



## MODULE SPECIFICATION

**Code:** USPJEG-20-3                      **Title:** Psychology and Evolution                      **Version:** 3

**Level:** 3                      **UWE credit rating:** 20                      **ECTS credit rating:** 10

**Module type:** Standard

**Owning Faculty:** Health and Life Sciences                      **Field:** Psychology

**Faculty Committee approval:** Quality and Standards Committee                      **Date:** March 2011

**Approved for Delivery by:** N/A

**Valid from:** September 2011                      **Discontinued from:**

**Pre-requisites:**

USPJLD-30-2 Biological Psychology and Individual Differences or  
USPJCK-20-1 Perspectives in Psychology or USPJLY-20-2 Individual Differences and  
Biological Psychology or USPJMX-30-2 Psychology Applied

**Co-requisites:**

None

**Entry Requirements:**

N/A

**Excluded Combinations:**

None

**Learning Outcomes:**

The student will be able to:

- demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the processes of evolution in the context of psychology;
- discuss the interpretation of the evidence relating to human origins and cultural evolution;
- evaluate evolutionary theories which claim to account for human behaviour.

**Syllabus Outline:**

Evolutionary theory and psychology. Socio-political issues, Social Darwinism, eugenics, sociobiology.

Evolutionary Theory. Mechanisms of evolution, natural selection, sexual (signal) selection. Inclusive fitness, kin selection.

Understanding human origins. Interpreting the fossil record. Artifacts and their interpretation. Comparisons with other primates. Use of anthropological data.

Memes and cultural evolution.

Accounting for human behaviour using evolutionary principles – aggression, dominance and status, co-operative behaviour. Generating and testing hypotheses.

Integration of evolutionary approaches with other areas of psychology.

**Teaching and Learning Methods:**

Course content will be addressed primarily through lectures. The course will also include workshops to address areas of student need and tutor lead seminars where issues raised by the course content can

be debated. Coursework in the form of a review of a book in a related area will also encourage a critical approach to the subject. Assessment under controlled conditions will require the students to critically evaluate the impact of evolutionary theory on a particular aspect of psychology.

Timetable.

1- 2 hour lecture/workshops, addressing syllabus content.

### Reading Strategy:

All students will be encouraged to make full use of the print and electronic resources available to them through membership of the University. These include a range of electronic journals and a wide variety of resources available through web sites and information gateways. The University Library's web pages provide access to subject relevant resources and services, and to the library catalogue. Many resources can be accessed remotely. Students will be presented with opportunities within the curriculum to develop their information retrieval and evaluation skills in order to identify such resources effectively.

Any **essential reading** will be indicated clearly, along with the method for accessing it, e.g. students may be expected to purchase a set text, be given or sold a print study pack or be referred to texts that are available electronically, etc. This guidance will be available either in the module handbook, via the module information on Blackboard or through any other vehicle deemed appropriate by the module/programme leaders.

If **further reading** is expected, this will be indicated clearly. If specific texts are listed, a clear indication will be given regarding how to access them and, if appropriate, students will be given guidance on how to identify relevant sources for themselves, e.g. through use of bibliographical databases.

### Indicative Reading List:

- Cartwright J, 2008, Evolution and Human Behaviour, Palgrave  
Buss 1999, Evolutionary Psychology, Allyn and Bacon  
Badcock C, 2000, Evolutionary Psychology: A Critical Approach, Polity Press  
Skelton P. Ed., 1993, Evolution: A Biological and Palaeontological Approach, Addison –Wesley  
Open University Press.  
Darwin C, 1865, Origin of Species (1985 Penguin Books)  
Darwin C, 1871, The Descent of Man (1985 Penguin Books)  
Dawkins R, 1976, The selfish Gene, Oxford University Press.  
Dawkins R, 1986, The Blind Watchmaker, Penguin Books.  
Kohn, 1999, As we know it. Granta Books  
Ridley M, 1994, The Red Queen, Penguin Books  
Ridley M, 1996, The origins of Virtue, Penguin Books.  
Gould, 1996, The Mismeasure of Man 2Ed., Penguin Books.  
Rose S, Lewontin RC and Kamin LJ, 1984, Not in our genes, Penguin Books.  
Jones S, 1994 Language of the genes, Flamingo, Harper Collins.  
Jones S, 1999 Almost Like a Whale. Black Swan.,  
Walker A and Shipman P, 1996, The wisdom of the bones, Phoenix  
Blackmore S, 2000, The Meme Machine. Oxford University Press.  
Mithen S, 1996, The prehistory of the mind. Thames and Hudson  
Sexton E, 2001, Dawkins and the Selfish Gene. Icon Books  
Wyn Davis M, 2000, Darwin and Fundamentalism. Icon Books  
Plomin R, 1990, Nature and Nurture: An Introduction to Human Behavioral Genetics, Books Cole.  
Daly M and Wilson M, 1983, Sex, Evolution and Behaviour 2Ed. Wiley.

### Assessment:

**Weighting between components A and B (standard modules only) A: 50% B: 50%**

### FIRST ATTEMPT

#### First Assessment Opportunity

**Component A** (*controlled*)  
Description of each element  
CW1 Timed Assignment

**Element Wt (Ratio)**  
(*within Component*)  
1

**Component B**

Description of each element  
CW2 Book Review

**Element Wt (Ratio)**  
*(within Component)*  
1

**Second Assessment Opportunity (further attendance at taught classes is not required)**

**Component A** *(controlled)*

Description of each element  
CW1 Timed Assignment

**Element Wt (Ratio)**  
*(within Component)*  
1

**Component B**

Description of each element  
CW2 Book Review

**Element Wt (Ratio)**  
*(within Component)*  
1

**SECOND (OR SUBSEQUENT) ATTEMPT Attendance at taught classes is required.**

**Specification confirmed by** .....**Date** .....  
(Associate Dean/Programme Director)