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| **Dayschool Title: Introduction to cognitive psychology** | | | | | | | |
| **Date** | | 30 March 2020 | | **Time** | 09:30 – 17:30 | | |
| **Venue** | | Institute of Continuing Education  Madingley Hall  Madingley  Cambridge | | | | | |
| **Tutor** | | Dr Fiona Essig | | **Course code** | | 1920NDX404 | |
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| **For further information on this course, please contact** | | | [psychology@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:psychology@ice.cam.ac.uk) | | | | |
| **To book** | [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk) | | | | | | |

**Tutor biographies**

Dr Essig is a chartered cognitive psychologist with 12 years experience in teaching the topic. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her research background is in the area of cognitive control, looking at people’s ability to multi-task using language and the types of errors they make. As well as delivering this short course, Dr Essig is course director and tutor for the Undergraduate Certificate in Cognitive Psychology at the Institute of Continuing Education.

**Programme:**

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| *09:30 – 11:00* | ***Session 1: Cognitive psychology: History and methods***  The session will give context to cognitive psychology as an antidote to the ‘black box’ psychology of behaviourism, considering the controversial analogy of the mind as a computer and key events such as the Hixon Symposium. From this basis we will consider what processes cognitive psychologists study and how this crosses over into other areas of psychology, particularly cognitive neuropsychology and cognitive science. We will finish by considering the tools cognitive psychologists use to gather data, reviewing behavioural experiments and neuroimaging. |
| *11:30 – 13:00* | ***Session 2: Memory and language***  The session will focus initially on long-term episodic and semantic memory, looking at processes of encoding, storage and retrieval. How we conceptualise stored knowledge about the world and how these concepts are expressed linguistically will be considered. We will finish by looking at how language relates to thought, touching on Fodor’s (1975) language of thought and looking at the concepts of time and colour. |
| *13:00 - 14:00* | ***Lunch in the Dining Hall*** |
| *14:00 – 15:30* | ***Session 3: Cognitive control and free will***  In this session, we will consider how we process information about the world and whether this always needs conscious attention or can be done unconsciously and automatically. How this is assessed experimentally will be considered, using examples including multi-tasking (task switching) behaviour. We will examine the problem of the control homunculus – the unspecified volitional process that takes charge of our behaviour. Finally we will question our autonomy. Are we self-determined or determined by either our internal or external environment? |
| *16:00 – 17:30* | ***Session 4: Challenges for cognitive psychology***  In the final session we will look at some of the current issues that cognitive psychology seeks to inform. Firstly, we will consider the relationship between emotion and cognition. Are emotions the product of cognitive processing or an instinctive physical response? Why is emotion so tied to memory? This is followed by a review of the hard-easy problem in consciousness research, global workspace theory and key research evidence. Finally we will look at intelligence in the frame of the nature-nurture debate. What is intelligence and can it be captured by intelligence tests? |

**Aims:**

This course aims to provide:

* An understanding of the historical context of cognitive psychology and of where it sits within the broader field of psychology
* An understanding of what cognitive psychologists do and the methods they use to achieve this
* An overview of the function and structure of memory and how this allows us to store knowledge about the world and about ourselves
* An understanding of how we use language to communicate and think about this stored knowledge
* Key ideas relating to how we control our own behaviour and exploring the notion of free will
* Debate over some of the enduring questions in the field – how emotion affects our behaviour and thinking, exploring the seat of consciousness and defining intelligence

**Content:**

The aim of this course is to introduce you to the discipline of cognitive psychology and to use it to answer some key questions about how we interact with the world around us. We will look at the historical context of cognitive psychology and how it has developed from a position of challenging the then prevailing school of thought: that behaviour was a direct result of learning from the environment. The course will also look at the methods cognitive psychologists use to gather data: behavioural experiments and neuroimaging. We will then focus on some selected elements of cognitive processing. These will include episodic and semantic memory; our memory for events and for general knowledge about the world. We will look at how we organise this knowledge into conceptual categories and how these categories link to language. The relationship between language and thought will be explored, using two concepts as examples – time and colour. Then we will look at some higher cognitive functions that relate more to our sense of who we are. The first of these is cognitive control, which is the adaptive conscious ability to inhibit automatic responses when they do not match our current goals. We will also consider the question of free will – are we self- or environmentally determined? Finally we will consider three big questions for cognitive psychology – what is the nature of the relationship between emotion and cognition, what is consciousness for and how is it realised, and can we define and accurately measure intelligence? By the end of the course you will have an understanding of the debates involved in these questions and of how cognitive psychology is seeking to answer them.

**Presentation of the course:**

The course will be delivered through classroom lectures and interactive activities.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical context and theoretical background to cognitive psychology, and its relationship to other branches of psychological investigation
2. Give an account of memory processing for general world knowledge and events, of how that knowledge is conceptualised, and how those linguistic concepts relate to thinking about the world
3. Reflect on how we control behaviour and whether we are able to choose for ourselves when we do and do not act
4. Critically engage with areas of debate within cognitive psychology

**Reading and resources list**

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

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| **Author**  Pinker, S.  Kahneman, D. | **Title**  How the Mind Works  Thinking Fast and Thinking Slow  r  & Modern Life | **Publisher and date**  W. W. Norton & Co. (2009)  Penguin (2012) |

**Additional information**

**Venue**

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:

<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

**Refreshments**

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

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| *Information correct as of:* | 06 January 2020 |