



St Andrews University

***PS5031: Review – Approaches to the Study of Mind***

Class hours: 4 one-hour tutorials

Credits: 15

Assessment: Literature review in a scientific journal style with a 5,000-word maximum and an abstract of up to 250 words; due for submission by 6 March 2020 at 5PM in MMS. The topic of the review should be agreed with the supervisor prior to the winter holiday.

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## General Introduction

The supervised review is based on comparisons and contrasts of different theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of the mind. The topic will be chosen on the basis of mutual agreement between the supervisor and the student, using the student's interests and feasibility of the review topic as the criteria for selection. The aim of this module is to encourage students to gain an understanding of the uniqueness of the evolutionary, comparative, and developmental approaches in relation to other psychological approaches and to gain an appreciation of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the evolutionary approach versus other approaches in psychology. Thus, the review is based on taking one psychological phenomenon and comparing and contrasting how comparative, evolutionary, and developmental psychologists have studied it *versus* other fields in psychology. The review should conclude with a discussion of the relative advantages and disadvantages of using the comparative, evolutionary, and developmental approaches to understand the given psychological phenomenon.

Many students seem to prefer lecture courses to the independent work that constitutes the bulk of this module. Of course, we enjoy giving lectures and lectures are a very efficient means of transmitting knowledge from one academic generation to the next. However, this is one of the few modules that gives you an element of choice about the research are covered. Also, it is an opportunity to work one-on-one with an academic supervisor. Most students taking the module in the past have enjoyed it and felt it was valuable to their education. Additionally, some doctoral programmes and employers view independent work as being more diagnostic of a graduate's potential than marks in lecture courses.

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## Aims

This module is designed:

1. To allow the student to assess the merits and drawbacks of the evolutionary, comparative and developmental approaches versus other approaches taken in psychology.
2. to provide the student with structured contact with a member of staff who will guide the development of the review. Note that since part of the review is based

on comparing evolutionary, comparative and developmental approaches versus other traditions in psychology, the supervisor need not be an evolutionary psychologist *per se*.

3. to provide the student with experience in identifying issues within the evolutionary, comparative and developmental frameworks.
4. to reinforce the ability to think in terms of both proximate (mechanism) and ultimate (adaptive significance) levels of explanation.
5. to foster the ability to work in a self-motivated way.
6. to provide practice in the critical evaluation of scientific sources of information.
7. to provide experience with handling complex and often contradictory sets of psychological findings.

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### Learning outcomes

Students who perform well in this module will:

1. Demonstrate a **knowledge** of:
  - a. the scientific research literature on the topic of their review.
  - b. the justification for the particular theoretical and methodological approaches taken in the research area covered by the review.
  - c. bibliographic searching and scholarly citation.
2. Have developed the following **skills**:
  - a. organising individual research reports into a coherent framework.
  - b. evaluating accurately the advantages and disadvantages of alternative research approaches to a given scientific problem.
  - c. presenting technical information in a structured document, further developing expertise in word processing and bibliographic software.
  - d. discussing and defending research with a colleague (supervisor).

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### Module structure & Assessment

The module will consist of 4 one-hour tutorials with your supervisor. In these tutorials you will discuss the selection of a review topic, discuss the theoretical and methodological approaches in the given review topic and discuss your supervisor's comments on *one draft only* of your review essay. Your supervisor can also comment *once* on an outline provided to them prior to the full draft of the review.

Attendance for the 4 tutorials is compulsory. If you fail to meet with your supervisor for any of the 4 tutorials without providing a self-certificate, then you will be sent an academic alert. The tutorials are arranged by mutual agreement with your supervisor, but it is your responsibility to make sure all 4 tutorials occur. If you have any problems contacting your supervisor about a tutorial, then please contact Dr. Bowman.

The module is assessed by a review in an appropriate scientific style that has a maximum of 5,000 words plus an abstract of up to 250 words. It is expected that the topic of the review be selected prior to the winter break. The review is due Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 5PM into MMS. The details of assessment are given below, as well the form that will be used to assess your review. Your primary supervisor and a second member of academic staff will each mark the review and then submit their agreed mark to the external examiner and the examining board for confirmation.

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### Support

The primary support for this module will be your supervisor, but all members of staff endeavour to support the learning of all postgraduate students. Eric Bowman is the module controller. His telephone extension is x2093 and his e-mail is [emb@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:emb@st-andrews.ac.uk). Please contact Dr. Bowman if you have any questions about the structure or the administration of the module.

### Form of the review

There is a required document template posted on Moodle that you must use. The document template includes the criteria sheet that staff use for marking the essay. The body of the review the writing should follow the format in the *British Psychological Society Style Guide* ([link](#)), particularly with respect to proper citation of research articles. It is your responsibility as a student to avoid plagiarism – when in doubt, cite the source of any text, ideas, figures, tables, pictures or illustrations in the review that are not your own. The final section of the review should of course be the list of referenced works.

Please note that the word count should exclude the title page, abstract and list of references. A word count can be obtained in MS Word from the Tools...Word Count... menu. The same is also true for OpenOffice and NeoOffice. As noted above, the maximum

word count allowed for the main body of the review is 5000 words and the maximum word count for the abstract is 250 words. Please note that these figures are limits and not targets.

### Criteria for assessment

The University uses a universal grade point scale of 0-20, which is described [here](#).

The criteria for assessing the review are listed below:

<i>Mark</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
16.5-20	Distinction: Outstanding work that indicates an advanced scholarly understanding of the theoretical, practical and analytical issues involved in research, with the review providing novel insights on the relevant literature. The sections of the review approach the typical quality of published peer-reviewed articles reviewing psychological research.
13.5-16.4	Merit: Excellent work that indicates a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical, practical and analytical issues involved in research. Some sections of the review would approach publication quality if the review were revised slightly.
10.5-13.4	Pass: Very good work that indicates a firm understanding of the theoretical, practical and analytical issues involved in research. At least one section of the section of the review would approach publication quality if some of the text were rewritten or amended.
7.0-10.0	Marginal pass: Fair work that indicates a partially incomplete or inaccurate understanding of the theoretical, practical and analytical issues involved in research. Substantial rewriting or amendment would be required to reach publication quality.
4.0-6.0	Fail with the right to resubmit the review: Flawed or insubstantial work that indicates incomplete or inaccurate understanding of the theoretical, practical and analytical issues involved in research. The level of performance is below that expected at postgraduate level but genuine effort in preparing the review is evident.
0.0-3.0	Fail without the right to resubmit the review: Substantially flawed or insubstantial work that neither reaches the level of quality required at postgraduate level nor suggests that conscientious effort was used in preparing the review.

### Submitting work

Work should be submitted to MMS in MS word format if possible (.doc, .docx), but other formats are acceptable (.pdf, .rtf). Submission through MMS will generate an electronic receipt – please ensure that this receipt is saved as it will act as proof of submission. Work that does not conform to the submission guidelines will not be accepted for submission and must be re-submitted. If work must be re-submitted after the

assignment deadline, the appropriate penalty for late submission will be deducted (see below). Please note that there is a document template in Moodle that you must use for the review. No assignment will be accepted unless the document template is used, and a late penalty will apply if a document must be resubmitted late to conform with the document template.

#### *Penalties for going over the word limits*

The maximum limits allowed are 5000 words for the main body of the text of the review and 250 words for the abstract. An accurate word count must be noted on the cover sheet for each piece of submitted work. Word counts do not include the title, tables, figure legends, bibliographies, reference lists, or appendices. All other words count towards the work length. Marks will be deducted if the word count is anything above the word limit and will be penalized with 1 point for any over-length up to 5%, then 1 further mark for every 5% over-length (Option C on p. 3 in the University's *Policy on Coursework Penalties* that can be found at this [link](#)). If the word count is disputed, then the student will be asked to demonstrate calculating the word count of the document in person to the module coordinator. There is no penalty for being under the word count limit, for it is a limit and not a target.

#### *Penalties for late submission of work*

The policy for late submission of work is that 1 point on the University's marking scale will be deducted for each day or part thereof that an assignment is late (Option A on p. 2 in the University's *Policy on Coursework Penalties* that can be found at this [link](#)). Thus, a point will be deducted even if you are one minute late, so please plan accordingly. Consider that MMS, like all computer systems, sometimes suffers from delays in communication and processing. It is your responsibility to make sure that MMS provides you a receipt prior to the deadline for a given piece of academic work.

#### *How to prepare for the module*

The main problem to be overcome in the module is selecting a topic that has been addressed from many different perspectives in psychology, including a comparative evolutionary, or developmental perspective. If you wish to take the module, you can prepare for it by considering 2-3 topics of psychological research that pique your interest,

and then reading about how various approaches in psychology have contributed to our understanding of those topics. Thus, one might consider how cognitive psychology, neuroscience, social psychology, clinical psychology, perceptual psychology and other subdisciplines of psychology have approached each topic. Once this is determined, then you should consider how comparative, evolutionary and developmental psychology have approached the topics. If you do this before your first meeting with your supervisor, it will save time and also make the meeting more productive.

### Expectations

In general, the University expects about 10 hours of work for each academic credit, and thus the work on the review should total to 150 hours in total, including all aspects of the work required (reading, meeting with your supervisor, writing). Obviously if you are efficient and can complete the work in less time, then that is absolutely fine. Since the work on this module is mostly independent, you can expect guidance from your supervisor, but you must take full responsibility for the work you submit. Given the breadth of the research you will cover in the review, your supervisor is unlikely to be expert in all areas of psychology that touch on the topic. However, all of members of staff have excellent knowledge of general psychology and will be able to help you search for relevant research, to organise your ideas, and to assist you with writing the review. We expect the students in the module to conduct high quality academic work, to engage constructively with the supervisor, and to notify Dr. Bowman as soon as possible if any issues arise that impede their progress.