

PSYCH 490.001

Melvin Mark:

Psychology and Program Evaluation

Social programs are commonplace. Many college students participated in a substance abuse prevention program in junior high school. Companies use a range of diversity programs. A list of social and educational programs could go on and on. But how do we know if a program is effective? How can we identify ways to improve a program? Program evaluators apply social science theory and research methods, with aims such as seeing whether a social program works, or guiding improvements in an ongoing program, or designing a new and hopefully better program. Psychology, especially social psychology, has much to offer the field of program evaluation. Most programs are intended to change human behavior (e.g., to prevent substance abuse); psychological theories are relevant, both for contributing to program (re)design and as a way to guide efforts to see why a program is (or isn't) working. Program evaluators also encounter challenges in carrying out their work, such as how to collect input about priorities from relevant parties who differ in power; psychology can help point to better ways of dealing with these challenges. Psychologists also have methodological skills that are relevant for the research involved in program evaluation. In addition to reviewing key linkages between psychology and evaluation, we will discuss training and career options in evaluation, as well as how to apply course content to endeavors other than program evaluation.

PSYCH 490.002

Sandra Azar:

Psych. Psychology of Marriage and the Family

This course focuses attention on how families and marriages operate. It gives details of the major theories that have been developed to explain family and marital interaction and will use film and novel material to help you master how to apply them. It overviews the major methods that psychology has utilized to understand family and marital life. Attention is paid to the major stages of family development from the formation of couples to taking on parenting (infants, young children and adolescents) to handling the issues involved with illness and aging. Discussion will also focus on atypical families and ones dealing with stressors such as mental illness in one of its members. Throughout the course racial, ethnic, and social class differences will be highlighted.

PSYCH 490.003

Louis Castonguay:

PRINCIPLES OF CHANGE IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapy has been demonstrated to be an effective form of treatment for a variety of clinical problems. This course is aimed at a deep examination of specific factors that might explain, at least in part, how psychotherapy works. These factors, called principles of change, refer to general strategies of interventions that cut across different theoretical approaches. In particular, the course will focus on two principles: Insight (or the acquisition of a new perspective of self) and corrective experiences (or the unexpected and positive outcome to previously difficult situations). Students will learn how three major approaches (cognitive behavioral, psychodynamic, and humanistic) define and foster these two principles of change.

PSYCH 490.004

Nancy Dennis:

False Memory and Eyewitness Testimony

If you were the victim of a crime, do you think you would be able to accurately describe the events of that crime and accurately identify a suspect from a line up? You are probably not as good at this as you think you might be. If you ask any memory expert to describe how memory works they will say: "Memory is not a tape recorder. Memory is a reconstruction." Meaning that we cannot simply 'replay' a past experience in our mind, but we have to recreate that experience from many stored pieces of that experience. This distinction has profound implications for the accuracy of our memories. Memory reconstruction is prone to the generation of false memories or remembering the past differently than how it was actually experienced. This course will examine the cognitive factors that lead to false and otherwise inaccurate memories, with a special emphasis on how such memory errors affect eyewitness testimony.

PSYCH 490.005

Reg Adams:

The Laughing Animal: The Psychology of Humor and Laughter

Humor and laughter are vital to human functioning, promoting physical and emotional well-being, social harmony, learning, and creativity. Humor and laughter can also be used as weapons against others and can transmit and perpetuate stereotypes and prejudice. This course is designed to explore these phenomena and to apply insights gained to broader research themes such as creativity, social cognition, attribution theory, and emotion theory.

490.007

Roger Beaty:

The Creative Brain

This course is designed for students who are interested in the psychology and neuroscience of creativity. It surveys scientific research on a broad range of topics, including the nature and measurement of creative thinking, the right vs. left brain controversy, the roles of memory and attention in creative problem solving, the relationship between creativity and intelligence, and the neural basis of musical improvisation, among others. The course will include diverse examples from the fine arts and humanities (visual art, literature, music), the sciences, and other relevant domains, largely from the perspectives of cognitive psychology and neuroscience.

PSYCH 490.008
Stephen Wilson:

The Phenomenology and Science of Drug Addiction

Drug addiction is a fascinating example of behavior gone awry. We do not have to look very hard to find reality shows and news stories chronicling individuals whose lives have been derailed by excessive drug use. Such tragic tales raise a host of important questions. What exactly is drug addiction? Why do people become addicted to drugs in the first place? Is it the result of personal vulnerability, something about the drugs themselves, or both? Why can't people just stop using drugs, especially when the costs are so high? What should society do about addiction? Is an attempt at treatment and rehabilitation the answer, or is some form of punishment more appropriate? The goal of this seminar is to approach questions such as these from two perspectives. From one point of view, we will explore the phenomenology of addiction by turning to some of the compelling personal accounts offered by those who have struggled with drug use. From a broader perspective, we will investigate how psychologists have attempted to develop a better understanding of addiction through research and theory. Along the way, we will think critically about the relationship between the individual experience and scientific explanation of addiction. As this is a seminar course, emphasis will be placed upon discussion of material by the class as a whole. The course also will include presentations by individuals and small groups of students.

PSYCH 490.009
Elisabeth Karuza:

Networks in Cognitive Science

In this course we will explore the rich history of networks in cognitive science and discuss the recent surge in applying tools from network science to understand the inner workings of the mind. We will focus on two distinct, but related content areas: (1) *the human brain as a network* of regions constantly communicating with one another to support learning, memory, attention, and sensory processing; and (2) *the world around us as a network* of inter-connected elements, and how complex patterns in our environment influence our behavior.

PSYCH 490.011
Frank Hillary:

Using functional brain imaging methods to understand the human mind

This course will focus on results of research using functional imaging, genetics, and electrical stimulation studies to examine and understand brain functioning with focus on higher order processes of the "mind". It will focus on multiple literatures including the clinical and cognitive neurosciences and examine how findings in these fields have influenced what we know about the brain and emergent mental processes such as altruism, humor, and consciousness. The course requires a basic understanding of functional neuroanatomy and cognitive psychology. We will be reading directly from a literature examining both normal developing mental processes as well as deficits of mind associated with developmental and neurological disorders (e.g., autism, schizophrenia). The goal is for students to understand how brain imaging methods can be used to advance the understanding of human mental processes, but also, the natural limitations of these methods, design challenges and even mis-uses of functional brain imaging in the study of the human mind.

PSYCH 490.012
Pamela Cole:

Human Development, Health, & Education from a Global Perspective

This undergraduate seminar explores how we can understand human development in other cultures. Using the cultures of the nation of Nepal as a case in point, we explore how history, geography, politics, religion, economic factors, education, and social customs influence how the individual develops within the family. In addition to reflecting on weekly readings, students select special topics to present and develop into a final paper. This course also meets PSU General Education International Cultures Course Requirement.

How do cultural influences community members' conceptions of social competence?

- How are individuals and relationships defined and how do changing social forces interface with traditional values and social structures in determining success in a modern global world?
- How do health factors such as nutritional deficits, infectious diseases, and limited access to food and medical care influence competencies (health, academic, & socio-emotional functioning)?
- How do history, economy, income, and education, influence human development?
- How does government affect educational options, including disparities between public, private, and government schools in preparing children for adulthood in a global society?
- How do cultural standards across groups (e.g., caste differences, religious differences) influence standards and expectations for competence?
- How does life differ in urban and rural settings?

PSYCH 490.013
Christopher (Daryl) Cameron:

The Psychology of Empathy and Altruism

How do we decide whether to help others? Are people naturally prosocial, and is human altruism possible? Why do people feel empathy and compassion for others, and are these emotions morally praiseworthy or problematic? Philosophers across cultures have long examined these questions, and psychologists and neuroscientists have complemented these discussions with empirical studies over the past several decades. The aim of this class is to engage in a broad survey of the nature of human empathy and altruism, illuminate debates about limits of empathy and how to expand it, and evaluate the science in a way that will inform ethical discussions of empathy.