

English for Psychology (Angielski w Psychologii)

Level: C1+

Duration: 30 hours/term

Requirements: If an examination in English is needed as part of the post-graduate studies programme (studia II stopnia), 60 hours of the course must be completed.

If no examination is required, one or two semesters can be completed.

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Course description: The course focuses on different topics from neurology through applied psychology to psychiatry. Students have a chance to have a glimpse into the mechanics of the human brain, find out what goes on in the mind of a psychopath, test their own personality, study different psychological disorders, find out how and why we fall in love, etc. The course is based almost entirely on authentic materials from the British and American media and the American Psychology Association. As it includes a wide variety of materials, it is both informative and enjoyable. It is addressed to students of any field who share an interest in contemporary psychology.

Course objectives

The course aims to:

1. enhance fluency through discussion
2. boost understanding of academic articles
3. improve students' writing skills through writing, e.g., short summaries
4. develop critical thinking
5. develop vocabulary through listening, reading and speaking
6. involve students in shaping the content of the course by suggesting areas of interest (if a topic outside the syllabus is popular enough, it could be realised)

Learning outcomes

Having completed the course, a student can:

1. follow conversations, talks and lectures in the field of psychology and psychiatry
3. justify and explain their opinions concerning psychological issues
4. recognize and use advanced terms in context
5. use the acquired vocabulary effectively and appropriately in academic contexts (classes)
6. evaluate the credibility of sources

Course topics

As students are actively involved in shaping the content of the course, the topics can vary. The topics to choose from are as follows:

1. Trolling
 - a) Who trolls and why?
 - b) The Dark Triad and what it is
2. The Brain on Porn
 - a) Does porn addiction really exist? - two perspectives on the influence of porn on the brain
3. Dating Apps
 - a) A brief history of dating
 - b) The influence of using apps on relationships and society
4. The chemistry of falling in love
 - a) How do we choose a romantic partner?
 - b) What changes in the brain can be observed over time?
 - c) In what way are the scripts we learn in childhood important in choosing a life partner?

5. Marriage

- a) Can arranged marriages work?
- b) Is monogamy natural?
- c) What is the best age to get married?
- d) What is the future of relationships?

6. The history of psychology and psychiatry

- a) The origins of the fields.
- b) Asylums vs. mental institutions.

7. Unethical experiments in psychology

- a) 12 most controversial experiments in psychology and their outcomes.
- b) What would yours be?

8. Personality testing

- a) How is personality formed?
- b) Introverts vs extroverts and personality types in general.

9. Personality disorders and mental illnesses

- a) The mental disorders in *Winnie the Pooh*.
- b) Different disorders and their symptoms, interdependence between genes and environment in the formation of different disorders.

10. Debunking myths in psychology

- a) The most popular myths, e.g., you're safe in a crowd, opposites attract, etc.
- b) The placebo effect and the nocebo effect.
- c) Dissecting the most persistent of the myths.
- d) Positive psychology and cancer treatment

11. Mental illnesses (e.g., depression) and different types of therapy.

- a) The stigma of mental illness – has it disappeared?
- b) How to live and cope with depression?
- c) Different types of therapy, their pros and cons.

12. The mysteries of the human brain.

- a) How is the brain built?
- b) Can one live without a vital part of the brain?
- c) The brain anatomy quiz.

13. Male brains and female brains – are there real differences?

- a) The overlap – what is it and how big is it?
- b) The role of society in forming our brains and behavioural patterns.

14. Inside the mind of a psychopath

- a) Hare's Psychopathy Checklist - test yourself.
- b) Nature vs nurture – the reasons underlying the occurrence of psychopathy.
- c) Politicians or teachers? – in what professions can they most likely be found?

15. Defining and testing intelligence

- a) The evolution of the definition of intelligence over the years.
- b) Test yourself.

16. Building AI and its potential consequences

- a) Should we create something just because we can?
- b) Can a machine learn prejudice?

17. Video games and their influence on reality

- a) Types of games
- b) The influence games have on the brain
- c) VR – potential benefits and threats
- d) The influence of games on children and teenagers

18. Alzheimer's disease

- a) The reasons for its occurrence and diagnostics
- b) Available treatment

19. Sleep

- a) Different stages of sleep
- b) Insomnia and other sleep disorders
- c) How to have a good night sleep?

20. The Paradox of Choice

- a) Is having unlimited choice good for us?
- b) Are we really free to choose what we want?

21. Female autism

- a) Can women be on the spectrum?
- b) Characteristic symptoms and challenges in day-to-day life

22. Gender danger

- a) What is gender?
- b) Gender identities
- c) Where does the controversy around the topic stem from?

23. Sexual orientation

- a) Are we born this way?
- b) Is sexual orientation a spectrum?

Academic component

1. Finding and processing information.
2. Preparing and delivering short presentations.
3. Making notes based on lectures and texts.
4. Developing autonomy and strategy of independent study.

Grammar (only tackled if students are unable to express themselves fluently and clearly)

1. Tenses, e.g., *She has spoken to her doctor about her symptoms.*
2. Using reported speech, e.g., *He said that he had made great progress using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy./Tom asked me if I knew how to recognise a psychopath.*
3. The passives, e.g., *He was given the best available treatment.*
4. Conditionals, e.g., *If she had not been depressed at the time, she wouldn't have lost her job.*
5. Wish sentences, e.g., *I wish I didn't have OCD./I wish healthy people would stop judging people with mental illnesses.*
6. Comparisons, e.g., *I don't think this method is as reliable as CBT.*
7. Transitional words, e.g., *However, Nevertheless, Furthermore, Also, Additionally.*
8. The infinitive and the gerund, e.g., *The researcher remembered talking/to talk to a test subject.*

Assessment

Students will be assessed on the basis of:

1. completing one individual assignment per term – 20 points – writing an essay
2. exit test each term - 30 points
3. regular attendance and completing homework assignments – 10 points
4. active participation in class - 10 points

Grade scale

0-59% – unsatisfactory
60-67% – satisfactory
68-75% – plus satisfactory
76-83% – good
84-91% – plus good
92-100% – very good

Resources

- Harris, Sam. TED “Can we build AI without losing control over it? (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nt3edWLglg>
- Emspak, Jesse. “How a Machine Learns Prejudice” *Scientific American*, 2016
- Umbridge, Ben. TED “Ten myths about psychology: debunked”
https://www.ted.com/talks/ben_umbridge_10_myths_about_psychology_debunked#t-674933
- Lissa Rankin MD. TEDx “Is there scientific proof that we can heal ourselves?” (video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWQfe_fNbs&t=935s
- Ehrenreich, Barbara, PhD. “Author Barbara Ehrenreich on her new book “Bright-Sided” Democracy Now 10/13/09 1 of 2” (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrXzcXLtuhU>
- 60-Second Mind – “Inside the Mind of a Psychopath” (podcast)
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/60-second-mind/inside-the-mind-of-a-psychopath-13-05-14/>
- Hare Psychopathy Checklist
<http://www.decision-making-confidence.com/hare-psychopathy-checklist.html>
- Brogaard, Birgit D.M.Sci., PhD. “The Making of a Serial Killer” *The Superhuman Mind*, 2017;
psychologytoday.com/blog/the-superhuman-mind/201212/the-making-serial-killer
- Wax, Ruby. TED “What’s so funny about mental illness?” (video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=283&v=mbbMLOZjUYI
- Types of therapy; <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies/index.shtml>
- Farrell, Helen M. TED-ED “What is depression” (video).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-IR48Mb3W0>
- Freedenthal, Stacey. “A Suicide Therapist’s Secret Past” *The New York Times*, 2017.
- “24-Year-Old Woman Born Without Cerebellum” IFL, 2016
<http://www.iflscience.com/brain/24-year-old-woman-born-without-cerebellum-her-brain/>
- Mastin, Luke. “Parts of the brain” *The Human Memory* (website), 2010.
http://www.human-memory.net/brain_parts.html
- The Brain Anatomy Quiz
https://www.biologycorner.com/quiz/quiz_brain_anatomy.html
- Wheeling, Kate. “The brains of men and women aren’t really that different, study finds” 2015.
<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2015/11/brains-men-and-women-aren-t-really-different-study-finds>
- BBC’s experiment in August 2017 (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWu44AqF0il>
- Cartoon Conspiracy “Does Pooh Have Mental Disorders? - Winnie the Pooh Theory” Ep. 35 (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNxOD-V3rDo>
- Crash Course “Personality Disorders: Crash Course Psychology #34” (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4E1JiDFxFGk>
- Huff, Charlotte. “Where personality goes awry” *American Psychology Association*, 2004.
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/mar04/awry.aspx>
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – a short version
<https://www.personalityclub.com/short-personality-test/>
- Srivastava, Sanjay PhD. “Personality Is Not Set by 30; It Can Change Throughout Life, Say Researchers”, *American Psychology Association*, 2003.
<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2003/05/personality.aspx>
- Little, Brian. TED “Who are you, really? Puzzle of personality” (video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYvXk_bqIBk&t=332s
- “10 Famous Psychological Experiments Could Never Happen Today”
<http://mentalfloss.com/article/52787/10-famous-psychological-experiments-could-never-happen-today>
- “10 Bizarre Psychology Experiments”

<http://www.online-psychology-degrees.org/10-bizarre-psychology-experiments/>

- Friend, Stephen. TED “The hunt for unexpected genetic heroes” (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yagdvqn2YMU>