PSYC3211 – Psychological Assessment and Organisational Psychology

Unit of Study Code: PSYC3211

Coordinator: Dr Damian Birney
Office: Room 419 Griffith Taylor Building
Phone: 9351 4236
E-mail: damiamb@psych.usyd.edu.au

Other Teaching Staff: Dr Barbara Griffin
Office: ProVice Chancellor’s Office, Peter Nicol Russell Building
Phone: 9351 5697
E-mail: barbarag@psych.usyd.edu.au

Format of Unit: 1 hour x 2 lectures/week x 13 weeks
1 hour x 1 tutorial/week x 12 weeks
Tutorial sizes: maximum of 20 students per group

Credit Point Value: 4 Credit Points

Qualifying: 8 credit points of Second Year Psychology including PSYC 2112 and PSYC 2114

Assessment:
Classwork: 1,500 word Report, worth 30% of unit total
Due Date: Before 4pm Monday, 11 October (Week 11)

Examination: 40% multiple choice and 30% short answer, worth 70% of the unit total

Evaluation of teaching and learning: Date: Week 13 of the semester
Type: Questionnaire

Unit of study general description:

The unit is divided into two sections (that overlap considerably in practice, if not theory). The Psychological Assessment component will cover fundamental issues in the construction, evaluation, and administration of psychological tests. Students will be given ‘hands-on’ experience with a variety of psychological instruments including those used for personality, aptitude, and clinical assessment. A variety of psychometric 'skills' (e.g., calculating reliability) will also be taught. Topics covered in the Organisational Psychology component include job selection, performance management and appraisal, job satisfaction, and work motivation.
Teaching outcomes:

The following are a list of projected teaching outcomes. The course is designed to be fun, fulfilling and challenging.

1. Demonstrate the ability to describe, explain, and evaluate major issues and controversies surrounding Psychological Assessment (e.g., Can we measure human behaviour? Is there a best form of psychological assessment?)
2. Demonstrate the ability to describe, explain, and evaluate the historical antecedents of contemporary Psychological Assessment.
3. Demonstrate the ability to describe, explain, and evaluate each of a number of theoretical approaches to scale and test construction and to critically compare and contrast these approaches.
4. Demonstrate the ability to describe, explain, and evaluate underlying theories of personality, intelligence, interests, attitudes, aptitudes and the role that these theories play in Psychological Assessment.
5. Demonstrate the ability to describe, explain, evaluate, and apply basic psychometric principles, and to especially understand the concepts of reliability and validity.
6. Demonstrate the ability to describe, explain, evaluate, and apply the major ethical issues underlying Psychological Assessment.
7. Demonstrate the ability to describe, explain, evaluate, and to perhaps even apply psychological tests in a range of assessment contexts.
8. Demonstrate the ability to design, describe, explain, evaluate, and apply principles of Psychological Assessment in an empirical context.
9. Awareness of the general nature of Organisational Psychology.
10. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of job and task analysis in selection
11. Demonstrate the ability to describe the validity of different selection methods.
12. Demonstrate a knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of interviewing and the ability to apply these to the design of structured behavioural interviews.
13. Demonstrate an ability to describe, evaluate and apply psychological models of job satisfaction and work commitment and related methods of assessment, in organisational settings.
14. Demonstrate an understanding of work motivation and the effect of job design/enrichment approaches.
15. Awareness of the need for careful integration between theory, research, and application in Organisational Psychology.

Evidence of learning:

In order to pass the course students are expected to be able to accurately identify, explain, and broadly apply the models described in the syllabus. High quality outcomes involve not only detailed and accurate descriptive knowledge of the syllabus items but also soundly argued evaluation and detailed application of those items. Assessment will take the form of a written report, short-answer questions, and multiple choice items that will cover the full range of teaching outcomes.

SYLLABUS

Introduction. It has been claimed that psychological tests (often in their explicit use by organisational psychologists) represent the most important practical contribution that psychology has made to modern society. Indeed, knowledge of the principles underlying psychological tests is pertinent to the vast majority of professional careers in psychology. The student participating in this course: (a) will gain ‘hands-on’ experience with the administration, scoring, and interpretation of psychological tests, (b) obtain an understanding of the many conceptual and methodological issues comprising the domain of psychological assessment, and (c) obtain an understanding of conceptual and practical issues in the area of organisational psychology.
Course Outline. The lecture (and tutorial) program will cover topics listed below.

1. Introduction to Psychological Assessment
   a. **The Many Uses (and Abuses) of Psychological Tests.**
   b. **Conceptual Definitions.** The meaning of 'psychological test', 'assessment', etc.
   c. **Principles for Administering a Psychological Test.**
   d. **Understanding the Experiment-Participant 'Relationship'.**

2. Introduction to Psychometrics (and other Technical Criteria)
   a. **Psychometrics.** The concepts of reliability and validity, and how these are crucial in psychological assessment. (The approach adopted here will be a more 'hands-on' approach to psychometric issues than that covered in PSYC 3201).
   b. **Comparability of Test Scores.** Scaling, norming, and equating procedures.
   c. **Factor Analysis.** An important technical tool (i.e., statistical method) in test appraisal and test construction.
   d. **Test Theory.** Different approaches to test development and the analysis of item response patterns.

3. The Varieties of Psychological Assessment I: Ability Testing
   a. **Core Concepts underlying Ability Testing.** A brief review of theoretical and empirical issues pertinent to the concept of intelligence.
   c. **Tests for Special Populations.** (i) Infant and preschool testing - (examples will include the Bayley Scales of Infant Development). (ii) Multicultural testing - is it possible to develop 'culture-free' measures of cognitive ability? (iii) Testing people with various disabilities.
   d. **Group Testing.** (i) Advantages and disadvantages associated with group testing. (ii) Computer-administered tests: A frontier for current and future (group) ability testing. (iii) An exposition (and critique) of multiple aptitude batteries.

4. The Varieties of Psychological Assessment II: Personality Testing
   a. **Core Concepts underlying Personality Testing.** The re-emergence of trait models in the study of personality. 'Objective' vs. 'projective' techniques: Review and expansion.
   c. **Measures of Interests and Attitudes.** (i) Strong Interest Inventory (with special reference to Holland's Hexagonal Model of General Occupational Themes). (ii) Attitude Scales - recent examples.
   e. **Other Techniques.** (i) Measures of cognitive style. (ii) Interviews (structured or otherwise). (iii) Biodata.

5. Psychological Tests: Professional, Ethical and Forensic Issues, New Directions
   a. **Ethical Considerations in Psychological Testing.**
   b. **A Critique of Psychological Tests.**
   d. **Summary and Conclusions.**

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6. Organizational Psychology

a. Overview of Organisational Psychology: Theory and Practice
b. The Role of Job Analysis.
d. Selection Research and Theory.
e. Conceptualising and Assessing Job Satisfaction, Work Commitment and Motivation.

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* There may be slight changes to this outline based on how the course progresses and test availability

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REFERENCES


