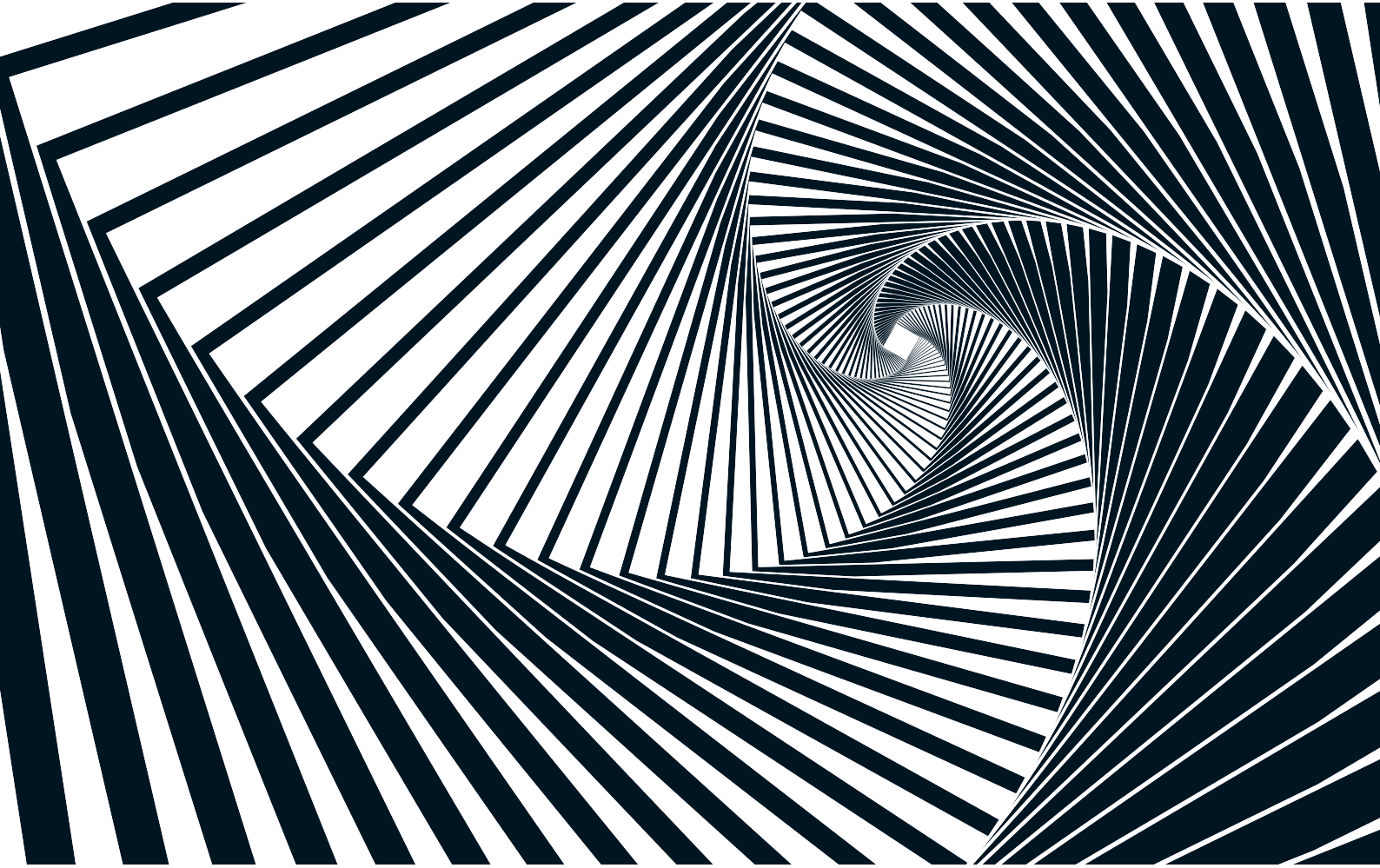
# University of Sussex
## Undergraduate study in Psychology



University of Sussex
Psychology

## Do you ever wonder why…

- You are scared of spiders or the dark?
- You get moody?
- You bought something you didn't really need?
- You forgot someone's birthday?
- You identify with some people but not others?

## Do you have…

- A wide-ranging curiosity?
- An eagerness to be challenged?
- An open mind?
- An enthusiasm for learning?

## Do you want…

- To learn from, and work with, internationally recognised researchers in psychology?
- To be taught by the authors of your university textbooks?
- An outstanding student experience?
- The opportunity to study abroad or go on a professional placement?
- To have a wide choice of options in your final year?

**If you do, come to Sussex to study for a psychology degree.**

# Choose us

**We are one of the leading departments in the UK**, with a faculty whose interests reflect all of the key areas within psychology. **Our faculty are active researchers** themselves, who incorporate the new discoveries and perspectives that they generate through research into their teaching. Our cutting-edge research has a real world impact, informs government policies and fuels media debates, **so you will learn directly about psychology from leading experts.** This will enhance your own understanding of key psychological challenges and issues.

(photo left) A mirror stereoscope is being used to probe the limits of unconscious processing. With different images presented to each eye, only one image will be consciously perceived while the other can exert an unconscious influence on behaviour.

**Our faculty are dedicated to teaching**. Some have written the core textbooks used by many UK universities to teach psychology, but at Sussex, **you have the opportunity to learn directly from the authors.** Several of our faculty have won teaching awards, including Professor Andy Field's highly prestigious **National Teaching Fellowship** in recognition of his ground-breaking and dedicated work teaching statistics. Professor Andy Field has transformed one of the toughest subjects in a psychology degree into one that is easy to understand, engaging and interesting.

We offer you the possibility of a **year abroad** between your second and final year at one of our university partners in North America or Europe. In addition you also have the option of a **placement year**, which may be spent developing professional experience in psychology (eg within an NHS Mental Health Trust) or in a more generic business environment. You can also compete for a **Junior Research Bursary** to work alongside our faculty on their research projects during your second summer vacation.

In your final year, **you get to choose what topics you study** enabling you to pursue your own interests. As one of the largest departments of psychology in the UK, we have specialists in every area of the subject, providing you with the widest choice possible. **You will find our range of options unbeatable.** Also given our size, we can support you in conducting a research project in almost any area of psychology.

We work together with our student representatives to identify areas for improvement and devise solutions to ensure that **we are continually offering the best possible experience**. We take pride in listening and responding to our student's needs, with high ratings for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey. In addition, **our faculty will provide you with the support you need to excel in your studies** through lectures, seminars, practicals and one-to-one tutoring sessions. There is also a very wide range of online materials available to help you through your studies.

Here is what some of our students say about Psychology at Sussex:

## Outstanding student experience

'Looking back in a few years – or even when I'm going to leave the University at the end of this year – I will be able to say that studying at Sussex has been the most fun, eventful, educating and amazing years of my life.

Studying Psychology was definitely the right choice for me as it is a course that offers many different options, whether you like the more biological side or if you prefer the social, or even developmental aspects more.

All the years have been very different from each other in respect to content, modules proposed but especially in the intensity. The most positive thing about third year is that you get to choose the modules that you want to study and even the supervisor you would like to work with. This all builds up to make it the most interesting year of all.'

**Anastasia Guy**

## Supportive learning environment

'As far as I know, I am the only student in my year who comes from the Chinese mainland where psychology is not a subject that students have the opportunity study before university. I was a little anxious about my studies at the start of my first year at Sussex. There were often many things I didn't fully grasp after lectures, but fortunately that didn't last too long. The lecturers showed me specific readings allowing me to find the answers to my questions; for statistics modules there are workshops so that you can practice what you have learned from the lecture. Tutors and lecturers have office hours every week for you to voice your questions and get fast feedback. Over the course of my degree, student mentors shared their knowledge of learning and key skills with me (eg note-taking and critical thinking). There are so many other ways to find help here allowing you to conquer any difficulties and eventually become an independent researcher within your area of interest.'

**Qianli Wu**

Anastasia Guy

Qianli Wu

# Our degree courses in psychology

We provide an excellent grounding in the core areas of psychology and at the same time provide you with flexibility so that you can pursue your own interests both within and beyond psychology.

Our psychology degrees are accredited by the British Psychological Society, giving you the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) which will enable you to apply for further training as a professional psychologist, provided the minimum standard of qualification of second class honours is achieved. This means that as one of our psychology graduates you will be eligible to train as, for example, a clinical or educational psychologist.

We offer a range of psychology courses, giving you the choice of either a Psychology BSc or a course in which you take Psychology as a major and another subject, such as neuroscience or cognitive science, as a minor. If you take the Psychology major without a minor then you can spend up to 25 per cent of the first and second years studying other subjects, or you can also take further optional modules in psychology.

All of the core domains of psychology are covered in the first two years, and the final year is devoted to option modules and your research project, as well as the integrative module, Perspectives on Psychology. We offer a wide selection of final year options for you to choose from, and these reflect the diverse range of our faculty's research interests. Your research project is an especially important and rewarding component of the degree. You carry out your own research on a topic of your choosing, with the help of a member of faculty who will act as your supervisor.

See pages 12-13 for more information.

When you study psychology at Sussex, you will find yourself part of a large community of fellow students. We have an annual intake of about 300 undergraduate students from a wide range of backgrounds, including many mature students and those from outside the UK. With around 100 students on our taught postgraduate courses and about 80 PhD students undertaking research, you can be assured of working within a large and diverse student population at Sussex.

**We hope that you will find that our course structure is suited to your own interests and ambitions. If you require more information, please do not hesitate to contact us:**

**T** +44 (0)1273 876638
**E** ug.admissions@psychology.sussex.ac.uk

# Psychology course structure

| Year 1 | Modules | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Autumn | Research skills in Psychology (1) | Individuals and Groups | Cognition in Clinical Contexts | Applied Psychology, **or** non-psychology elective |
| Spring | Research skills in Psychology (2) | Psychobiology | Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence | Contemporary Issues in Psychology, **or** non-psychology elective |
| **Year 2** | **Modules** | | | |
| Autumn | Discovering Statistics | Brain and Behaviour | Cognitive Psychology | Forensic and Applied Cognitive Psychology, **or** non-psychology elective |
| Spring | Social Research Methods | Developmental Psychology | Social Psychology | Abnormal and Clinical Psychology, **or** non-psychology elective |
| **Final year** | **Modules** | | | |
| Autumn | Research Project | Perspectives on Psychology | Psychology option | Psychology option **or** minor option |
| Spring | Research Project | Research Project | Psychology option | Psychology option **or** minor option |

## BSc in Psychology
### Elective modules

Students on the Psychology BSc have a choice of taking psychology modules, or choosing a module offered by other schools at the University as an 'elective'. If you wish to widen your studies beyond psychology in the first and second year, elective modules can be chosen from a very wide range offered by other schools within the University. For example, in the first year you can choose modules that include Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Media Studies, Themes and Perspectives in Sociology and America Inside Out. Your electives can be a free choice of those available in each term, or form a coherent pathway in a particular subject, or be used to develop proficiency in a foreign language. A wide range of language modules, including French, German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese are available from foundation to an advanced standard.

## Psychology with a minor

Students studying Psychology with a minor subject (Cognitive Science or Neuroscience) will choose one module each term from those offered by the minor subject. Students applying to these courses should therefore have a strong interest in the relevant topic.

# Teaching in year 1

### Cognition in Clinical Contexts

This multidisciplinary module introduces you to the aims, methods, theories and empirical findings associated with a scientific approach to studying the human mind. You will learn how psychologists develop models of cognitive function that are tested against data from behavioural studies of healthy individuals, as well as from individuals with brain damage or psychopathology. You will cover three broad themes: perception and attention; language and thought; learning and memory. This term 1 module does not assume any prior knowledge of psychology.

### Individuals and Groups

This module covers topics such as the self (how we see ourselves and how others see us), person perception (how we form impressions of others), attitudes and attitude change, the determinants of pro-social and anti-social behaviour (eg helping, aggression), social influence, group performance (how people work in group settings), inter-group relations (including the origins of prejudice and methods of reducing it), and social identity (how our group memberships influence our behaviour towards people in our own and other groups). You will also consider individual differences, such as personality types and IQ – exploring how they arise and their impact on an individual. This term 1 module does not assume any prior knowledge of psychology.

### Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence

Introducing the historical origins, perspectives, theories, methods and empirical findings of developmental psychology, you will examine key themes in human development from a variety of different psychological perspectives. These themes include language development and socio-emotional development. The module covers a wide range of material on topics such as infant cognition, family relationships, peer group processes and childhood disorders.

### Psychobiology

How does our brain store information? Do different parts of the brain have different functions? How do brain cells communicate with each other? Why do some people become addicted to drugs? What makes us want to eat and drink to excess? How has evolution shaped our behaviour? How similar is our behaviour to that of other animals? Why do we have emotions? These are just some of the questions you will examine in this module which is designed to give psychology majors from all backgrounds a thorough grounding in the most important areas of biological psychology.

### Research Skills in Psychology (1 and 2)

These two modules will provide you with several key skills that will be valuable not just throughout your degree, but also your career. You will learn about the various methodologies that psychologists use to study behaviour, and be introduced to some of the basic statistical techniques that are used to analyse data. By the end of the two modules you will be able to run a well-designed experiment, choose an appropriate statistical test, analyse the data, and write up the findings in a report following the format used by psychology journals. All the necessary computing skills are taught on the module.

Common mental health problems are studied in the first part of the Applied Psychology module.

## Psychology electives in year 1

If you are studying a BSc in Psychology you can choose either or both of the following psychology electives modules. If you prefer, you can replace either or both of these modules with non-psychology electives, including a modern language.

### Applied Psychology

This module provides you with an insight into five areas of professional applied psychology: Clinical Psychology, Health Psychology, Educational Psychology, Forensic Psychology and Occupational Psychology. You will learn some of the core psychological knowledge that underpins these applied areas, cover some detailed examples of the issues that professional applied psychologists deal with, and learn about some of the research and theories that support these applied areas.

### Contemporary Issues in Psychology

This module introduces you to a variety of contemporary topics in psychology. Subjects vary on a regular basis in order to keep them up to date, but would typically include areas such as Brain Imaging, Comparative Psychology, Evolutionary Psychology, Gender Differences and Polylinguism.

A student investigates children's social play behaviour in order to develop strategies for supporting social interaction and communication in children with autism-spectrum conditions.

# Teaching in year 2

## Brain and Behaviour

This module will help to build your knowledge of brain mechanisms and behaviour. Topics covered will normally include mechanisms underlying nerve communication; synapses and neurotransmission; the effect of anxiety inhibiting drugs on the nervous system; development and functioning of the human brain; and neural mechanisms in cognition, reward, motor behavior and learning. Through this module you will gain an understanding of how knowledge of brain structure and function is used to help understand the production of behaviour.

## Cognitive Psychology

This module covers a very broad range of exciting topics including the sensory systems (vision, hearing, touch, balance and the chemical senses), how attention relates to perception, action and memory, amnesia, and other disorders of memory. You will also consider the psychology of language more generally, including how we read and recognise words, and the relationship between language and thought. The complexities of human thought are also considered – including issues such as how we reason and make decisions, as well as how we think creatively and solve problems.

## Developmental Psychology

Building on the first-year Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence module, you will consider how our understanding of development can be applied in real world settings, such as child rearing and education. Aspects of both social and cognitive development are included, and individual differences between children (eg 'easy' vs 'difficult' temperaments) are considered alongside species-general development. The origins and consequences of parent-child attachment are examined, and the topical debate of the impact of non-maternal care on the strength of these bonds is illuminated through theoretical debate and empirical evidence. You will also explore how children come to understand the world around them,.

## Discovering Statistics

Discovering Statistics develops your research skills through research projects conducted in small groups, and lectures and practical classes that teach you how to analyse data using the general linear model. Professor Andy Field (see page 03) writes 'The general linear model sounds pretty scary, but it is taught using lively examples that are like catnip to the toothy feline of statistics fear. As well as learning about statistics, you'll discover the truth about speed dating, which people end up smelliest after three days at a rock concert, and whether you can use an eel to cure constipation'. The module is well supported by lectures given by a National Teaching Fellow, his award-winning textbook, web-based materials, graduate tutors and peer-led support networks. It's the most fun you can have learning about statistics!

## Social Research Methods

On this module you will develop the knowledge and skills that will equip you for three kinds of social research methods in psychology: survey questionnaire design and interpretation; observation and inter-rater reliability; and qualitative data-gathering and analysis, including interviews and discourse analysis. You will also develop more generic research skills in research design, analysis and report writing which will prepare you to carry out your own independent empirical project in the final year.

## Social Psychology

This module addresses questions such as: How do social factors influence people's thoughts, feelings and behaviour? How do we make judgements about our own and others' personalities and behaviour? When are people's attitudes reflected in their behaviour, and when not? How easy is it to change people's attitudes? Why do people hold stereotypes about other social groups? Is prejudice inevitable? Why do people behave differently when they are part of a group (or part of a crowd)? Why, and when, do people conform to others' behaviour? The central focus of the module is on social factors influencing human psychology.

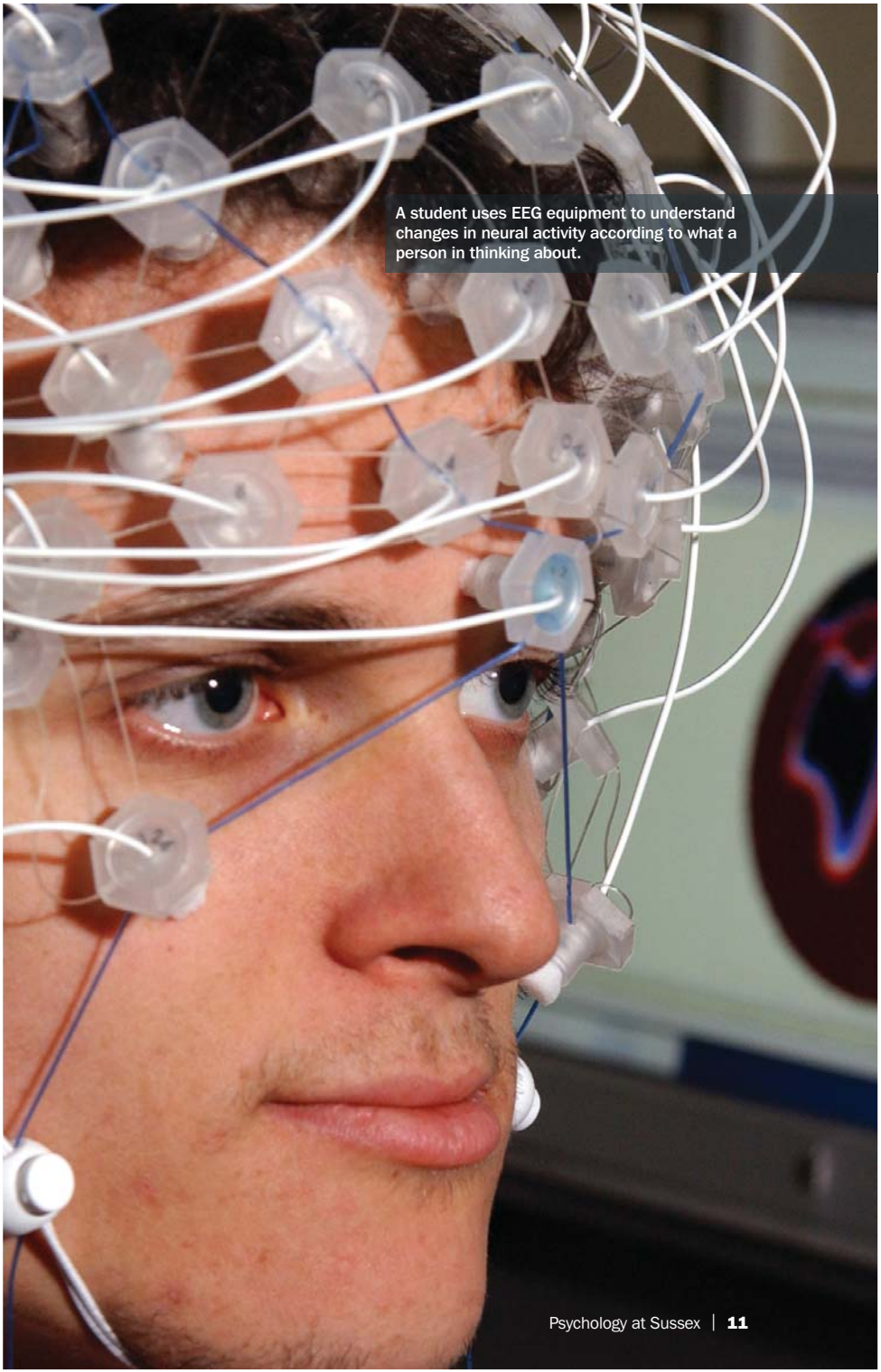
## Psychology electives in year 2

### Forensic and Applied Cognitive Psychology

This module deals with the application of the theories, knowledge and methodologies of cognitive psychology to various 'real world' problems. For example, you will consider the application of theories of perception and memory in a criminological context. What is wrong with face recall systems such as Photofit, Identikit and E-fit? How reliable are eyewitnesses' accounts of what they have seen? Cognitive psychology also provides insights on issues such as: how stressors, such as alcohol, drugs and fatigue, affect a driver's performance.

### Abnormal and Clinical Psychology

The aim of this module is to provide you with an introduction to the theory and treatment of psychological disorders such as anxiety, phobias, depression, schizophrenia, addiction and dementia. You are encouraged to appreciate the links between the theory and treatment of those disorders from cognitive, behavioural and biological perspectives.



A student uses EEG equipment to understand changes in neural activity according to what a person in thinking about.

# Teaching in the final year

At this stage you have covered all of the core areas of Psychology to BPS qualifying level. You may also have experienced a year abroad or in a professional placement. The final year gives you the opportunity to explore areas of specific interest to you, or that will be of special relevance to your intended career pathway.

## Research project

In the final year of the degree, you will carry out a research project. You begin thinking about the project at the end of the second year, when you list which members of faculty you would like to work with. In the past, students have investigated topics as diverse as the effects of ecstasy use on cognitive function, communication in meerkats, emotion processing in the healthy elderly and visual search performance in people with obsessive-compulsive disorder.

You are encouraged to make use of our extensive research facilities, which include dedicated human psychopharmacology and psychophysiology laboratories, well-equipped vision and psychoacoustics labs, as well as developmental psychology labs used for studying infants and children. We also have strong links with local nurseries, schools and hospitals, as well as other institutions such as local zoos and the aquarium.

## Final-year options

In the final year, our psychology students choose four option modules. As a student on the BSc Psychology you select all four from the options from those offered by Psychology. If you are taking a BSc Psychology with a minor then you select two options from those offered by psychology, and two from those offered by the minor discipline.

The options offered reflect the wide range of research interests covered by psychology faculty. Because faculty (and their research interests) can change, the exact list of options offered may change slightly from year to year.

However, as one of the largest psychology departments in the UK, you can rest assured that we will offer a very wide range of choice. All options offer you the opportunity to explore a topic in real depth, taught by a member of faculty with considerable expertise in the area. The list shown on page 13 is typical of the range of options we offer.

Option modules also differ in how they are examined – some are assessed with an extended essay or dissertation, others are assessed by a more traditional unseen 'final' examination.

There is one core module:

## Perspectives on Psychology

This module is designed to help you reflect on your studies of psychology in three ways. First, you will examine the philosophical underpinnings of psychology, tackling questions about the nature of scientific investigation and other fundamental debates through the history of psychology. Second, the ethics of psychological research will be scrutinised. Finally, you will be supported in identifying and critically reflecting on the transferrable employability skills that you have gained from your studies of psychology during your degree course.

Some people see coloured letters spelled out when they listen to speech. The parts of the brain used for hearing may connect in unusual ways to the parts of the brain involved in seeing. This is the topic of the final year option 'Synaesthesia and the Mixing of Senses'.

## Psychology options in the final year

- Altruism and Helping Behaviour
- Animal Vocal Communication
- Biological Bases of Mental Disorders
- Clinical Psychology
- Cognitive Neuroscience
- Drugs, Brain and Behaviour
- Economic and Consumer Psychology
- Environmental Psychology
- Fear and Anxiety in Children
- Gestural Communication in Apes and Human Infants
- Health Psychology
- Human Vocal Communication
- Neurobiological Mechanisms of Learning and Memory
- Organisational Psychology
- Positive Psychology
- Psychobiology of Cognitive Ageing and Dementia
- Psychological Perspectives on Self and Identify
- Psychology of Appetite
- Psychology of Collective Action
- Psychology in Education
- Psychology of the Family: Beyond Attachment
- Reading, Writing and Dyslexia
- Social Cognitive Development
- Social Psychology of Prejudice
- Synaesthesia and the Mixing of Senses

Transcranial magnetic stimulation temporarily blocks nerve action so that it is possible to identify the function of that part of the brain, as the participant may become slower at a task or make more errors. This is the topic of the final year option 'Cognitive Neuroscience'.

# Research at Sussex

Our cutting-edge research aims to enhance the understanding of, and provide innovative approaches to key psychological challenges and issues. Our research activity is organised around four broad themes:

The **Behavioural and Clinical Neuroscience** group draws on a close relationship between animal, human and clinical work. We focus on studies of ageing and dementia, appetite and obesity, and addictive behaviours.

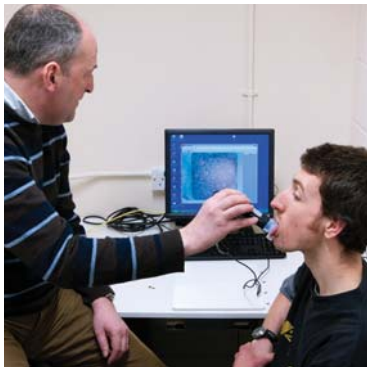
The **Cognitive Psychology** group has wide-ranging interests including language and communication, attention, visual perception and cognition, vocal communication in mammals, learning, memory, and consciousness. As well as normal adult cognition, members of this group study both developmental issues and various pathologies.

The **Developmental and Clinical Psychology** research group has a common aim of advancing theoretical approaches to human development and clinical psychology in order to inform practical interventions to support cognitive, emotional and social growth. Research spans three intertwined areas: the development of cognition and communication, social and emotional development, and mental health through the lifespan.

The **Social and Applied Psychology** group of faculty concerns itself with the attitudes and behaviour of people in their social environments. Above all, it focuses on how people's relationships – with others in their groups or with those who belong to different groups – affect behaviour and in turn, how relationships are affected by the social context in which people find themselves. Research is concentrated in four main areas: health psychology and behaviour change; identity, culture and well-being; intergroup relations; and pro-social and moral engagement.

You can find more information about research conducted in the School in our *Research Guide for Prospective Students* at:
**www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/guide**

**Each of the images on these pages relates to research conducted in our school which are also all topics that you can study within an option. What would you choose?**



# Studying at Sussex

Psychology at Sussex is taught through a combination of lectures, seminars and tutorials (plus laboratory or practical classes for some modules), as well as private study. The number of teaching sessions will vary according to your course, but they normally occupy most days of the week. For the remainder of the time you will be expected to study independently, so you will need to organise your time efficiently and develop good study habits.

Many modules are built around a series of lectures, each lasting about an hour and offer a regular opportunity for the whole student group to be taught together. Lectures – and the lecture notes that are posted on the web – are essential, but they only represent a starting point: you are expected to build on what you learn through your own study.

Lectures are supported by seminars, in which a group of students and their tutor talk through ideas, question assumptions and discuss aspects of a topic in depth. Sometimes a student presentation or problem exercise provides the starting point for discussion.

Much of your learning will depend on you: how you use the learning resources available to you; the extent to which you participate in discussions and practical or group work; and how you tackle assignments and assessments.

The academic year is divided into two teaching blocks of 13 weeks, each of which is followed by an assessment period.

During the second and final years there is greater emphasis on seminars and project work. Greater independence in the final year is combined with more in-depth study of a particular topic. As well as having a broad understanding of your subject and its context, you develop a specialist interest and expertise. This breadth and depth of study – and the skills that it nurtures – will prove invaluable in your future career.

Sussex is a friendly, open, and inclusive university and we are eager for you to enjoy your work and have fun during your time with us. Every student has access to an academic advisor for front-line advice on academic matters, and to professional student advisors for advice and support on a wide range of personal, financial and academic issues.

But don't just take our word for it!
This is what our students say:

## Research expertise and opportunities

'I knew before I applied to Sussex that it had a good reputation, but it wasn't until I attended an open day at the School of Psychology that I realised how much I wanted to study here.

The range of subjects is great and the methods of teaching are fantastic! Particularly seminars. In these I met so many students from differing backgrounds, which really adds to the classroom debates.

I cannot stress enough the importance of getting involved in all aspects of student life. Personally, I started to attend meetings, in my first year, at the Children and Technology Laboratory, which gave me a good understanding of research in this area.

Gaining this experience helped me to design and conduct my own research project at the end of my second year, thanks to a Junior Research Bursary which I applied for at the university.'

**Chris Girvan**

## Breadth of choice and perspectives

'As a mature student who had been out of education for nearly 10 years, I was rather apprehensive starting my Psychology BSc degree.

Not only has the degree itself offered a wide variety of psychological perspectives and areas to be fascinated by but the people I have met, from engaging and inspiring academics to enthused fellow students, as well as the 'village' feel of the Sussex campus, has allowed me to slip right back into education with ease.

Having had an extensive range of subject material throughout the first two years, I was very well placed in my third year to choose modules that align with my interests and career goals. I feel this is a real advantage of the course as in effect, you can tailor the end of your degree to what you want to progress on to.'

**Jennifer Merres**

Chris Girvan

Jennifer Merres

# Life at Sussex

For many, going to university will mean moving away from home for the first time. Surrounded by the South Downs National Park, the University of Sussex is a community with an atmosphere of intimacy and camaraderie that many students find encouraging, and reminisce about long after graduation.

From a social perspective, it is unbeatable – the restaurants, bars and sports facilities are only ever a short walk away.

The centre of Brighton is only ten minutes away from campus by either bus or train. Here you will find everything you could ask for – sun, sea, brilliant clubs, great places to eat, fabulous shops, and a truly cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Whether it's down to something in the sea air or the protection of the South Downs, Brighton feels special. The atmosphere is unique, relaxed and friendly. Famous for its shopping and café culture, Brightonians have embraced the student lifestyle.

The place is alive with mainstream and alternative cultures. It is a city where individuality and diversity are valued and applauded.

**But the best thing you could do is to come and find out for yourself.**

Some final words from our students:

## Student satisfaction

'I had never imagined how diverse university would be before I came to Sussex. I am amazed by the wide range of areas in Psychology that I have been introduced to, the excellence of teaching staff specialised in, and the research done on these different fields at Sussex. Being an International student, I am overwhelmed by how globalised Sussex is, in terms of students with different cultural backgrounds, and teaching staff members who have taken part in cross-national research collaboration.

As a final-year Chair Representative, I like the way the School of Psychology values student voices. It is empowering when I am asked to express my views towards the course and subsequently see the positive changes that the feedback can potentially impose. Being an active participant, instead of a passive recipient, of my own education does more than just achieving a degree but helps my personal development as an individual.'

**Hazel Tong**

## Excellent choice

'I initially chose Sussex because of the course offered and I haven't been disappointed. I really enjoy the variety of topics covered in Psychology, and studying at Sussex has also given me the invaluable opportunity to study German through the 'Proficiency in a language' electives pathway.

The campus provides a really friendly and positive environment to study in with loads of places to work and socialize. It's a great location as in a few minutes you can either be out on the downs, in the city or on the beach.'

**James Moon**

Hazel Tong

James Moon

## How do I find out more?

For information about entrance qualifications and for advice on how to apply, see the University of Sussex Undergraduate Prospectus. This is obtainable online from **www.sussex.ac.uk/study/prospectus**

For any further or more specific enquiries, please contact:

Admissions Tutor
Psychology
University of Sussex
Falmer
Brighton
BN1 9QG, UK

T +44 (0)1273 876638
**E** ug.admissions@psychology.sussex.ac.uk

**www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology**

University of Sussex
Psychology

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this booklet at the time of going to press (May 2014) but the University cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

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