PHIL1060 - Introduction to Philosophy of Psychology

Course Outline

Course Co-ordinator: Dr Colin Wilks
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Fax: 49216933
Email: Colin.Wilks@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Thursday 12.00-1.00

Semester 2 - 2007
Unit Weighting 10

Brief Course Description
This course introduces students to the philosophical issues that arise from the theory and practice of Psychology. It has been specifically designed to meet the requirements of the Bachelor of Psychology degree. Topics covered will include the scope of psychology’s subject matter, the biology versus culture debate, the mind/body problem, the nature and function of worldviews, scientific method, science and pseudo-science, schools of psychological thought, and professional ethics.

Contact Hours
Lecture/2 Hours per Week for 13 Weeks
Tutorial/1 Hour per Week for 13 Weeks

Tutorials will commence in week 2.

Course Objectives
On completion of this course students will be able to:

(1) Demonstrate an understanding of the basic philosophical issues within Psychology.

(2) Demonstrate an understanding of the issues arising from (i) the diversity of psychology’s subject matter, and from (ii) psychological research and practice in general.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2007

CTS Download Date: 9 July 2007
(3) Demonstrate an understanding of (i) professional ethics, (ii) where and why professional ethics apply in the professional practice of psychology, and (iii) how general professional ethical principles are applied to particular situational cases.

(4) Demonstrate an understanding of the 'big picture' framework from which the various schools of psychological theory and practice have emerged.

**Course Content**

Content will be organised around the following topics:

1. Basic problems in Philosophy of Psychology (e.g. the biology/culture debate, the mind/body problem, worldviews, determinism, rationalism, reduction).

2. Philosophical bases of classical schools of Psychology (e.g. behaviourism, functionalism, psychoanalysis, cognitivism).

3. Philosophy of scientific method (including deductive and inductive reasoning, empiricism, falsification, Kuhn, science and pseudo-science)

4. Professionalism and Professional ethics.

Although the topics explored are philosophical in nature, the focus is on how decisions made at the philosophical level shape the theory and practice of Psychology.

**Assessment Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>Essay 1 (1500 words) 30%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>Essay 2 (1500 words) 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination: Take Home</td>
<td>Take Home Examination (2000 words) 40%</td>
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**Assumed Knowledge**

Qualification for entry to Bachelor of Psychology or other relevant degrees.

**Callaghan Campus Timetable**

**PHIL1060**

**INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY**

Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 – 2007

- Lecture: Friday 13:00 - 15:00 [MCTH]
- Lecture or Tutorial: Thursday 10:00 - 11:00 [V07]
- Lecture: Thursday 15:00 - 16:00 [W243]
- Lecture: Wednesday 13:00 - 14:00 [W238]
- Lecture: Thursday 11:00 - 12:00 [V07]
- Lecture: Thursday 16:00 - 17:00 [W243]
- Lecture: Wednesday 14:00 - 15:00 [W238]
- Lecture: Thursday 14:00 - 15:00 [W308]

**Ourimbah Timetable**

**PHIL1060**

**INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY**

Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 – 2007

- Lecture: Monday 16:00 - 18:00 [O_CS2.18]
- Lecture or Tutorial: Monday 13:00 - 14:00 [O_CS2.02]
- Lecture: Monday 14:00 - 15:00 [O_CS2.06]
Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Further Information

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students
Purpose of Course

This course introduces students to some of the philosophical issues arising from the theory and practice of psychology but focuses, in particular, on the issue of the extent to which psychology can be considered ‘a science’ as opposed to ‘an art’.

Broadly speaking, psychology is considered ‘a science’ to the extent that its theories and methods are consistent with the theories and methods of the paradigmatic sciences (physics and chemistry) and ‘an art’ to the extent that its theories and practices are not consistent with the theories and methods of the paradigmatic sciences. But, in order to determine the extent to which its theories and practices are consistent with the theories and practices of the paradigmatic sciences, we will first need to determine what the theories and practices of the paradigmatic sciences are, and what it is about their theories and practices that renders them paradigmatically scientific.

On the basis of these initial determinations, we can then proceed to (i) distinguish those aspects of psychological theory and practice which are more properly considered ‘science’ from those which are more properly considered art; (ii) identify the limitations of psychological science; (iii) distinguish between pseudo-psychological science and psychological art, and (iv) explore the domain of human thinking and behaviour over which psychological art has (for the time being at least) exclusive jurisdiction.

The course concludes with an examination of the professional ethics which apply (or should apply) in the fields of psychological research and clinical psychological practice, and the philosophical foundations upon which these professional ethics are founded.

Consultation

Teachers in this course will be available for consultation at the following times:

Dr Colin Wilks
MC107 Thursday. 12.00 – 1.00
Email: Colin.Wilks@newcastle.edu.au

Dr. Robert Farrell
MC123 By appointment
Email: Robert.Farrell@newcastle.edu.au

Summary of Assessment Items, Word Lengths, Weightings and Due Dates

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<tr>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
<th>Word Length</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Essay 1</td>
<td>1200-1500</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Monday September 3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Essay 2</td>
<td>1200-1500</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Monday October 8th</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Take Home Exam</td>
<td>2000-2500</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Examination Period</td>
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Essay Questions

Essay 1

The first essay covers the course content for weeks 3-6.

Question:

Part A: To what extent are computer analogies helpful in understanding the relationship between the human brain and the mind (400-600 words).

Part B: How does a human’s worldview differ from a rat’s ‘worldview’ and how does your worldview inform your attitude to experimenting on rats for psychological purposes (600-1100 words).

Essay 2

The second essay covers the course content for weeks 7-10. The question/questions for the second essay will be posted on Blackboard in week 7.

Take Home Exam

The Take-Home Examination covers the course content for weeks 2-3 and 11-13 and will be posted on Blackboard during the examination period at a time to be determined. From the point at which it is posted, students will have one week in which to complete and return it. Further details will be made available later in the semester.

Course Readings

Most of these books, chapters and articles are held in Short Loan in either hard copy or electronic form.

“Determinism and Modern Psychiatry” in The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy.


Holmes, J., *Between Art and Science* Routledge, 1993


“National statement on ethical conduct in research involving humans” (extracts) National Health and Medical Research Council, June 1999.


## PHIL1060, 2007 Schedule of Lecture and Tutorial Topics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Beginning</th>
<th>Tutorial</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 July 16</td>
<td>Introductory Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 July 23</td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong>: Hergenhahn, B. R. “Introduction” to An Introduction to the History of Psychology</td>
<td>Science: the scientific (hard-soft) spectrum; spectrums within spectrums; reductionism and emergence; the psychological scientific spectrum.</td>
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</table>
| 3 July 30     | Science – the hard-soft spectrum Psychology and Science  
**Reading**: Gardener, H., ‘Scientific Psychology: Should We Bury or Praise it?’ | Psychology as Science: hard-soft psychology; reductionism-emergence in psychology |
| 4 Aug 6       | Psychology as science  
**Reading**: Pinker, S., ‘Silly Putty’ and ‘The Last Wall to Fall’ (Chs. 2 and 3 of The Blank Slate) | The mind-brain-body problem – the metaphysical spectrum; hardware-software analogies |
| 5 Aug 13      | The Mind-Brain-Body problem  
**Reading**: As for Week 4. | Views of the world and Worldviews; facts, values, beliefs and ideals. |
| 6 Aug 20      | Views of world and Worldviews  
**Reading**: Schumacker, J. F., “The Problem of Reality” (Ch 1 of The Corruption of Reality) | Closed and open world views and their psycho-dynamics; the scientific world view |
| 7 Aug 27      | Closed and open worldviews; their psychodynamics; the scientific worldview and the problem of ‘modernity’. | What is science?  
**Screening**: Ulcer Wars |
<p>| 8 Sept 3      | Discussion of ‘Ulcer Wars’ | Empiricism and Falsificationism |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>Empiricism and Falsificationism</td>
<td>Paradigms; pluralism and experimental testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sept 17</td>
<td>Science and Pseudo-Science</td>
<td>Statistics and pluralistic testing; error-avoidance; fraud in science; what is science? Cognitive Behavioural Therapy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong>: Giere, R. Understanding Scientific Reasoning Ch’s 2</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Sept 24</td>
<td>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Science or Art</td>
<td>Paradigms, Worldviews, Theories of Ethics.</td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong>: To be announced</td>
<td><strong>Screening</strong>: Gay Muslims</td>
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<td><strong>Mid-Semester Recess: Monday 1 October - Friday 13 October</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Paradigms, Worldviews, Theories of Ethics.</td>
<td>Professional Codes of Ethics</td>
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<td>Discussion of ‘Gay Muslims’</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>Codes of Ethics</td>
<td>Course Synthesis</td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong>: O’Donohue, W. and Mangold, R. “A Critical Examination of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct”</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Course Synthesis/Review</td>
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