PS4107: Evolution of human behaviour and culture

Semester
Semester 1, 2022-23

Meeting times
11am-1pm on Tuesdays; location: Stewart Room, Younger Hall

Credits
15 credits

Module summary
The aim of this module is to explore how evolutionary theory is being used to study human behaviour and culture. This research field has a long and controversial history, stretching back to the work of Charles Darwin. After this history has been briefly described, the module will focus on four modern, evolutionary approaches to human behaviour, namely Human Behavioural Ecology, Evolutionary Psychology, Cultural Evolution and Gene-culture Co-evolution.

These sub-fields differ in their underlying assumptions about how the human mind has evolved. Each field will be critically evaluated, and the potential for integrating these sub-fields will be assessed. The types of questions that will be covered include ‘do mate preferences differ between the sexes’, ‘does the mind consist of domain-specific modules’ and ‘has human culture has altered the direction of human evolution’?

The module will consist of short lectures, group discussions, a practical class activity, non-assessed student presentations and class quizzes.

Prerequisites & Anti-requisites
Prerequisites: None; Anti-requisites: BL4280

Assessment
100% continuous assessment

Staff
Prof. Gillian Brown (Module Co-ordinator) (grb4) and Prof. Kevin Laland (knl1)
Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics &amp; assignment due dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.09.22</td>
<td>History of applying evolutionary theory to human behaviour</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>20.09.22</td>
<td>Sociobiology &amp; Evolutionary game theory</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>27.09.22</td>
<td>Human Behavioural Ecology &amp; Tips for presentations</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>04.10.22</td>
<td>Evolutionary Psychology (part 1) &amp; Student presentations</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>11.10.22</td>
<td>Evolutionary Psychology (part 2) &amp; Student presentations</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Independent Learning Week</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>25.10.22</td>
<td>Cultural Evolution &amp; Student presentations</td>
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<td>i) Extended Abstract due date: Friday 28th October, 4pm in MMS</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>01.11.22</td>
<td>Gene-culture Co-evolution &amp; Essay writing tips</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>08.11.22</td>
<td>Comparing and integrating approaches</td>
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<td>ii) Short Essay due date: Monday 7th November, 4pm in MMS</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>15.11.22</td>
<td>Revision session &amp; Generic essay feedback</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>iii) Long Essay due date: Friday 25th November, 4pm in MMS</td>
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Reading material

a) Core reading


b) Additional reading

A list of papers for the student presentations and assessments will be provided at the start of the module, and further reading will be given each week to supplement the core reading.

Assessment

*Please use the specific coversheets in Moodle for each of the assignments to receive feedback.*

i) **Extended Abstract**

The Extended Abstract (10% of grade) is a **300-word abstract** that briefly describes a recent empirical article from the field of evolution and human behaviour using the structure of ‘Background’, ‘Findings’ and ‘Implications’. Students will choose one empirical article from a list of articles (provided in Week 1). Deadline: **Friday 28th October, 12pm** (to be uploaded to MMS).

ii) **Short Essay**

The Short Essay (30% of grade) is a **700-word essay** that describes and critically evaluates a recent empirical article from the field of evolution and human behaviour. Students will choose one empirical article from a set list of articles (provided in Week 1), and these articles will also be used for the student presentations. Deadline: **Monday 7th November, 12pm** (MMS).

iii) **Long Essay**

The Long Essay (60% of grade) is a **1,500-word essay** that will provide students with the opportunity to integrate and evaluate the core knowledge that they have learned during the module. Students will answer **ONE** question out of a choice of **THREE** essay questions. The essay titles will be released in Week 8. Deadline: **Friday 25th November, 12pm** (MMS).
Format of teaching sessions

All sessions will be taught in-person. Students are expected to attend all sessions, and attendance will be noted. Please use self-certification to register absences, as outlined in the University student handbook. The lecture part of sessions will be recorded via Panopto and be available for 7 days following the session. Academic alerts will be issued in accordance with University guidance.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the module, students will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the subfields of evolutionary behavioural sciences,
- understand the core concepts of each subfield and current areas of debate,
- describe and critically evaluate examples of recent empirical research, and
- construct a coherent, logical argument that is supported by empirical findings.

Transferrable Skills

Skills that will be developed include:

- demonstrating critical thinking and an ability to explain ideas concisely,
- engaging with the views and perspectives of others, and
- communicating with clarity and accuracy, e.g., orally and in written form.

Assessment regulations

Extensions

To apply for an extension on a continuous assessment due to adverse personal circumstances, please fill out the form found at: https://standrews.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_034Lan2dWzYsfqu

Late work & late penalties

Academic alerts will be issued for late submissions that are not excused (see: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/teaching-and-learning/policies/AcademicAlerts.pdf).

Late penalties will be applied at the rate of one grade point per day or part thereof that an assignment is late (Policy A of the Penalties for Late Work; see: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/teaching-and-learning/policies/penalties.pdf).

Over-length penalties

Over-length penalties will be applied at the rate of 1 mark for work that is over-length to any extent, then a further 1 mark per additional 5% over (Policy C of the Penalties for work of incorrect length). Words will be counted electronically and all aspects including text boxes will be counted unless otherwise stated. See: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/teaching-and-learning/policies/penalties.pdf

Grade descriptors

For details regarding the ‘Common reporting scale for module grades’ please see: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/registry/students/transcripts/UG%20Credit%20and%20Grades%20Sheet%20202019-0.pdf.

For details regarding the reporting scale and grade descriptors for coursework, please see individual assessment descriptions that will be provided during the semester.
University student handbook

The University student handbook contains a wealth of academic-related information for students.

Inclusive curriculum statement

The School is committed to making its teaching and learning fully inclusive, so that all students are given the opportunity to reach their potential, all students feel like they belong and are not made to feel excluded, and students have the opportunity to contribute to curriculum development.

If you have any comments or feedback on this module in terms of the inclusivity of the content, delivery or assessments/feedback, please contact the Module Co-ordinator or, if you would rather provide anonymous feedback, please use the Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ). Alternatively, you can contact your School President or Class Representative, who can raise ideas or issues via the relevant staff-student meetings and consultative committees.

If you want to report any instances of bullying, harassment or discrimination that have occurred in teaching and learning environments, you can use the University’s Report & Support tool.

Support contacts

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School administrative office for general teaching matters</th>
<th><a href="mailto:psyneuroug@st-andrews.ac.uk">psyneuroug@st-andrews.ac.uk</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Teaching</td>
<td><a href="mailto:psydot@st-andrews.ac.uk">psydot@st-andrews.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Controller</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jg5@st-andrews.ac.uk">jg5@st-andrews.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology &amp; Neuroscience Student Wellbeing Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:psyneuro_wellbeing@st-andrews.ac.uk">psyneuro_wellbeing@st-andrews.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice &amp; Support Centre (ASC) – welfare and support services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:theasc@st-andrews.ac.uk">theasc@st-andrews.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development (CEED) – learning and development support for students</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ceed@st-andrews.ac.uk">ceed@st-andrews.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Education Institute - English language support</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ie@st-andrews.ac.uk">ie@st-andrews.ac.uk</a></td>
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