

Personality Psychology

Brief description of course content (According to the programme's verification report)

Personality as a concept and discipline: definition and objectives. Theoretical perspectives, strategies and research methods in Personality Psychology. Personality determinants: genetic and environmental influences. Stability and change in personality throughout life. Elements of personality. Individual differences in emotions, adaptation and experience of emotional well-being. Personality styles, health and maladjusted personality. Ethics, deontology and profession.

Learning outcomes

The Psychology Degree Verification document specifies that the objectives to be attained in this subject, expressed as a result of learning, are the following:

Training objectives:

- To understand the fundamental processes and elements of personality and understand how they work.
- To understand the different theories and methods of studying personality.
- To achieve an integrated vision of Psychology from personality constructs.
- To study the main individual differences.
- To understand current lines of work and applications of Personality Psychology.
- To understand the ethical guidelines in Psychology.

In addition, the specific objectives to attain upon finishing the subject are the following (expressed in terms of “Knowledge”, “Skills” and “Attitudes/Values”):

Knowledge (To know)

- To understand the different elements and fundamental processes of personality.
- To know how personality is developed and constructed.
- To understand the different theories.
- To understand the different fields of interest and research.
- To understand study methodologies.
- To understand the implications, hypothesis and results of the main theories.
- To understand the perspective of individual differences, their methods and theories.
- To study the main individual differences.
- To understand current problems in Personality Psychology.
- To relate the results, theories and methods of Personality Psychology with different branches of applied Psychology and other branches of Psychology.
- To study the applications and knowledge of the personality in relevant areas regarding behaviour, emotion, health, performance and adaptation.
- To achieve an integrated vision of Psychology in general from personality constructs.

- To understand the ethical and anthropological assumptions underlying the different schools of Psychology.
- To understand the generally accepted criteria for resolving ethical conflicts, typical when practising Psychology, gathered in the professional codes of ethics.

Skills (Know how)

- To know how to distinguish which of the conceptual and methodological contributions from different schools are relevant for the general study of the personality.
- To know how to infer results in different fields of application from the study of the processes and elements of personality.
- To handle analytical techniques and instruments for personality processes and phenomena.
- To know how to transfer theoretical approaches to research criteria.
- To create or interpret profiles or personality styles from assessment data.
- To know how to handle the main general ethical principles and commonly accepted criteria to resolve ethical conflicts which are presented to the psychologist in fields related to research and social responsibility.

Attitudes and values (Knowing how to be)

- To value and respect theoretical and human diversity.
- To develop a relativist, critical and reflective attitude for the study of personality.
- To respect and recognise individual differences.
- To respect basic understanding.
- To develop an ethical attitude in the assessment and interpretation of the personality.
- To value knowledge attained from the different scientific methodologies.
- To have an interest in research and the creation of new data in Psychology, both passively (as a recipient or evaluator of the innovations) and actively (creating them).
- To take into consideration the quality of the work carried out as a reference of the activity itself: not only to work effectively but also in the best way possible.
- To understand and value the theoretical and practical diversity of Psychology.
- To be critical of the social system from the principles of Psychology.
- To respect the criteria gathered in the code of ethics for the profession of Psychology.

Planned learning activities

Theory Syllabus

BLOCK I. INTRODUCTORY ASPECTS: THE HISTORICAL, CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY.

- Topic 1. Personality as a concept and discipline. A proposed definition of the concept of personality. Strategies and research methods in Personality Psychology. Conclusions.

BLOCK II. THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY.

- Topic 2. Trait approaches. Introduction: common assumptions and characteristics of trait approaches. Factorial-lexical approaches. Factorial-biological approaches. The nature-nurture debate. Conclusions and reflections: the importance of trait units in Personality Psychology.
- Topic 3. Cognitive approaches. Introduction: common assumptions and characteristics of the cognitive and social-cognitive approaches. The first cognitive approaches. Bandura's social cognitive theory. Other important cognitive concepts. The self-concept. Conclusions.
- Topic 4. Motivational approaches. Introduction: common assumptions and characteristics of the approaches focussed on the motivational elements of personality. Approaches based on motivation such as stress reduction. Incentive-type motivation theories: theories of targets. Self-growth/self-actualisation theories. Other current approaches. Conclusions and reflections.

BLOCK III: TRENDS AND APPLICATIONS OF PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY.

- Topic 5. Personality determinants: Genetic and environmental influences. Introduction. Genetic determinants. Explanations of behavioural genetics. Methods of behavioural genetics. Research findings in behavioural genetics. Environmental determinants. Personality and social context. Genotype-environment interaction. Conclusions.
- Topic 6. Stability and change in personality throughout life. Introduction. Stability in personality across time. Changes in personality across time. Explanatory models of personality stability and change. Stability and change processes. Conclusions.
- Topic 7. The unconscious. Introduction. Empirical phenomena illustrating the unconscious. Approaches to studying the unconscious. The dynamic unconscious of psychoanalysis. The cognitive unconscious. The dynamic unconscious and the cognitive unconscious. Comparative analysis. Implications of studying the unconscious. Conclusions: Evaluation of the research in this area and future possibilities.
- Topic 8. Emotions, adaptation and experience of emotional well-being. Introduction. Theoretical issues in research on emotions. Emotional well-being. Factors which affect emotional distress vs. well-being. Personality patterns and their relationship with health vs. disease. Conclusions.
- Topic 9. Personality styles, health and maladjusted personality. Introduction. Attributes of the healthy personality. Attributes of the maladjusted personality. Conclusions.
- Topic 10. Ethics, deontology and profession. Introduction to the code of ethics for the practice of Psychology. Ethics, professional deontology and psychology. Ethical implications of psychological theories. Psychological research. Responsibility before the law. Social responsibility and relationship with organisations.

Practical Syllabus

BLOCK I. INTRODUCTORY ASPECTS: THE HISTORICAL, CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY.

First seminar: The library: information services and resources

Activities to be carried out

- Training modules on information search skills will be given with library resources, and presented in one session in the classroom. For each module, a practical exercise will be done on the Prado platform.

Work method

- Class attendance and completion of the exercises for each module on the platform.

Main challenges of the seminar

- The seminar will be carried out with the coordination of professionals from the Psychology Faculty library and subject teachers. The aim is for students to acquire the basic information search skills, differentiating scientific sources from non-scientific sources.

Second seminar: Research in Personality Psychology

Activities to be carried out

- Read and study the recommended texts. Understand what the correlation coefficients are and how to interpret them, in a simple way, in research work in Personality Psychology. Distinguish between the different kinds of variables which can be used in Personality Psychology. Understand which personality variables can be handled experimentally, through which type of handling, and how this should be done. Completion and delivery of the practical tasks on the proposed date.

Work method

- Class attendance. Personal preparation. This seminar also uses remote methodology. The student must have the required material to address the study in an autonomous way. Seminar work will be done from the basic texts, the articles published on the website and the complementary bibliography. The student will have to carry out the suggested exercises for the different topics of the contents.

Main challenges of the seminar

- To learn to identify the methods of the social sciences and their use in Personality Psychology. To use the appropriate methodology for the research

problems in Personality Psychology. To use the document search systems and distinguish between stages of the research process.

BLOCK II. THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY.

Third seminar: The measure of the trait as a basic unit of personality.

Activities to be carried out

- Complete and correct the questionnaires (16PF, BFQ and EPQ-R). Examine the results' congruence and make a general description of the personality, integrating the information obtained from the three questionnaires. From the personality profile obtained, a prediction of behaviour will be made, according to that presented in the theoretical topic and following the guidelines of Bermúdez (1997). A personal assessment of the results is carried out. Upon finishing the practical exercise, the student will hand in a brief report including the results, interpretation, comparison of the information obtained and reflection about concordance between instruments.

Work method

- Class attendance. Personal preparation. Self-application of the questionnaires (16PF, BFQ and EPQ-P). Correction, results interpretation and report writing.

Main challenges of the seminar

- Those inherent to the correction and calculation of typical scores, interpreting the results and writing a report.

BLOCK III: TRENDS AND APPLICATIONS OF PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY.

Fourth seminar: Assessment of the personality. Achievement motivation

Activities to be carried out

- To further knowledge about the concept of achievement motivation from a practical perspective. To understand the possibilities, advantages and disadvantages different personality assessment instruments which assess this construct offer. To understand the importance of integrating the results of the different assessment tests. To learn about the importance of caution when interpreting assessment tests.

Work method

- Class attendance. Personal preparation. Two assessment instruments on achievement motivation will be self-applied: the Thematic Apperception Test (McClelland, 1985) and the Achievement Motivation Inventory (Smith, 1973). In the case of the first instrument, it will be codified by the student themselves

and by a classmate. The results of both tests will be interpreted, commonalities will be analysed and a reflection on advantages and disadvantages will be carried out.

Challenges of the seminar.

- Those related with codifying, interpreting and integrating results from different assessment tests.

Fifth seminar: The study of the self

Activities to be carried out

- To further knowledge about the complexity and multiplicity of the self in Personality Psychology, as well as the knowledge and skills related to the different assessment instruments for the different selves. To reflect on the multiplicity of the self and to be aware of the implications of this for personal functioning. To consider the implications of private and public image. To reason about the distance between the real self, the ideal self and the feared self and the implications of this in different areas. The student will hand in a report reflecting on the implications of the study and the kinds of self in Personality Psychology and in everyday life.

Work method

- Class attendance. Personal preparation. An assessment instrument, the Berkeley Personality Profile, will be used. From the information in this questionnaire the differences in each of the dimensions the questionnaire measures for the private image (internal self) and the public image (external self) of the personality will be measured. Possible discrepancies between other possible selves - real, ideal and feared self - will be identified. The differences between the self in different roles will be analysed.

Main challenges of the seminar

- Those inherent to correction, interpreting the results and writing a report.

Sixth seminar: Response styles and dispositions

Activities to be carried out

- Completion and interpretation of the CSI (Coping Strategies Inventory by Tobin, Holroyd and Reynolds, 1984). Continuous assessment of the usual kind of strategies for facing specific situations. Comparison between daily and one-time assessment (the correlation between the scores in the coping strategies obtained in the overall and continuous assessment will be identified). Examination of the relationship between optimism and symptoms. Examination of temporal variability and stability. The student will hand in a report reflecting on the consistency of the style of response and its influence on the environment.

Work method

- Class attendance. Personal preparation. To further knowledge about individual differences in order to perceive, assess and initiate coping strategies in identical situations. To analyse a pattern of personality variables which shape coping. To recognise the issue of variability and consistency in coping. To explore the response styles which identify each individual.

Main challenges of the seminar

Those inherent to the assessment and interpretation of reflection and response styles about the implications of studying different types of response and their repercussions on Personality Psychology and in everyday life.