



PHIL2062

Philosophy of Psychology

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2022

Department of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Alexander Gillett

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Convenor

Adam Hochman

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Psychologists study the mind, but what exactly is a mind? What is the relationship between the mind and the body? What is consciousness? Do we know our own minds, or are we driven by unconscious motivations? In this unit we will examine these big philosophical questions about the mind, and we will also explore the philosophical foundations of different forms of psychotherapy. Cognitive behavioural therapy is advertised as "evidence based". What does the evidence show about its effectiveness? What is the scientific status of psychoanalysis--is it a pseudoscience, as its critics maintain? We will also explore topical issues in the philosophy of psychology, such as the following. To what extent, if any, can differences between the sexes be explained by brain differences? Did humans evolve to be racist? Do non-human animals have minds? What makes us choose our romantic partners, and where do we fall when we fall in love? No background in psychology is necessary for this unit.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Understand the major issues connecting psychology and philosophy

ULO2: Critically evaluate various positions in philosophy of psychology

ULO3: Clearly and accurately communicate issues and arguments in the philosophy of psychology in both spoken and written form

ULO4: Develop your own philosophically informed views on the major issues in philosophy of science

ULO5: Offer constructive and courteous feedback to your peers

General Assessment Information

Detailed assessment information and rubrics Detailed information about each of the assessments, including rubrics and submission instructions will be available in the Assessment block in iLearn. Please make sure you read the assessment information carefully, watch the Guide to Assessments in week 1, and post a message in the relevant Assessment forum if you have any questions.

Special Consideration

Requests for extensions should be submitted via a Special Consideration request, which is available in the <http://ask.mq.edu.au> portal. Your request should be submitted no later than five days after the due date and should be accompanied by appropriate documentation. Please see <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration> for further details and instructions. Read this information closely as your request may be turned down if you have not followed procedure, or if you have not submitted a request in a timely manner. The Macquarie University Special Consideration Policy can be found at the end of this document.

Late Assessment Submission Penalty Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Academic Integrity In Philosophy, academic honesty is taken very seriously, and a range of methods, including but not restricted to the use of Turnitin, are used to detect plagiarism. Misrepresenting someone else's work as your own may be grounds for referral to the Faculty Disciplinary Committee. If you have questions about how to properly cite work or how to credit sources, please ask the convenor for help and see also the Academic Integrity Policy <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/academic-integrity>

Note: *All assignments in this unit are individual assignments. Collusion (unauthorised collaboration on individual assignments) is a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. This includes sharing or making use of shared assignments, in person or online,*

including through file-sharing websites. If in doubt, contact a member of teaching staff.

A helpful resource if you would like to know more about referencing and avoiding plagiarism is Macquarie's Academic Integrity Module, available here: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills-development>. You will need to complete this Module before accessing the unit content, if you have not already done so. More information is available in iLearn.

Academic Writing and Study Support Macquarie University offers a number of services to help with academic writing, referencing and study skills. For details, see: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills/assignments>.

For information about policies related to Assessment, see Policies and Procedures section below.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Online quizzes	25%	No	Sunday, 11.55pm, Fortnightly
Tutorial participation	20%	No	Ongoing
Essay	35%	No	Sunday, 11.55pm, 6/11/22
Short media presentations	20%	No	Sunday, 11.55pm, 18/9/22

Online quizzes

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Sunday, 11.55pm, Fortnightly**

Weighting: **25%**

Online quizzes

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the major issues connecting psychology and philosophy
- Critically evaluate various positions in philosophy of psychology

Tutorial participation

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Contribution to the discussion of weekly readings during on-campus or online tutorial activities. Students are expected to be well prepared and make a constructive contribution.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the major issues connecting psychology and philosophy
- Critically evaluate various positions in philosophy of psychology
- Clearly and accurately communicate issues and arguments in the philosophy of psychology in both spoken and written form
- Develop your own philosophically informed views on the major issues in philosophy of science
- Offer constructive and courteous feedback to your peers

Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **Sunday, 11.55pm, 6/11/22**

Weighting: **35%**

Students will write an essay that provides a careful critical examination, based on reasons, argumentation and evidence, of a set topic

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Develop your own philosophically informed views on the major issues in philosophy of science

Short media presentations

Assessment Type ¹: Media presentation

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Sunday, 11.55pm, 18/9/22**

Weighting: **20%**

Short format recorded presentations involving audio and/or visual material reflecting on questions posed by the weekly content

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the major issues connecting psychology and philosophy
- Critically evaluate various positions in philosophy of psychology
- Clearly and accurately communicate issues and arguments in the philosophy of psychology in both spoken and written form
- Develop your own philosophically informed views on the major issues in philosophy of science

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Required Reading: There will be a core texts to read for each week of the course. It is mandatory that these be read as tutorial discussions and lectures are based on these. The fortnightly quizzes will also be based on the readings. The weekly readings will be available via the Leganto service, which is accessible through the iLearn. Additional optional and further readings will be made available electronically on the iLearn in each week. These will be useful for the research essays.

Technology Used and Required: We use an iLearn website, and the Echo360 lecture recordings. Any other material you need will be available through the iLearn website. We recommend you have access to a reliable internet connection throughout the semester.

Assignment Submission: Essay assignments in this course will be submitted electronically, as word documents or PDFs. There is no need for a coversheet - the iLearn assignment submission (Turnitin) involves declaring your details and honesty in submitting your work. The short media presentation will be submitted via a private blog interface and can either be a video or audio presentation. Instructions and assistance for this will be provided in the assessment section. Please note, we do not accept submission by email attachment.

Unit Schedule

WEEK 1: Introduction (Lecture AH, **NO Tutorial**) In this introductory lecture students will be given an overview of the unit, including the assessment structure. We will cover the basics: what is philosophy? What is psychology? What is the philosophy of psychology? And we will start to introduce some of the central themes of the unit.

Part 1: Individual Differences and Therapy

WEEK 2: What is Mental Illness? (Lecture AH) In the first half of the unit, we look at individual differences and therapy. We will begin with the topic of mental illness, or disorder. What exactly is a mental illness? The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the D.S.M.) focuses on symptoms to achieve a diagnosis. Is this the right approach? What role do values play in determining whether something counts as a mental illness? Or is mental illness an illusion, as the anti-psychiatry movement argued?

WEEK 3: Evolutionary Psychiatry (Lecture AH) A possible solution to the problem of identifying mental illness is to draw on evolution. Perhaps a mental illness is a kind of dysfunction, where the mind is not working *as designed by natural selection*. The heart was designed to pump blood. This is its evolutionary function. Perhaps, if we can determine the various functions of the mind, we can work out when it is “broken”. However, evolutionary approaches to the mind are highly controversial. We will consider both sides of the debate.

WEEK 4: The Scientific Status of Psychoanalysis (Lecture AH) This week we turn to psychoanalysis for another perspective on mental illness. Whereas the D.S.M. lists explicit criteria (e.g. symptoms) that patients must meet to receive a diagnosis, psychoanalysts are more interested in personality structure itself. Before we delve into psychoanalytic diagnosis in the following week, we will explore its scientific status. It has been faced by many critiques, some of them incompatible (psychoanalysis is unfalsifiable; psychoanalytic claims are false). Is psychoanalysis science, or pseudoscience?

WEEK 5: Understanding Personality Structure (Guest lecture: Dr Andrew Geeves) Are labels just for clothes, or are they also for people? This week, we turn to the issue of diagnosis. Are diagnoses “insults with a fancy pedigree”, as some have argued? Or are they useful for understanding personality structure? Can a diagnosis help psychologists to understand their clients better without reducing the richness of individual diversity or pigeonholing them? And should we think of mental illness as something you either have or don’t have, or is it an extreme manifestation of vulnerabilities that we all share? To help answer these questions, we turn to the work of Nancy McWilliams and her psychoanalytic alternative to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

WEEK 6: Feminism, Eastern Philosophy and Psychotherapy (Guest lecture: Taylor-Jai McAlister) This lecture will explore common debates among psychologists around the potential biases and limitations of the DSM-V and diagnoses in psychotherapy. Firstly, we will explore the history of diagnoses in the DSM-V and compare it with other diagnostic manuals (e.g. ICD-11), and explore the concept of having a *personality disorder*. We will ask questions like: What does it mean to have a disordered personality? Do some personality disorders pathologize femininity, or are these disorders truly more prevalent among females? We will also explore the applicability of

diagnostic manuals and related psychotherapies within non-Western contexts, and explore the concept of culture-bound syndromes. We will ask questions like: Do Western psychotherapies work across non-Western contexts? What are culture-bound syndromes? How does colonization impact on psychotherapy?

Part 2: Methodological Concerns

WEEK 7: The WEIRD Problem (Lecture AJG) In the second half of the unit we turn to a range of methodological concerns and consider how to improve the scientific practices within the field of psychology. To begin, we consider recent research indicating that a majority of psychological research is carried out on WEIRD participants (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic). Furthermore, cross-cultural psychology and anthropology research indicates that WEIRD individuals are outliers and are not a representative sample of the human population. This week we discuss the methodological and philosophical implications of this state of affairs. In particular, we raise the question of the importance of culture for understanding the mind and how this can be properly factored into the unit of analysis.

WEEK 8. The Replication Crisis (Lecture AJG) Over the last decade there has been an increasing recognition of the controversy that long established findings and new findings are failing to replicate and be reproduced. These issues have arisen in many scientific fields, including psychology, for a number of reasons (e.g. questionable research practices, the file drawer problem, etc.). This week we discuss how this issue has arisen and speculate on how to go about tackling this matter. This then sets up the discussion for the remainder of the course.

WEEK 9: Measurement Schmeasurement (Guest lecture: Wendy Higgins) In the wake of the replication crisis, measurement validity is emerging as another significant area of concern in the psychological sciences. This week we discuss what it means for a measure to be 'valid', consider the implications of using insufficiently validated measures, and examine ways in which current measurement validation practices could be improved.

WEEK 10: What is an argument? (Essay writing and research discussion week) (Lecture AJG) This week we break from covering particular topics in psychology to focus on the importance of formulating arguments in philosophy. This week will provide students with not only the basics but also advanced skills in developing rigorous arguments that form the basis of good research essays.

WEEK 11. Misinformation, Belief, and Behaviour (Guest lecture: Dr Robert Ross) Humans are social animals. The major way in which we form beliefs that relate to our behaviour - e.g. what is the weather outside? What should I eat? Who should I vote for? Should I vaccinate my children? - is socially mediated. We are highly socially epistemically dependent. However, there are concerns about the influence of online misinformation in societies around the world, including Australia. This week we critically engage with recent research that examines relationships between exposure to misinformation, belief, and behaviour. This acts as a case study for further exploring issues raised in previous weeks about the issues of replication and measurement.

WEEK 12. Comparative Cognition (Lecture AJG) Having spent much of the course examining the philosophical questions about psychology only regarding humans; in this final week of the course we branch out to consider the minds of other animals. Do other animals have

sophisticated minds, with abilities in causal reasoning, emotional intelligence, and social cognition? How can we go about exploring these questions in a methodologically rigorous way? This approach is necessary to attempt to overcome and begin to articulate a non-anthropocentric approach – not only for properly understanding the minds of other animals, but also in understanding ourselves.

WEEK 13. Final Essay Due (No readings, no tutorial, and no lecture). This week is writing and research time for the essay.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the

expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.