



## MODULE SPECIFICATION

**Code:** USPJDS-20-3                      **Title:** Psychology of Consciousness                      **Version:** 7

**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:**

USPJLC-30-2 Cognitive and Developmental Psychology 2 or USPJLB-30-2 Social and Theoretical Psychology: Conceptual and Historical Issues 2 or USPJLW-20-2 Theoretical and Social Psychology or USPJMX-20-3 Psychology Applied

**Co-requisites:**

None

**Entry Requirements:**

N/A

**Excluded Combinations:**

None

**Learning Outcomes:**

The student will be able to:

- understand why consciousness presents a challenge to current scientific and philosophical thought;
- analyse, discuss and evaluate the various theories, arguments and evidence connected with Consciousness Studies;
- question the function of consciousness (if any) in perception, sensation, deliberate action and decision making;
- use knowledge gained from other areas of psychology to explore the nature of conscious experience;
- have enriched their own experience through the practical exercises and encouragement of critical reflection.

**Syllabus Outline:**

**Consciousness as Subjective Experience:**

What is it like to be you? What is it like to be a bat? Various approaches are taken to some of the classic problems in psychology: subjectivity, sense of self, point of view, experience, qualia, mind-body problem, among others. A review of the key features of work by Nagel, Chalmers, Dennett, and others will form a major running theme throughout the course.

**Consciousness as Action:**

What does consciousness do? How does consciousness function? Is consciousness an emergent property? Did consciousness evolve? How is consciousness related to language? The course examines evolutionary, behavioural, enactive (sensorimotor), and functional explanations. Do we have free action or is this an illusion? What is the potential of consciousness? The course explores meditation and personal development through transformation and covers some eastern thought, mostly through Buddhism.

**Anomalous and Exceptional experience:**

Some allied phenomena are also examined: out-of-body, near-death and other kinds of parapsychological or anomalous or exceptional experiences are covered. Research into sleeping and dreaming, the effects of drugs, and other altered states of consciousness are also considered.

Conscious machines, robots, AI and other species.

Are humans the only conscious species? Could a machine be conscious? Can a computational system be conscious? Are we simply such a system? Do other species exhibit consciousness? How does work in these areas inform our understanding of human consciousness?

The course builds on students' experience with modules taken elsewhere on the programme and outside it. Cognitive, Social, Developmental and other psychological models, theories, debates and research evidence will be drawn on during this course.

### Teaching and Learning Methods:

Lectures, discussions, seminars, readings and practical exercises and activities.

### 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:

- Baars, B.J. (1997). *In the Theatre of Consciousness: The Workspace of the Mind*. OUP.
- Blackmore, S. (2003). *Consciousness: An Introduction*. Hodder & Stoughton
- Blakemore, C. & Greenfield, S. (Eds) (1987) *Mindwaves* Oxford: Blackwell
- Chalmers, D. (1996). *The Conscious Mind*. Oxford: University Press
- Churchland, P. (1986). *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified Science of the Mind-Brain*. MIT Press
- Claxton, G. (Ed) (1996) *Beyond Therapy: The Impact of Eastern Religions on Psychological Theory and Practice*. Dorset: Prism Press
- Copeland J (1993). *Artificial Intelligence: A Philosophical Introduction* Blackwell.
- Crick, F. (1994) *The Astonishing Hypothesis*. New York: Scribner's.
- Damasio, A. (1999) *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness*. London, Heinemann
- Dennett, D.C. (1991) *Consciousness Explained*. London: Little, Brown & Co.
- (2005) *Sweet Dreams*. Bradford Book.
- Flanagan, O.J. (2007). *The Really Hard Problem: Meaning in a Material World*. MIT.
- Gray, Jeffrey (2004) *Consciousness: Creeping Up on the Hard Problem*. Oxford University Press.
- Hameroff, S.R., Kaszniak, A.W., and Scott, A.C. (1998) (Eds) *Toward a Science of Consciousness: The Second Tucson Discussions and Debates*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Henry, Jane (editor) (2004) *A to Z Parapsychology*. Routledge.
- Hofstadter, D.R. and Dennett, D.C. (Eds) (1981) *The Mind's I*. London: Penguin.
- Lodge, D. (2002) *Thinks*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Nagel, T. (1979) *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge University Press.
- Papineau, D. & Selina, H. (2000) *Introducing Consciousness*, Duxford, Cambs: Icon.
- Penrose, R. (1994) *Shadows of the Mind*. Oxford: OUP.
- Pickering, J. and Skinner, M. (Eds) (1990) *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness*. Harvester.
- Pinker, S. (1997) *How the Mind Works*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Rose, David (2006) *Consciousness: Philosophical, Psychological and Neural Theories*. OUP.

- Ramachandran, V.S. and Blakeslee, S. (1998) *Phantoms in the Brain*. London: Fourth Estate.  
Searle, J.R. (1992) *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.  
Strawson, G. (1994) *Mental Reality*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.  
Tallis, Raymond (2008). *The Kingdom of Infinite Space*. Atlantic Books.  
Varela, F.J., Thomson, E. and Rosch, E. (1991) *The Embodied Mind*. London: MIT Press.  
Velmans, M. (2000) *Understanding Consciousness*, London: Routledge.  
Wegner, Daniel (2003). *The Illusion of Conscious Will*. MIT Press.  
Weiskrantz, L (1997) *Consciousness Lost and Found: A Neuropsychological Exploration*. Oxford: OUP

**Assessment:**

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

**FIRST ATTEMPT**

**First Assessment Opportunity**

<b>Component A</b> ( <i>controlled</i> )	<b>Element Wt (Ratio)</b>
Description of each element	( <i>within Component</i> )
EX1 Timed Essay (1 Hour)	1

<b>Component B</b>	<b>Element Wt (Ratio)</b>
Description of each element	( <i>within Component</i> )
CW1 Essay (2500 words)	1

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

<b>Component A</b> ( <i>controlled</i> )	<b>Element Wt (Ratio)</b>
Description of each element	( <i>within Component</i> )
EX1 Timed Essay (1 Hour)	1

<b>Component B</b>	<b>Element Wt (Ratio)</b>
Description of each element	( <i>within Component</i> )
CW1 Essay (2500 words)	1

**SECOND (OR SUBSEQUENT) ATTEMPT Attendance at taught classes is not required.**

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