 hours

Total module hours for Semester Two = 101