FOURTH YEAR SEMINAR COURSES 2015
Students should refer to the Electronic Course Profile for further seminar information

Please note that there is a maximum of 20 places in each class. Students will not be accommodated if these places are full. You should sign on to a different seminar if your first preference is full.

Semester One

PSYC4331  TOPICS IN PERCEPTION AND COGNITION

Coordinator: Dr Katharine Greenaway & Professor Jolanda Jetten
Enrolment: opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

This course will provide students with an understanding of the way group membership impacts mental and physical health. The material covered in this course will primarily engage with recent social psychological insights in the way social identity processes affect health and well-being but will also draw from recent research in organizational, clinical and applied psychological fields. The course will start with an overview of relevant theorizing after which there will be a focus on the role of social identity, in among, others (a) symptom appraisal, (b) stigma and coping, (c) recovery and rehabilitation, (d) mental health, (e) perception of pain and (f) identity transitions and identity loss.

PSYC4341  SPECIAL TOPICS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY (MUSIC PSYCHOLOGY)

Coordinator: Dr Genevieve Dingle
Enrolment: opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

Music psychology is an emerging field informed by experimental psychology and musicology. It aims to explain and understand musical behaviour and experience, including the processes through which music is perceived, created, responded to, and incorporated into everyday life. In this course we will explore some basic music psychology (such as the building blocks of music, and how music influences cognitive and emotional responses) as well as applications of music psychology in education, health, and clinical settings. For instance, we will examine a school based music program for emotion regulation in adolescents, and choir singing for adults with mental health problems. Students must be prepared to take an active role in teaching and learning in this seminar class, such as reviewing materials and submitting discussion points before class; and presenting materials to class.
PSYC4371  ADVANCED TOPICS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Coordinator: Dr Kana Imuta

Enrolment opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

Each week in this course, we will learn about a different topic in Developmental Psychology by carefully examining and discussing a handful of relevant recent research. We will address current issues of debate such as, Do infants have mental state understanding in the first year of life?, Are infants born with an “innate moral compass”? and Does bilingualism help or hinder cognitive development? The course will also cover more recently-emerging topics of interest, such as young children's concept of ownership and decision making skills.

Through exposure to both classic and contemporary topics, theories, and empirical methods, students will gain a more comprehensive understanding of how we know what we know about development in infancy and early childhood.

PSYC4991 ADVANCED SEMINAR IN PSYCHOLOGY I
(INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING)

Coordinator: Dr Paul Harnett

Enrolment opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

This course is an initiative of the School of Psychology and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit and will include input from both. This course will be of interest to students who have an interest in Indigenous issues. The course will be in three Parts.

Part 1 will focus on providing psychology students with a basic understanding of the historical and current influences in society that have impacted and continue to impact on the social and emotional well-being of Indigenous Australians.

Part 2 will focus on healing—including Indigenous and non-Indigenous views on the way forward.

Part 3 will look at examples of research activities with indigenous communities.

The course will include classroom teaching, class discussions, as well as a field trip. The lecture timetable is currently being finalised. A number of speakers have agreed to present, but dates are not yet finalised. These will be listed as they are confirmed or announced in class.

Background to the Course

Each year for the past five years the School of Psychology and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit have presented a one-day workshop on Indigenous mental health and well-being. For this we have received a Vice-Chancellors Equity Award. The workshop has been offered to students at honours level and above with around 80 students attending each year.

A common reaction to this workshop is a desire to know more about Indigenous issues, and how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can work together in the spirit of reconciliation. There were many requests for further opportunity to develop a more in depth understanding of the issues that could only be introduced in a single day workshop. This course provides an opportunity for this. The course will provide a framework for understanding the historical and contemporary determinants of Indigenous disadvantage. However, much of the content will be delivered by Indigenous people who will emphasise the resilience and strength of
Indigenous communities, with examples of research and other initiatives involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**PSYC4992 ADVANCED SEMINAR IN PSYCHOLOGY II**

*(Health Professionals & Communication)*

**Coordinator:** Dr Bernadette Watson  
**Enrolment:** opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

**Assumed Background:** It is strongly recommended that you have completed any third-level social psychology course before undertaking PSYC4992. Students may be advised not to take this course if they have not studied social psychology at the third-year level.

During this course we will discuss a range of issues around communication between health professionals and patients. In particular we will examine the intergroup dynamics that exist in these encounters and discuss the role of intergroup and interpersonal salience. We will also examine the intergroup dynamics that exist in interprofessional and multidisciplinary health care teams.
Semester Two

PSYC4311  ADVANCED TOPICS IN SOCIAL COGNITION & GROUP PROCESSES

Coordinator: A/Prof Barbara Masser

Enrolment opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

This course will provide students with an understanding of current social psychological research in the study of social cognition, group processes, and inter-group behaviour. The material covered in this course will build on group processes, inter-group relations and social cognition in social psychology studied in third-year. The course will comprise a number of blocks devoted to separate topics. Previous topics covered in this course have included collective guilt, prejudice, the social psychology of time, cognitive dissonance, subjective group dynamics/deviance and terror management theory.

PSYC4341  SPECIAL TOPICS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY
(THE PSYCHOLOGY OF AGEING)

Coordinator: A/Prof Julie Henry

Enrolment: opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

Brains and bodies age together, but an old brain has an important advantage over an old back or knee in that the accumulated experience that resides in the mind can help the brain compensate for neurobiological losses brought about by senescence. As a consequence, the psychological changes that emerge with age paint a complex picture of loss, gain, and stasis, as diminished functioning in some domains offset or interact with enhanced knowledge and abilities in others. In this course we will examine some key topics in the psychology of adult ageing. These include memory changes across the adult lifespan, social cognitive ageing, differentiation of normal versus pathological age-related decline, and the role of environmental and biological influences in understanding both of these types of decline.
PSYC4331  TOPICS IN PERCEPTION AND COGNITION

Coordinator:  Dr Paul Dux
Enrolment opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

The human brain is the most powerful information processing system in the known universe. It allows humans to recognise a detailed visual display in less than 100 ms (Rousselet, et al., 2004), to store across the life span more 50000 times the amount of text than that housed in largest library on earth (US Library of Congress; Marois & Ivanoff, 2005; Von Neumann, 1958) and, at least for some of us, to hit a cricket ball approaching at more than 160 km/h after having viewed it for only several tenths of a second. Such remarkable capacities permit humans to survive in and interact with a highly complex sensory world that constantly changes across the dimensions of time and space. Nevertheless, against this background of information processing sophistication, the brain exhibits striking and seemingly incongruous limitations. For example, individuals often fail to notice significant changes in the environment, detect salient objects and are barely able to recognize or respond to more than one stimulus in a given instance - all phenomena thought to reflect the capacity of the attentional system. Given such impairments, and with the advent of advanced cognitive neuroscientific methods that allow researchers to track and manipulate brain activity in real time, a central challenge for science in the 21st century is to understand how the brain selects the relevant from irrelevant information to shape our perceptual experience and interact with it. The present Seminar, will adopt an interactive approach, to discuss state of the art research on this topic.

PSYC4361  EVOLUTIONARY AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES
(Topics in Evolutionary Psychology and Human Mating)

Coordinator:  Dr Brendan Zietsch
Enrolment: opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

Have you ever wondered why males of our species are often caring fathers while in most other mammals they are not, why women swoon over musicians, or why men are willing to risk life and limb while attempting to impress women? The answer to these questions and many others regarding human mating behaviour can be better understood when examining these issues from an evolutionary perspective. In this seminar, we will examine the ways that the human mind has been equipped by evolution in order to solve the adaptive problem of attracting a mate and reproducing. This course will look at the variation and universalities in human mating behaviour, including sex differences, and will discuss the how our behaviour is a product of the interaction between genetic and cultural influences. Additionally, the mating behaviour of humans will be compared to that of our closest living relatives, chimpanzees and bonobos.
PSYC4991 ADVANCED SEMINAR IN PSYCHOLOGY I
(POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY)

Coordinator: Dr Paul Harnett
Enrolment opened on first come first served basis – 4pm Thursday 26th February 2015.

Traditionally applied psychological research has focused on understanding the causes of psychological distress and the evaluation of therapies aimed at alleviating psychological distress. In more recent times attention has broadened to consider psychological wellbeing as an important focus for applied psychologists. The field of ‘positive psychology’ acknowledges that people may be ‘languishing’ but not suffering from traditional mental ‘disorders’ such as anxiety or depression. In the workplace this may translate into efforts to facilitate creativity and flexible problem solving. This seminar will explore both theory and practice from the perspective of a positive psychology. Recent therapeutic developments such as the use of mindfulness meditation and heart rate variability biofeedback will be described and critiqued.

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