UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
PSYCHOLOGY

Ethics, Philosophy and Methods (EPM)
Masters Module (301C8: 15 credits)
Autumn Term/Teaching Block 1 (2014-15)
Module Convenor: Michael Morgan
# Ethics, Philosophy & Methods (EPM) - Essentials

## Autumn Term/Teaching Block 1: Weeks 1-10

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-hour lecture</td>
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<td>Introducing qualitative methods</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2-hour lecture</td>
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<td>Evaluating qualitative research</td>
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**Qualitative Methods**

John Drury  
j.drury@sussex.ac.uk  
Tel 2514

Assessment: 33% weighting: 1000-word essay. See Sussex Direct for submission date in week 5

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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2-hour lecture</td>
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<td>An introduction to ethics in Psychology</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2-hour lecture</td>
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<td>The BPS Code of ethics &amp; research governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2-hour lecture</td>
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<td>Working with vulnerable groups of participants</td>
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**Ethics and Governance**

Michael Morgan  
m.j.morgan@sussex.ac.uk  
Pev 1, 1C6: Tel 7202

Assessment: 34% weighting: 3 parts: research summary (400 words), ethical summary (400 words) and completed ethics application. See Sussex Direct for submission date in week 8

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<td>2-hour lecture</td>
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<td>Assessment guidance</td>
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**Philosophy of Science**

Zoltan Dienes  
Z.Dienes@sussex.ac.uk  
Tel 7335

Assessment: 33% weighting: 1000-word essay. See Sussex Direct for submission date in week 12
Module Overview

This module will consider the conceptual foundations of psychological research and is divided into three key elements (referred to in this document as mini-modules):

1) **Qualitative methods.** These are becoming increasingly important in psychology and related disciplines (e.g., biology, medicine, sociology). Nevertheless, heated debates continue to rage about their essential qualities (if any) and quality (if any). In this part of the module we will examine all aspects of qualitative research, from (claimed) philosophical underpinnings, through method selection, project planning, ethical considerations, data collection, data analysis, and the production, assessment, and presentation of results, though to the scientific, practical, ethical, and theoretical benefits of the end product(s). Particular attention will be given to the prospects of developing qualitative methods that are complementary to quantitative ones.

2) **Ethics and Research Governance.** During this part of the module students will learn about the ethical principles and guidelines relating to research in psychology, in particular the BPS code of conduct and how it applies to research studies, and the UK frameworks for research governance. The ethical issues involved in using non-human animals in psychological research will also be addressed.

3) **Philosophy of Science.** This part of the module explores different approaches to what it means for psychology to be scientific and why it matters. Half of the material considers classic philosophy of science as represented in the views of Popper and Lakatos and how they apply to psychology. The remaining material considers the foundations of statistical inference, comparing the conceptual basis of orthodox (Neyman, Pearson) statistics with that of Bayesian statistics. The aim is to clear up popular misconceptions in interpreting statistics, not to teach any particular statistical technique.

Learning Outcomes

1. Critically evaluate the merits of at least one qualitative method, both in its own terms and in relation to currently dominant quantitative methods

2. Apply the UK frameworks for Research Governance and the BPS Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines to research questions in psychology

3. Explain what the scientific basis of psychology is by linking ideas from philosophy of science to research areas in psychology
Assessment

There are three assessments for this module, one each for each of the “mini-modules” below.

See below for details of each assessment.

Assessment criteria are given at:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/internal/students/examinationsandassessment

Assessment deadlines can be found on Sussex Direct:
https://direct.sussex.ac.uk

Late Submissions and Mitigating Evidence
What happens if I miss an assessment deadline?

Where applicable you may still submit the assessment within 7 days of the published deadline. This will incur a penalty, as follows:

- Work submitted up to 24 hours late shall incur a penalty deduction of 5 percentage points (not 5% of the actual mark).

- Work submitted after 24 hours and up to 7 days late shall incur a penalty deduction of 10 percentage points (not 10% of the actual mark)

- No work shall be accepted after the 7 day penalty period has elapsed

Please consult your assessment deadlines timetable on Sussex Direct;

- https://direct.sussex.ac.uk

For any piece of work where the student wishes to claim mitigating circumstances or impairment a MEC claim needs to be completed and submitted to the Student Life Centre.

Please access the links for further information.

- http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/mitigation
- http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/documentsandpolicies/examinationandassessmenthandbooks
Plagiarism and Collusion

Plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one's own written work submitted for assessment.

Collusion is the preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with another person or persons unless explicitly permitted by the examiners. An act of collusion is understood to encompass those who actively assist others as well as those who derive benefit from others.

Information on how to avoid plagiarism and collusion can be found here;

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=33
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/documentsandpolicies/examinationandassessmenthandbooks

Student Evaluation of our Modules

All modules at Sussex are fully audited. You will be asked to complete an anonymous student evaluation form near the end of each term, allowing you to comment on and criticise all aspects of the module. You may also comment on the module at any time, either to the convenor or you may do this indirectly via some intermediary (e.g. a student representative). Feedback received in this way will be collated reported to the psychology teaching and learning committee. Module Evaluation summaries from last year are available on the School web pages.
Qualitative Methods ‘Mini-Module’

Mini-Module Leader: John Drury

Teaching: Two-hour interactive lectures in Weeks 1-3.

Reading: The core reading is the following:


Other recommended books are given in an annotated bibliography below, as are some useful articles.

Assessment: A single 1000-word essay. See above for general assessment details. Please submit two copies to the Psychology Office by the deadline given on Sussex Direct. See below for titles.

Qualitative Methods – Essay Titles

Below are some titles you may use for your 1000-word essay for the Qualitative Methods ‘mini-module’ assessment. You may use another title if you first get emailed permission for it from John.

- Qualitative research: Supplement, complement, or alternative to quantitative research in psychology?
- To what extent are qualitative and quantitative modes of enquiry compatible?
- How may the quality of qualitative research best be assessed?
- Critically evaluate the utility of adopting any one form of qualitative research within psychological research.
- Explain how a particular piece of qualitative research made a significant contribution to psychological knowledge. What are the implications for improving future qualitative research?
- To what extent is generalisability a necessary and sufficient condition of scientific research?
- To what extent does subjectivity preclude the possibility of qualitative research being scientific?
• Is qualitative research a precursor to science?

• To what extent is qualitative research necessary and sufficient within psychology?

• Can qualitative research contribute to the establishment and improvement of a body of useful psychological knowledge?

• To what extent should qualitative researchers strive for objectivity?

• What should be done about the inevitability of researcher interpretation within qualitative research?

**Qualitative Methods – Books and book chapters**

None of the readings included in this document are ‘essential.’ Please read as widely and deeply as possible to answer the questions you have for each topic (whilst ensuring that you meet the Learning Outcomes).


http://www.mheducation.co.uk/openup/chapters/033520192X.pdf

**Qualitative Methods – Selected Articles**

As said above, none of the readings included in this ‘mini-module’ are ‘essential.’ Please read as widely and deeply as possible to answer the questions you have for each topic (whilst ensuring that you meet the Learning Outcomes).


Very basic, no-frills overview of interviewing from a relatively ‘positivist’ (i.e., the truth is out there) stance.


Plenty to think about in a brief, well-written paper.


Holloway, I., & Todres, L. 2003: The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative Research, 3*, 345-357.


Richards, H. M., & Emslie, C. (2000). The "doctor" or the "girl from the University"? Considering the influence of professional roles on qualitative interviewing. *Family Practice, 17*, 71-75.


Ethics and Research Governance ‘Mini-Module’

Mini-Module Leader: Michael Morgan

Section Overview

Structure, Aims and Objectives
This short component of the module is concerned with the general topic of research governance; primarily ethical considerations in carrying out psychological research but also addressing issues around risk assessment and other components of research governance. The ethical issues involved in using non-human animals in psychological research will also be addressed. Some knowledge in this area is essential to anyone who plans a career that involves a research component in psychology. However the issues have a very much broader relevance than this. Almost all professions – especially those that involve offering services to individuals – will have ethical codes that depend, to some extent, on shared philosophical principles and moral codes.

Learning Outcomes.
By the end of the module you should be able to: 1. Understand the BPS Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines and the specific way in which they are implemented at the University of Sussex. 2. Apply the Code to a range of research studies 3. Understand UK frameworks for Research Governance 4. Understand the ethical issues involved in using animals in Psychology

Pre-Requisites
There are no formal prerequisites.

Contact Information
Organiser: Michael Morgan
Location: Pevensey 1, 1C6
Telephone: internal x7202, external; 01273 877202
E-mail: m.j.morgan@sussex.ac.uk
Teaching and Learning

Teaching Sessions. There are three timetabled teaching sessions, in Weeks 4-6, for this module. Each session will involve a mix of lectures by the convener and some interactive discussion. The Chair of our Research Ethics Committee (REC) will also give a short presentation during the second session. The third session will be in two parts. In the first part I shall discuss the ethical issues that arise when using non-human animals in psychological research and I will finish with an informal session to help you along with the module assessment.

Independent study. The teaching sessions for this module will provide a background to ethics and research governance but you will be expected to carry out a significant amount of private study both prior to and following the teaching sessions.

Following the teaching sessions you will need to complete the assessment. This will involve careful reading of the relevant ethical codes and also the downloading of the forms used by the University of Sussex in judging the ethical issues that arise in a particular piece of research. You will also need to examine some of the other issues that arise in Research Governance, primarily relating to health and safety.

Office Hours. I have office hours at 1.00-2.00 pm on Mondays and Thursdays. You may use these office hours (without appointment) to discuss or ask about anything that relates to this module.

Study Direct. You are encouraged to access module materials and use the module forum in Study Direct. This is the best way to share ideas amongst your fellow students and ask questions about the module. All of the module reading is provided on the website and is not repeated here.

School of Psychology webpage. ALL PGT student applications for projects considered “low risk” must be submitted online. Applications will first be authorised by the Student's Supervisor or Course Convenor, and then reviewed by the Psychology School Research Ethics Officer (SREO): Dr Michael Morgan. Applications must be submitted through the online ethical review application system via Sussex Direct. See the Research Governance website for more details: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/spg/researchgovernance/apply

Books and Reading

There is no module text for this module, but you are encouraged to read all relevant material that is available online such as the BPS code of human research ethics: http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/code_of_human_research_ethics.pdf


Assessment

The Task. There is a single summative assessment task for this part of the module. You should choose a paper reporting empirical research (i.e. not a review), in a “house” journal of the British Psychological Society, published during 2013. These journals are listed here.

http://www.bps.org.uk/publications/journals/bps-journals/bps-journals

The paper should report experiments in an area that is close to your own interests, perhaps in the area in which you hope to carry out your project. Then you should download a word version of the ethics coursework form from Study Direct. You can also access the new online ethical review application system via Sussex Direct (When you have logged into Sussex Direct, click on the ‘Research’ tab, and then select ‘Ethical Reviews’), and look at it but do not print it or fill it out online. Your task is divided into three parts:

1) You should write a brief summary of the research findings and their significance, setting these in context for a broad, scientifically literate audience, in not more than 400 words. This part of the assessment should not simply be an expansion of the abstract of the paper, together with the main findings. Instead you should make a genuine attempt to present the ideas in a broader context. “News and Views” pieces in the journal Nature do this regularly should you be looking for a possible model to follow.

(2) Outline, in not more than 400 words, the ethical issues that are raised by the study together with information about the way in which they were dealt with, if specified, or the way in which you would expect them to have been dealt with, if the paper is not specific. You should make explicit reference to the BPS Ethical code in this section of the assessment.

(3) Complete the 200 word risk assessment of the study that you have chosen (as if you were the investigator applying for ethical approval for the study). Check the “yes” or “no” boxes on the risk assessment and if you judge that a risk assessment would have been necessary for the study say why. You should address any significant risk-related issues in Part 2 of your answer.

Thus your assignment will consist of three parts: the research summary (400 words), the ethical issues summary (400 words) and the completed mock ethics application form (200 words). You can print out the coursework form “2-up” – i.e. 2 pages onto a single a4 sheet. Do not include any supporting documents and leave the names of the applicants, address details etc. blank. However you must provide a description of the experiment.

Marking Scheme. The marking scheme mirrors the structure of the assessment piece.
(1) The first part of the assessment will be allocated 40% of the marks and will be marked using the PGT assessment criteria, specifically that for shorter essays, though also informed by the criteria for „data analysis problems.

(2) The second part of the assessment will be allocated 40% of the marks and will again be marked using the PGT assessment criteria for shorter essays.

(3) The final part of the assessment, relating to the completion of Part A of the ethics form and risk assessment, is allocated the remaining 20% of the marks.

The assessment criteria for assessed essays and practical reports can be downloaded from the School teaching pages.

Submission deadlines should be shown on your timetable and in Sussex Direct. The deadline will be towards the end of the Autumn Term. Since this is a summative assessment there is no particular deadline for the completion of marking. However I shall post some generic feedback on the module website after the submission deadline and expect to complete the marking and moderation process over the Winter vacation.

How does assessment meet learning outcomes? The assessment exercise is designed to test the learning outcomes 1, 2 and 3 of the module. The background material and introductory material to learning outcome 4 will also be tested by this assessment though only a few of you are likely to explicitly choose a paper describing work involving non-human animals. Thus the assessment gives you the opportunity to present your knowledge and mastery of each of the four outcomes listed at the beginning of this module handbook.

Two copies of your assessment must be submitted to the Psychology School Office, Pevensey 1 2A13 before the deadline. You must ensure that you have attached the relevant coversheet.

Session Overview

Session 1
An introduction to research ethics in Psychology

Session 2
BPS code of ethics and research governance at Sussex

Session 3
Working with vulnerable groups of participants. Guidance on the ethics approval process.
Philosophy of Science ‘Mini-Module’
Mini-Module Leader: Zoltan Dienes

Section Overview

Aims: The aim of this section is to provide students with an understanding of core conceptual and philosophical issues relevant to the scientific and statistical nature of psychology.

Objectives: At the end of the course a student should be able to:
Argue what the scientific basis of psychology is, by linking ideas from the philosophy-of-science field to research areas in psychology.

Summary: This section of the module explores different approaches to what it means for psychology to be 'scientific' and why it matters. It considers classic philosophy of science as represented in the views of Popper and Lakatos and how it applies to psychology. It also considers the foundations of statistical inference, comparing the conceptual basis of orthodox (Neyman Pearson) statistics with that of Bayesian statistics: This part of the course aims to clear up popular misconceptions in interpreting statistics, so that you can conduct and evaluate research in a way useful for your development in whichever branch of psychology you are specialising in (clinical, cognitive, etc.).

This is the schematic time table. You should rely on Sussex Direct for complete information on dates and times.

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Assessment: Assessment will consist of a 1000-word assignment due at the end of the term (see Sussex Direct for submission deadline). You will get feedback and marks at the beginning of the Spring Term teaching period, in Weeks 1 or 2.
Readings by topic:

KARL POPPER

Essential reading.

Background reading:

IMRE LAKATOS

Essential reading.

Background reading:
A 20-minute talk by Lakatos:
http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/lakatos/scienceAndPseudoscience.htm

NEYMAN-PEARSON

Essential reading.

Background reading:
http://jpepsy.oxfordjournals.org/content/34/9/903.full

Good talk by Cumming:
Useful site for exploring confidence intervals:

First part of this paper explains using confidence intervals:

If you are staying in research this book is worth getting:

**BAYESIAN INFERENCE**

**Essential reading.**


**Background reading:**


If you are staying in research this book is worth getting:

Assessment

For a paper published in 2014 (for example, from the journal *Psychological Science*), where a key result apparently testing a theory comes from a t-test, answer the following questions. Try to limit your total words to about 1000, so each answer will need to be very concise, while being informative.

You can use one of the following papers:


Or:


Use the original Bargh paper (which is on Study Direct) to inform you of the expected effect size and see if this failure to replicate by Harris et al. is sensitive.

If you wish to pick another paper, that is fine, but do not spend a lot of time searching for the “right” paper. If you pick another paper, include a copy in your submission.

**Section A. Popper (25 marks)**

1) Concisely state the theory that the authors present as being put up to test?
2) What pattern of results, if any, would falsify the theory?
3) What background knowledge inspired this theory but is not being directly tested?
4) What background knowledge must be assumed in order for the test to be a test of the theory in (1)?
5) How safe is the background knowledge in (4)?

**Section B. Neyman Pearson (25 marks)**

6) Have the authors determined what minimal difference could be expected if the theory were true?
7) If not, do you know any results or other papers that could allow you to state an expected size of difference or a minimal interesting difference? Provide an expected raw difference and state your reasons. Provide a minimal difference if you can.
8) Have the authors established their sensitivity to pick up such a difference, through power or confidence intervals? Calculate a confidence interval and use it to argue whether or not the data sensitively distinguished the alternative and null hypotheses.

**Section C Lakatos (25 marks)**

9) State the hard core of the research programme the authors are working in
10) Does the paper contribute to the research programme in a progressive or degenerating way? State your reasons.
Section D  Bayes (25 marks)

11) What was the mean difference obtained in the study?
12) What was the standard error of this difference?
13) Extending your answer in (7) concerning an expected raw difference, specify a probability distribution for the difference expected by the theory and justify it
14) What is the Bayes factor in favour of the theory over the null hypothesis?
15) What does this Bayes factor tell you that the t-test does not?

If you used your own choice of paper, please attach a copy of your chosen paper so I can check your critical analysis of the paper against mine, and check your calculations.