

MA Psychology

Optional Modules

Students choose 30 credits worth of optional modules. The optional modules change each but are likely to include some of the following.

Lying Brain (20 credits)

There is growing evidence suggesting that, contrary to popular opinion, delusions and hallucinations are not restricted to pathology, illness, or disease – and also occur in the non-clinical population. This course will examine striking instances of pathological / non-pathological hallucinations and delusions, and their implications for contemporary theoretical models of brain function.

Adaptive Behaviour (20 credits)

The modern environment presents numerous actual and perceived threats to our health and survival. There is variability in how people interpret, respond and adapt to these threats. However, individuals and communities are essentially resilient and able to adapt to both minor and major challenges. This module will examine adaptive human behaviour to a range of everyday health threats and recent global events that impact on health.

Understanding Emotion (20 credits)

The modules would explore the main debates in the neuro-cognitive research of emotions, it would focus on evidence from variety of research methods including behavioural, neuroimaging and neuropsychological studies. The course will examine the relation between emotion and cognition; how many emotions we have, are emotions a universal or culture specific and how we know what another feels.

Visual Cognitive Neuroscience and Art (20 credits)

The module approaches the complex problem of how people respond to visual art (ranging from “fine” art to commercial graphics), from a cognitive neuroscientific perspective. Using a

diverse set of example artworks, the module explores how contemporary theory, methods and knowledge from the cognitive neuroscience of perception, attention, memory, emotion and social cognition can inform our understanding of how art “works”. In so doing, students develop understanding of current psychological theory and develop insight into the application of neuroscientific methods to complex problems.

Why We Eat What We Eat (20 credits)

The course explores issues in our relationship with food. The initial focus will be on the psychobiology of appetite control and food preferences. Discussion of flavour perception and hedonics will lead to evaluation of concepts such as food craving and addiction. Examination of non-nutritive effects of foods (including nutraceuticals) links food to mood and cognition. Finally, we explore the rise of obesity and disordered eating from a psychological perspective.

Communities and Social Action (20 credits)

This course examines how individuals relate to communities and wider societies. We will be employing theories from within psychology – including from social and environmental psychology - to understand problems, and specifically attitudes and behaviours of individuals within social contexts. Finally, we will explore links between social issues, sense of community and action research.

Clinical Psychology of Severe Intellectual Disability (20 credits)

This course will outline severe intellectual disability and describe the main cognitive, behavioural and developmental features. Students will gain an understanding of the main psychological interventions that are employed to ameliorate severe intellectual disability. The course will also focus on the established cognitive and behavioural features associated with specific genetic syndromes.

Sleep

This module will be a comprehensive introduction to normal and pathological sleep, covering the

topic from biological, neurological, psychological and psychiatric perspectives. The module will cover common methods for the classification of sleep, as well as the neurophysiological basis of the brain phenomena used for this classification. The evolutionary purpose of sleep, and sleep patterns in non-human animals, will be discussed, as will the different cognitive processes which have been linked with specific sleep stages, such as memory consolidation and motor learning. The use of sleep as a window into brain function will be discussed.

Speaking and Reading (20 credits)

This course will focus on how we produce and understand language. No prior linguistic knowledge or language background is assumed. The first part of the course will focus on the production of spoken language and the second part will focus on understanding written language. These processes are heavily related and share many components; speaking involves translating meaning into speech and reading involves translating writing into meaning.

Developmental Disorders of Language in Children (20 credits)

This module will focus on contemporary theories and research on language development, including atypical language development. As language development needs to be measured against the fully functional language of adults, it will cover the relationships between theories of child language and theories of adult language processing. We will discuss more traditional methodologies as well as modern technologies and how both have led to theoretical advances. The module will focus on both cognitive and social aspects of language development.

Parental Cognition (20 credits)

This module will cover current cognitive and affective theories of parenting and examine the links between parenting practice and child outcome. We will examine and evaluate cognitive and affective predictors of parenting practice including attachment, mind-mindedness, parental styles, parental beliefs and values, and 'core' beliefs. We will then examine the effects of

parental psychopathology on parenting cognition, emotion and behaviour, and will assess the effects of a range of parental psychopathologies on child social, emotional and cognitive outcome.

Higher Cognitive Functions (20 Credits)

This course will focus on studies examining three topics (time, causality and theory of mind) in three different participant groups (children, adults, and non-human animals). The aim of the course is to focus on the integration of evidence across these groups to address what it is to understand these topics

Adult Neuropsychological Syndromes (20 credits)

This module will provide an introduction to neuropsychological syndromes in adults. Through discussion of specific neurological conditions, students will gain an understanding of cognitive disorders associated with abnormal brain structure and function. The module will provide an overview of structure-function relationships and evaluation of cognition. Case studies will be used to illustrate key concepts and there will be an emphasis on neuroimaging and genetic features of common disorders.

Design and analysis 1(10 credits)

In this module you will learn how to make better use of descriptive statistics and statistical hypothesis testing including the use of t-tests, ANOVAs, and linear and multiple regression. In addition to gaining competence with SPSS, students learn techniques for designing and analysing questionnaires and using discriminant function analysis. Assessment is by exercises and exam.

Computer Use (10 credits)

In this module students develop their digital skill set, including file management, using electronic library services, bibliographic techniques, advanced word-processing, digital presentation techniques, making the most out of spreadsheet software, database management, and how to disseminate information using the web. Assessment is by take-home exam.