



Faculty of Arts and Social Science  
Psychology

## Syllabus

### Biological psychology, learning, motivation and happiness

<b>Course Code:</b>	PSG020
<b>Course Title:</b>	Biological psychology, learning, motivation and happiness <i>Biologisk psykologi, lärande, motivation och lycka</i>
<b>Credits:</b>	30
<b>Degree Level:</b>	Undergraduate level
<b>Progressive Specialisation:</b>	First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements (G1N)

**Major Field of Study:**  
PSA (Psychology)

#### Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Science 2016-09-12, and is valid from the Spring semester 2017 at Karlstad University.

#### Prerequisites

Admission to the Master of Science in Psychology Programme (VAPSY)

#### Learning Outcomes

Module 1 - Cognitive, neuro- and biological psychology I (12 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the module, students should be able to:

- give an account of concepts, theories, methods and research results in cognitive, neuro- and biological psychology,
- give an account of the adult individual's cognitive functions such as perception, attention, memory, learning and decision-making, and give examples of applications in workplace and clinical settings,
- apply cognitive theories in the planning and performing of an experimental study,
- outline the anatomy and organisation of the brain and nervous cell communication and genetics,
- describe the development of the brain in an evolutionary perspective,
- describe the motor and sensor systems of the brain,
- give an account of the autonomous nervous system and the structure of the hormonal system and the link to emotion and stress,
- give an account of basic psycho-pharmaceutical principles,
- give an account of biological rhythms and sleep, and
- discuss the importance of a scientific approach and analysis in the field of psychology.

Module 2 - Positive psychology, creativity and happiness (4 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the module, students should be able to:

- outline positive psychology,
- identify and describe central theories and research results of the determinants of subjective

wellbeing,

- give an account of and evaluate strategies that affect subjective wellbeing,
- relate theoretical knowledge of subjective wellbeing to everyday situations, and
- give an account of different theories of creativity.

#### Module 3 - Learning and motivation (4 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the module, students should be able to:

- describe and explain classic and modern theories of motivation and learning,
- describe, explain and compare the main features of child, youth and adult learning theories,
- describe, identify, compare and reflect on relevant knowledge theoretical assumptions of theories on motivation and learning, and
- evaluate and apply theoretical knowledge of learning and motivation to everyday situations.

#### Module 4 - Educational psychology (4 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the module, students should be able to:

- give an account of how an applied intervention is performed in a educational setting,
- give an account of different theoretical perspectives in the field of educational psychology,
- evaluate and analyse current theory formation and research data in the field of educational psychology, and its application in pedagogical activities, and
- design an intervention plan in a educational setting.

#### Module 5 - Theory of science and methods II (4 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the module, students should be able to:

- give an account of basic psychometric concepts,
- identify the possibilities and limitations of psychometric testing and evaluation,
- identify the possibilities and limitations of a qualitative data material and relate to possible questions and choice of analysis method,
- perform and present a simple qualitative analysis of a data material,
- identify the possibilities and limitations of a quantitative data material and relate to possible questions and choice of analysis method,
- perform and present quantitative analysis of a data material, parametrically as well as non-parametrically for a dependent variable,
- identify and consider the ethical aspects linked to psychometric testing and research, and
- critically reflect on and assess the research results of a research article.

#### Module 6 - Self-reflection, communication and clinical skills, conduct and communication (2 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the module, students should be able to:

- demonstrate ability to discuss, explain, instruct and give constructive feedback efficiently, orally and in writing,
- describe the meaning of a functioning work alliance, and
- give an account of the challenges of the psychologist's role in terms of concepts such as responsibility, professionalism, self-reflection and social influence.

### **Content**

The course comprises six modules:

#### Module 1 - Cognitive, neuro- and biological psychology I (12 ECTS cr)

The module deals with basic theories, methods and research results in biological psychology and neuropsychology regarding neurophysiology and neuroanatomy, genes and evolution, sensory and motor skills, psycho-pharmacology, biological rhythms, sleep, emotions and stress. Cognition psychology centres on basic theories and methods regarding perception, attention, memory and learning, intelligence and decision-making. The emphasis is primarily on understanding normal adult functions. The module includes laboratory sessions and a project where students carry out an experimental investigation in groups based on cognitive theory. Instruction is mainly in the form of lectures, laboratory work and projects.

#### Module 2 - Positive psychology, creativity and happiness (4 ECTS cr)

The module deals with subjective wellbeing. Students acquire a general understanding of basic theories, methods and areas of application for positive psychology, creativity and subjective wellbeing. The main focus is on strategies for subjective wellbeing and self-reflection on the basis of the theories of positive psychology. Instruction is in the form of lectures, field experiments, group seminars and net-based discussions (e.g. via tweetchat).

#### Module 3 - Learning and motivation (4 ECTS cr)

Students acquire knowledge of the classic and modern theories of motivation and learning based on theory of knowledge assumptions. Instruction is in the form of lectures, seminars, practical exercises and individual assignments.

#### Module 4 - Educational psychology (4 ECTS cr)

The module has a focus on areas relevant to school psychologists and different theoretical traditions in the field of educational psychology. The module deals with the concepts learning and development, which are treated from different theoretical perspectives and in relation to various social phenomena. Also treated are issues connected to child, youth and adult learning and progress in different contexts, such as education, leisure and work, as well as issues such as gender and diversity. Laboratory components and practical tasks reinforce student learning, for example, in writing evaluations professionally.

#### Module 5 - Theory of science and methods II (4 ECTS cr)

The module is a continuation of Theory of science and methods I in semester 1, and deals with quantitative and qualitative research methods and basic psychometric aspects. The qualitative component aims to provide basic knowledge of the interview as a data collection method in qualitative research. Instruction is in the form of lectures, application exercises and video recordings of interviews. Some common types of tests and instruments relevant to the profession are described. Processing empirical data is included, partly qualitative data using relevant qualitative methods, partly quantitative data with relevant non-parametric and parametric statistical methods. Manual calculation as well as calculation with statistical software are included.

#### Module 6 - Self-reflection, communication and clinical skills, conduct and communication (2 ECTS cr)

The module builds on a previous course in semester 1. Students participate in role play of information-gathering interviews, both as interviewer and respondent. The interviews are video-recorded and analysed in groups with an emphasis on how an interview or a conversation can be conducted in a non-leading fashion. The aim is that students should start identifying with the professional role. Active participation in role play activities is an important element of the module.

### **Reading List**

See separate document.

### **Examination**

Assessment is based on:

Module 1: written exam and mandatory group work, laboratory sessions and group reports.

Module 2: mandatory field experiments with discussions and individual hand-in assignment presented and discussed in mandatory seminar.

Module 3: individual take-home exam, a practical observation of everyday phenomena and analysis based on theory, and mandatory participation in seminar where the take-home exam and practical application of theories are reported orally and discussed.

Module 4: individual and group hand-in assignments and mandatory lectures and literature seminars.

Module 5: written exam, mandatory workshops and statistics laboratory sessions.

Module 6: individual hand-in assignments presented and discussed in mandatory seminars.

**Grades**

One of the grades Distinction (VG), Pass (G), or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course. The grade of Distinction is awarded to students who have earned this grade for 18 of the 23 course credits for which the grade is awarded.

**Quality Assurance**

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

**Course Certificate**

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

**Additional information**

The local regulations for studies at the Bachelor and Master levels at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.