**C8303 Individual Differences**

**Semester 1 20 credits**

***Class Leader:*** Dr Susan Rasmussen

***Teaching staff:*** Dr Susan Rasmussen

Dr Allan McGroarty

Dr Irina Campbell

Dr Dwight Tse

Mr Spence Whittaker

***Aims:***

* To consider the origins of the study of differences between people in their intellectual abilities, and in their personalities.
* To examine definitions of personality and intelligence by looking at the historic background to individual differences research and considering both current and historic methods that have been devised for measuring and studying these characteristics.
* To consider different theories of intelligence and personality and what these imply about the causes of individual differences.

***Learning outcomes:***

On completion of this class students will have gained an understanding of the history of individual differences research and will have acquired the necessary tools to evaluate information on human variations and its measurement. Students will be able to 1) evaluate critically the existing theories and research in the field of individual differences, 2) demonstrate knowledge about the genetic and environmental factors that influence human variations, 3) identify characteristics of intelligence and personality that differ across individuals and understand how these differences change over time.

In particular, students will be encouraged to think scientifically about conceptual and practical issues related to the study of individual differences and will gain the chance to put this knowledge into practice by designing their own measurement instrument. This task will form part of the coursework component of this class.

***Topics covered in the class:***

The course will provide a historical and conceptual overview of the main classic and contemporary theoretical approaches to intelligence and personality. The use of established intelligence and personality tests will be demonstrated, and problems of test construction discussed.

The first half of the semester is dedicated to the study of human personality in terms of 1) What is personality?, 2) Personality traits, 3) stability of personality, 4) assessment of personality, 5) classical and contemporary theories of personality, 5) personality disorders, 6) Personality as a predictor of health and life outcomes, 7) biological approaches to personality, and personality and life outcomes. The section on intelligence will cover the following issues: 1) intelligence definitions and theories, 2) measurement and functions of intelligence, 3) stability of intelligence, 4) group differences in intelligence, 5) the development of intelligence, 6) Intelligence as a predictor of health, illness and death, and 7) giftedness, wisdom and learning disorders. There will also be a session led by the careers services on the use of individual differences tests within the workplace and recruitment.

***Place in course:***

Psychology has traditionally adopted two contrasting approaches to the study of human behaviour: a) examining what people have in common and how this is affected by different circumstances (the experimental approach); and b) investigating the ways in which people consistently differ from each other (the individual differences approach). This class, building on elements of ***C8105 and C8106 Basic Psychology***, provides a comprehensive introduction to both the theoretical and the practical sides of the individual differences approach.

***Methods of teaching and teaching hours:***

Each topic covered in the class will have a number of activities associated with it. These include lectures, reading suggestions, discussion points, and additional relevant videos and external websites. There are also two SPSS lab sessions which gives the student an opportunity to work with data in SPSS.

***Assessment:***

1. Final examination (worth 60% of overall mark). The paper will consist of two sections which correspond to the first (personality) and second (intelligence) parts of the course. Candidates will be asked to answer two questions, choosing one question from each section. Questions will address themes mentioned in lectures, but evidence of further background reading will be expected. This is an on-campus exam and you will have two hours to answer the questions.
2. Report (worth 40% of overall mark). Each student will write a 2500 report on the topic of family position, birth order and personality. Students will be given a data set to analyse for the report and guidance on the report will be given in week 2. This method is what is known as secondary data analysis and is an approach often used by researchers. Being able to make sense of data which one has not collected oneself is a key research skill. **Report to be submitted by 1pm on Wednesday the 8th of November 2023.**

The University and the Department of Psychological Sciences and Health require students to engage with the teaching materials regularly and to perform satisfactorily in the associated work. Students who fail to engage, or who have not submitted the report by two weeks following the deadline may be excluded from the degree examination. Any student with coursework outstanding at the time of the examination will receive a Fail for the examination performance and will not be able to obtain a pass at the re-sit examination unless the outstanding work completed to a satisfactory standard has been submitted.

***Employability***:

C8303 provides students with a number of skills which are valued outside of the undergraduate context. These include: the ability to understand and translate research findings into plain English; an understanding of how we measure individual differences and behaviour; engaging directly with questions and presenting independent opinions about them in arguments that are well-written, clearly expressed, coherently organised and effectively supported by relevant evidence; gaining the confidence to undertake self-directed learning, making the most effective use of time and resources, and increasingly defining one's own questions and goals.

***Feedback***:

Students will receive detailed, written feedback on their report. Generic feedback for the class as a whole will also be provided, as well as upon completion of the end of year exam.

Feedback, however, comes in many forms and at various points: when a discussion post is responded to, this is feedback; when you email a member of staff and they reply, this is feedback; a response to a question before, after, or during a lecture, is feedback. If any feedback is unclear, given the opportunity staff will be happy to clarify it.

***References:***

There is an abundance of texts available on individual differences. The short list below represents some which might be of interest. Further, more specific texts and selected papers may be suggested during the course.

***Main references:***

Maltby, J. Day, l., & Macaskill, A. (2023). Personality, Individual Differences and Intelligence. Pearson - Prentice Hall.

However, any older versions of this book can also be used. The main textbook is available through the library.

***Possible further reading:***

Anastasi, A. & Urbina, S. (1997). Psychological Testing. Prentice Hall.

Larsen, R.J. & Buss, D.M. (2010). Personality Psychology: Domains of Knowledge about Human Nature. McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Carver, C. & Scheier, M. (1992). Perspectives on Personality. Allyn & Bacon.

Cooper, C. (1999). Intelligence and abilities. Routledge.

Cooper, C. (2001). Individual Differences. Arnold.

Haslam N. (2007). Introduction to Personality and Intelligence. Sage.

Howe, M. (1997). Q in question: the truth about intelligence. Sage.

Kail, R. & Pellegrino, J. (1985). Human Intelligence: perspectives and prospects. Freeman.

Kline, P. (1993). Handbook of Psychological Testing. Routledge

Loewnthal K.M. (1996). An Introduction to Psychological Tests and Scales. UCL Press.

Matthews, G. & Deary, I. (1998). Personality Traits. Cambridge University Press.

Murphy, K.R. & Davidshofer, C.O. (2001). Psychological Testing. Prentice Hall.

Pervin, L.A. (2003). The Science of Personality (2nd edition). OUP.

Richardson, K. (1991). Understanding intelligence. Open University Press.

There is also a list of relevant papers available to students via the University of Strathclyde Library.

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