

Module code: MOD008694	Version: 2 Date Amended: 29/Jan/2020
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1. Module Title
Contemporary Issues in Psychology

2a. Module Leader
Mick Finlay

2b. School
School of Psychology, Sport and Sensory Sciences

2c. Faculty
Faculty of Science and Engineering

3a. Level
7

3b. Module Type
Standard (fine graded)

4a. Credits
15

4b. Study Hours
150

5. Restrictions			
Type	Module Code	Module Name	Condition
Pre-requisites:	None		
Co-requisites:	None		
Exclusions:	None		
Courses to which this module is restricted:	None		

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

6a. Module Description

The aim of this module is to explore the unique solutions and approaches that psychologists and psychological research can bring to analysing contemporary real-world problems. For example, issues such as welfare, climate change, political conflict, behaviour in a health pandemic, and the effects of social media, are all public policy issues that psychologists can contribute to. Many current concerns of environmental and social welfare are strongly influenced by psychological factors, and could benefit from psychological analysis.

The module will provide you with a grounding in key skills and research that address considering people, and their psychology, in relation to issues of contemporary concern and policy making. There are two strands to these skills: (a) critical understanding of psychological research methods and ethics, and (b) specific psychological knowledge and approaches relevant to policy making. Regarding the latter, some examples would be knowledge about the roles of self-regulation, motivation, identity, emotion, and culture, amongst other factors.

The specific topics of the module vary depending on issues of contemporary concern but some examples would be: identity politics, wellbeing economics, political populism, disaster preparedness, social media, nationalism, conspiracy theories, and pandemic behaviour. In summary, the module looks at several topics of contemporary relevance and examines how psychologists can contribute to our understanding of them and what practical advice psychologists could give to policy makers.

6b. Outline Content

This module consists of topics relating to the contribution that psychology can make to issues of contemporary concern relating to public policy.

Examples of issues that could be covered are as follows:

- Behaviour in relation to climate change
- Effects of social media
- Identity politics
- Behaviour in relation to a health pandemic
- Wellbeing in the work place
- Dealing with narcissists
- Human rights abuses
- Nationalism
- Racism
- The incel movement
- Political disengagement
- Conspiracy theories

These will vary depending on the contemporary situation, and not all of these issues will necessarily be covered.

Examples of psychological knowledge and skills applied to the above topics you will learn include

- Some awareness of a range of psychological research methods and ethical issues.
- Knowledge of the roles of factors such as (but not limited to) self-regulation, motivation, identity, emotion, and culture, in understanding people and their behaviour.
- Understanding of how to apply psychological knowledge to public policy making.

6c. Key Texts/Literature

The reading list to support this module is available at: <https://readinglists.aru.ac.uk/>

6d. Specialist Learning Resources
None

7. Learning Outcomes (threshold standards)		
No.	Type	On successful completion of this module the student will be expected to be able to:
1	Knowledge and Understanding	Describe in accurate detail some contemporary issues of public concern that are relevant to psychological explanation
2	Knowledge and Understanding	Describe in accurate detail some psychological theories and research that are relevant to explaining contemporary issues of public concern
3	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Apply psychological theory to an issue of contemporary public concern in the form of evidence-based policy advice
4	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Take a critical and reflective stance towards the application of psychological research to public policy making

8a. Module Occurrence to which this MDF Refers				
Year	Occurrence	Period	Location	Mode of Delivery
2026/7	ZZF	Template For Face To Face Learning Delivery		Face to Face

8b. Learning Activities for the above Module Occurrence			
Learning Activities	Hours	Learning Outcomes	Details of Duration, frequency and other comments
Lectures	12	1-4	Lecture 1 hr x 11 weeks plus 1 hour lecture in TW 12
Other teacher managed learning	4	1-4	Seminar 1 hr x 5
Student managed learning	134	1-4	5 hours reading for each lecture (5 x 11 = 55 hours); 4 hours preparation for each seminar (4 x 5 = 20); 58 hours preparation for assessment
TOTAL:	150		

9. Assessment for the above Module Occurrence

The assessment for some modules includes a presentation (see below for details on how this particular module is assessed). We recognise that presenting, especially to a large group, can cause significant anxiety or distress for some students. If this may affect you, please contact your Module Leader or the Disability and Neurodiversity Service as early as possible. We will work with you to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments. Depending on your individual needs, these might include, for example, presenting to a smaller group or presenting only to a member of academic staff.

Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
010	Coursework	1-4	100 (%)	Fine Grade	40 (%)

Coursework (2500 words)

In order to pass this module, students are required to achieve an overall mark of 40% (for modules at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (for modules at level 7*).

In addition, students are required to:

- (a) achieve the qualifying mark for each element of fine graded assessment as specified above
- (b) pass any pass/fail elements

[* the pass mark of 50% applies for all module occurrences from the academic year 2024/25 – see Section 3a of this MDF to check the level of the module and Section 8a of this MDF to check the academic year]