

PS4040
Psychology Junior Honours Review Essay



School of Psychology & Neuroscience
2017-2018
Module Controller:
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Deadline and timelines to remember:

1. Semester 1, Week 2: Arrange a meeting with your allocated supervisor to discuss a suitable essay topic.
2. By end of November: Hand a structured outline of the essay to your supervisor for comments.
3. Semester 2, Week 1, 5pm Friday: Upload a digital copy (word file) of the essay draft to MMS. This will allow your supervisor to provide comments and feedback. **Essays not uploaded by this deadline will not receive feedback.** This draft will not receive a mark. You will receive the feedback within 14 days.
4. Semester 2 Week 4, 5pm Friday: Upload a digital copy (word file) to MMS. The essay must have the title, Module code PS4040, and only your MATRICULATION NUMBER, not your name, on the front cover, nor should your name appear anywhere within the text. Use the template provided on Moodle.

Aim

The aim of PS4040 (10 credit module) is for students to develop the ability to critically evaluate current thinking in an area of psychology of their own choosing.

Allocation of supervisors

PS4040 Students are allocated to supervisors in the School of Psychology and Neuroscience after advising and will be informed about their supervisor at the end of teaching week one. The allocation system does not allow for students to choose specific supervisors.

Choice of essay topic

The essay topic is to be chosen by the student, with help and guidance from the supervisor. **Important:** the topic can be selected on students own interests unrelated to the specific field of expertise of the allocated supervisor.

Supervision

Your supervisor will devote up to 3 hours for **individual** supervision of your essay, usually in 3 meetings about the **topic, outline** and **draft** of your essay. The supervisor will also give advice on practical aspects of essay writing: how to choose a good question to frame your essay, how best to structure the essay, and how to find suitable background literature. You are responsible for keeping to the timetable for the module and organising these meetings with your supervisor, by email, in plenty of time. Note that the university policy for replying to emails is 48 hours under normal conditions during the working week.

Objectives

In PS4040 students will:

1. Gain experience in pursuing an independent piece of work in close collaboration with a member of staff.
2. Develop skills in conducting literature search using the university's library and electronic database facilities.
3. Develop skills in reading, digesting and critically evaluating psychological research articles.
4. Gain familiarity with the ways in which psychological concepts, theories and research are described and presented.
5. Learn to identify and extract key elements of written reports of psychological research.
6. Develop skills in writing about psychological concepts, theories, and data, and crafting a coherent argument.

Format and word limit

- You must include a title page stating the title of the work, your matriculation number, and the module number. Please use the template provided on Moodle.
- The default formatting is: type font Arial at 12 points; line spacing at 1 ½; with Margins of 1". Please make use of meaningful headings and sub-headings. Footnotes should be avoided.
- There is a 4000 word limit to the review essay, this includes the mandatory

abstract with max. 250 words, in text citations [please use APA style] figure legends, and table legends. The word count does NOT include tables, figures, reference list, or appendices.

Assessment

The essay is marked on a 20 point scale by your supervisor as the first marker and an independent second marker. Details of the Common Reporting Scale can be found at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/teaching/examinations/scale/>. At the end of this handbook you will find the grading criteria and feedback template.

Penalties

For any word overlength up to 5% (1 to 200 words in our case) a mark will be deducted, then a mark for every further 5% (201 to 400, 401 to 600, and so on). Late submission will be punished by 1-mark deduction per day.

Good Academic Practice

You will be reading original scientific papers and review articles as your primary source material. It is ESSENTIAL that you avoid plagiarism when you write your essay, and one way that plagiarism might happen when writing a review is by forgetting which statements are actually quotes, and which are your own summaries of a research article. Familiarise yourself with the Good Academic Practice policy: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/teaching-and-learning/policies/gap.pdf>

Extensions

Extensions are granted under exceptional circumstances, such as long-lasting illness (flu or an upset stomach on the last 3 days would not normally be sufficient grounds for an extension, please keep this in mind when managing your time to complete your essay). For illnesses, you may be asked for medical documentation. If you need an extension for the deadline to upload your *draft*, you should apply for one before the deadline in week 1. This will automatically adjust the final deadline for the essay. When asking for an extension, please use the online form found [here](#). Please note, that your supervisor cannot grant an extension – this is done via a central process.

PS4040 criteria sheet

Class	Fail	Pass	3 rd	2.II	2.I	1 st
Content	A failure to address the topic at hand OR copying* from other sources (even if source is cited)..	Little and insubstantial reference to the issues OR over-reliance on other work (e.g. close paraphrasing*, perhaps with lack of understanding of the material).	Very patchy and limited coverage of the topic. Use of a narrow range of sources. Total reliance on secondary or out-of-date material.	Major positions/issues presented in outline, but in little depth and over-reliance on a narrow range of sources, particularly secondary sources.	Covers all the major positions and issues with use of a range of appropriate and up-to-date primary sources.	Thorough and detailed description of relevant positions, clear grasp of grasp of the core issues and widespread use of primary sources – including some independent use of sources
Referencing	Missing references and referencing of material not cited in the text	Minimal use of referencing	Widespread errors both in the content and style of references.	Reference list mostly comprehensive, but failure to use appropriate style in citing references	Referencing generally accurate, though some stylistic errors in the reference list	Generally thorough and proper referencing throughout.
Factual accuracy	Little or no accurate material	Predominantly inaccurate	Widespread substantive errors	Some substantive errors	Few substantive errors	No substantive errors, few minor errors.
Relevance	Little or no material relevant to the review topic	Material predominantly irrelevant to the review topic	Considerable amount of material irrelevant to the review topic	Some material irrelevant or tangential to the review topic	Some tangential material, but little material irrelevant to the review topic	Very little material irrelevant to the review topic
Organisation and coherence	No organisation of material	No clear structuring of the topic	Little sign of an overall basis for structuring the material, mostly a list of studies with little or no development of ideas	A discernable structuring of the topic, but often disjointed and with a limited overview of the topic as a whole	For the most part, clear structuring of the material leading to some overview of the topic	Discussion of the topic generally well structured and well developed, leading to a clear and well argued conclusion
Precision of Expression	Absence of scientific precision in the use of terms and concepts	Minimal evidence of the ability to use terms and define concepts precisely	A few instances of scientific precision in the use of terms and concepts, but predominant sloppiness and redundancy	Signs of the ability to use precise scientific language, but still widespread instances of sloppiness and redundancy	Overall, precise use of major terms and concepts with little sloppiness or redundancy	Generally clear analytic use of language, with precise use of concepts and negligible redundancy of expression.
Critical evaluation	No valid evaluation of evidence	Minimal evidence of evaluation	Trivial or underspecified criticisms (e.g. ‘need more research’) and widespread illogical reasoning	Raises some important issues but still displays some illogical reasoning or triviality	Identifies most of the main issues relating to topic/evidence/ Methodology with few major instances of illogicality of triviality	Generally sound and thorough data evaluation. Some evidence of original thought.

The overall grade is an amalgamation of the components, and may not reflect a straight forward average. Missing components may not be an issue or may justify poor grade regardless of other sections.