SPED1020

Why People Believe Weird Things: Making Rational Decisions in an Irrational World

Session 2, Online-scheduled-weekday 2024

Macquarie School of Education

Contents

General Information

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Credit points
10
Prerequisites
Corequisites
Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit provides an introduction to why people make irrational decisions and how an understanding of the scientific process can assist making rational decisions in everyday life. The unit will include examination of flaws in human perception and cognitive biases, characteristics of pseudoscience as well as features and limitations of scientific approaches. Principles discussed in the unit will be illustrated with practical examples including paranormal claims, questionable educational interventions and dubious health claims. You will be equipped with tools to evaluate evidence, strengthen your reasoning and improve your decision making in both academic study as well as everyday life.

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: describe and critically evaluate the basic features and limitations of a scientific approach to evaluating evidence and claims

ULO2: identify typical indicators of pseudo-science in evaluating evidence and claims

ULO3: critically evaluate at a basic level a range of claims and evidence from a range of academic and non-academic sources

ULO4: explain common factors that contribute to errors in human judgement when evaluating claims

General Assessment Information

- Students should be aware of and apply the University policy on academic honesty (see: https://policies.mq.edu.au/document/view.php?id=3)

- Unless a Special Consideration (see: https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/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.

- Please format assessments using 12-point font and 1.5 spacing.

- All assessments are submitted electronically. Turnitin plagiarism detection software is used to check all written assessments.

- Students can use Turnitin's Originality Report as a learning tool to improve their academic writing if this option is made available in the unit.

- Students should carefully check that they submit the correct file for an assessment as no re-submissions will be accepted after the due date and time, including instances where students upload an incorrect file in error.

- Word limits are strictly applied. Work above the word limit will not be marked.

- All assessments are marked using a clear marking scheme or a rubric.

- Marking of all assessments is moderated by the Unit Convenor.

- Applications for extensions must be made via AskMQ (https://ask.mq.edu.au/).

- It is not the responsibility of unit staff to contact students who have failed to submit assessments. If you have any missing items of assessment, it is your responsibility to make contact with the unit convenor.

Important informaiton about Quiz Assessments

Quizzes are an individual assessment task and MUST BE COMPLETED by each student individually.

Similarities in responses between students will be checked and investigated for possible collusion.

Quizzes are an individual assessment task and **MUST BE COMPLETED by each student individually**. Similarities in responses between students will be checked and investigated for

possible collusion.

Important information about Examinations

• The exam timetable is not typically finalised until mid-semester. Once it is available, please take careful note of the date and time of the exam. No early examinations can be set for individuals. Do not plan leave until you have seen the exam timetable.

• The exam is an invigilated, on-campus exam. Students are expected to be available at the date and time designated in the exam timetable. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time, you can consider applying for Special Consideration. For students who have experienced serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time, a later supplementary exam will be held, and any such students must make themselves available for whenever that is scheduled.

University policy on grading

Criteria for awarding grades for assessment tasks

Assignments will be awarded grades ranging from HD to F according to guidelines set out in the University's Grading Policy. For Professional Experience units the PE Report is marked as satisfactory or unsatisfactory and the Teaching Performance Assessment (in final PE units) is marked as not meets, meets or exceeds. The following descriptive criteria are included for your information.

Descriptive Criteria for awarding grades in the unit

In order to meet the unit outcomes and successfully pass this unit, students must make a genuine attempt at all assessment tasks. Where any submitted assessment task is considered to be unsatisfactory in this regard, the highest possible final grade that can be awarded for the unit will be 45.

Grade	Descriptor
HD (High Distinction)	Provides consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding in relation to the learning outcomes. There is substantial originality and insight in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem-solving approaches; critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; creativity in application as appropriate to the discipline.
D (Distinction)	Provides evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles and theories, distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills and concepts in relation to learning outcomes. There is demonstration of frequent originality in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; and the use of means of communication appropriate to the discipline and the audience.

Cr (Credit)	Provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. There is demonstration of substantial understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study and the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; convincing argumentation with appropriate coherent justification; communication of ideas fluently and clearly in terms of the conventions of the discipline.
P (Pass)	Provides sufficient evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes. There is demonstration of understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the field of study; routine argumentation with acceptable justification; communication of information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the discipline. The learning attainment is considered satisfactory or adequate or competent or capable in relation to the specified outcomes
F (Fail)	Does not provide evidence of attainment of learning outcomes. There is missing or partial or superficial or faulty understanding and application of the fundamental concepts in the field of study; missing, undeveloped, inappropriate or confusing argumentation; incomplete, confusing or lacking communication of ideas in ways that give little attention to the conventions of the discipline.

Note: If you fail a unit with a professional experience component, the fail grade will be on your transcript irrespective of the timing of the placement.

Withdrawing from this unit

If you are considering withdrawing from this unit, please seek academic advice via https://ask.mq.edu.au before doing so as this unit may be a co-requisite or prerequisite for units in the following sessions and may impact your course progression.

Results

Results shown in iLearn, 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.

Assessment Tasks

In relation to AI (such as Chat GTP) you need to decide what is acceptable / not acceptable for your assessments. If a unit/task doesn't explicitly delineate acceptable parameters for AI use, then any amount of AI use cannot be considered a breach nor penalized beyond what would be justified against the rubric. Markers cannot "factor out" the (suspected) AI-generated sections, deduct an arbitrary amount of marks, or claim that the submission is not "the student's own work" for the purposes of academic integrity. These are all formal sanctions that can only be enforced via a breach case, and there is no breach of conduct if the un/acceptable use of AI's was never specified for that task.

In accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy a student must take responsibility, be proactive,

take ownership and hold oneself responsible to ensuring all information and content, including citations and references in their assessment, have been generated and communicated in an ethical and honest matter. Failure to show responsibility by checking the accuracy and integrity of your own content, citations and references, or the submission of falsified content, is a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Weekly topic quiz	25%	No	Weekly Quizzes
Assignment	35%	No	Sunday, 8th September, 11.55pm
Final Exam	40%	No	Exam Period

Weekly topic quiz

Assessment Type [1]: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 9 hours
Due: **Weekly Quizzes**
Weighting: **25%**

A total of 9 weekly online multiple choice topic quizzes, each of 5 minutes duration, will be conducted in ilearn. The best 7 scores in these quizzes will count toward the final mark for this component of the assessment.

On successful completion you will be able to:
• describe and critically evaluate the basic features and limitations of a scientific approach to evaluating evidence and claims
• identify typical indicators of pseudo-science in evaluating evidence and claims
• critically evaluate at a basic level a range of claims and evidence from a range of academic and non-academic sources
• explain common factors that contribute to errors in human judgement when evaluating claims

Assignment

Assessment Type [1]: Problem set
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 30 hours
Due: **Sunday, 8th September, 11.55pm**
Weighting: **35%**

The assignment consists of two parts. The first part involves a conceptual question related to content considered in the first four weeks of the unit. The second part involves the analysis of a scenario for possible signs of pseudoscience and/or features of a scientific approach.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- identify typical indicators of pseudo-science in evaluating evidence and claims
- critically evaluate at a basic level a range of claims and evidence from a range of academic and non-academic sources
- explain common factors that contribute to errors in human judgement when evaluating claims

Final Exam

Assessment Type [1]: Examination
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 51 hours
Due: **Exam Period**
Weighting: **40%**

A two-hour examination, held during the University examination period, is comprised of short answer questions. It covers material from all readings, lectures and tutorials.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- describe and critically evaluate the basic features and limitations of a scientific approach to evaluating evidence and claims
- identify typical indicators of pseudo-science in evaluating evidence and claims
- critically evaluate at a basic level a range of claims and evidence from a range of academic and non-academic sources
- explain common factors that contribute to errors in human judgement when evaluating claims

[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

Recommended text books.

These books are useful references to help you with your academic writing.

American Psychological Association (2020). *Concise guide to APA style 7th edition.* The official APA Style Guide for Students. Washington, DC. ISBN:978-1-4338-3273-4

Faigley, L., Carey, M., & Munoz, G. (2017). *The Little Pearson Handbook 4th edition*, (An academic writing skills and grammar textbook). Pearson Education Australia, Melbourne, Victoria. ISBN 9781488616846.

Information about the unit iLearn site

This unit has a full web presence through iLearn.

Students will need regular access to a computer and the Internet to complete this unit.

Weekly access to iLearn is compulsory for all students. Important assessment information will be posted here, as will other relevant unit notices and materials, including a reading template and guide to lecture note taking to assist your studies.

Various activities and materials for discussion and critical reflection are included and students enrolled in INFQ mode are especially encouraged to use this web component. Electronic links and suggested references will be included in the Resources section. Please check the iLearn unit regularly.

Weekly lectures are available on the web through the ECHO360 lecture component. You must listen to and make notes for all lectures.

PowerPoint slides are available in iLearn in advance of the weekly lecture and/or are available in the Active Learning Tool.

Access and technical assistance

Information for students about access to the online component of this unit is available at https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/index.php. You will need to enter your student username and password.

Please do NOT contact the Unit Convenor regarding iLearn technical help.

Assistance is available from IT Helpdesk

Ph: 9850 4357 or 1800 67 4357

Log a request: help.mq.edu.au.

On Campus: Ground floor at 18 Wally's Walk

Structure

The unit structure can be found in the university timetable https://timetables.mq.edu.au/2023/ In the tutorial students will discuss issues and questions arising from the lectures and prescribed readings. They are expected to base their arguments/discussions on evidence from published research and other relevant material. There will be a supporting iLearn site for the unit providing additional readings, links and materials.

The weekly program for the course with the accompanying readings/ preparation is available on the following pages or on the unit iLearn site.

Unit Schedule

Check iLearn for details.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (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). 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) 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.

School of Education Procedures

In addition, the following policies and procedures of the School of Education are applicable in this unit.

Attendance for undergraduate units

See the university timetable for information about when classes begin in this unit. https://timetables.mq.edu.au/2023/

Activities completed during weekly tutorials (internal/DAY or ONLINE DAY mode) or on campus days (external/INFQ mode) are essential for building the core knowledge and/or skills required to demonstrate the learning outcomes of this unit. Attendance at all tutorials or on campus days is expected and the roll will be taken. Make up tasks may be given if attendance is missed to ensure all content is covered to meet accreditation requirements.

Students are required to attend the tutorial in which they are enrolled. Any changes to tutorial enrolments must be completed officially through e-student. **Please do not contact the unit convenor requesting a change.**

Electronic Communication

It is the student's responsibility to check all electronic communication on a regular weekly basis.

Communication may occur via:

- Official *MQ Student Email* Address
- The *Dialogue* function on iLearn
- Other iLearn communication functions

- Please make effective use of the online component of the unit and access iLearn regularly.

- Keep up to date with listening to the lectures on a weekly basis.
- Further specific details and any updates will be posted on iLearn as an Announcement during first half of the semester.

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 Advocacy provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

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.

Changes from Previous Offering

5Rs Framework

The 5Rs Framework, developed by the School of Education at Macquarie University, is embedded throughout your teacher education course. Your use of the 5Rs Framework will help you develop the capabilities that will make your teaching career sustainable and fulfilling. The 5 Rs are:

Resilience practiced inside and outside of the classroom.

Reflexive in their teaching practice.

Responsive to students, colleagues, parents and professional communities.

Ready to learn.

Research engaged throughout their career.

In this unit, you will learn using the 5Rs framework in the following important ways:

Resilience will be developed through a major focus on critical thinking skills via exposure to a diversity of ideas (i.e., problematic knowledge) which challenge belief systems and academic orthodoxy. Tutorial and assessment tasks encourage reflection on pseudo-science perpetuated within teacher education programs and their comprehension from a critical thinking lens. The subject develops research and investigative skills, i.e., students critically evaluate a range of claims and evidence from a number of academic and non-academic sources.

Unit information based on version 2024.02R of the Handbook