

# Key studies in psychology

Renata Słowińska

# About the course

## **In this course you will:**

- Discover psychology at its best
- Get to know the various disciplines and approaches within psychology
- Find out about the various possibilities of conducting psychological research...
- ...and the potential pitfalls that researchers face
- ...and how to avoid them
- Learn a basic lesson that should come in handy when you pursue your fruitful research careers in the future
- Look at psychological research from a different perspective

# What is psychology all about?

## **Serge Moscovici (1972):**

*We have been asserting for many years that science seeks truth, that its role is to promote civilised values and to extend the reign of reason, and to create human beings capable of objective judgment who would help to enact the ideals of democracy, equality and freedom. (p.21)*

## **Rod Cooper (1982):**

*Suppose tomorrow that all these scholarly efforts of the psychologists should disappear from the collective knowledge of mankind... Would it really make a difference?*

# Topics

1. Freud: The case of Anna O.
2. The Bobo Doll experiments: Bandura's social modelling approach to aggression.
3. The end and the means of psychological research: Milgram's (1963) Behavioural study of obedience
4. Showcase psychology: Zimbardo's (1972) Simulated prison experiment
5. The challenges of child research: Baillargeon's (1987) studies on the development of object concept
6. Do autistic children have theory of mind? Baron-Cohen's (1985) exploration on the frontiers of developmental, cognitive and abnormal psychology.
7. Does psychotherapy work? Eysenck's (1952) seminal study.

# Topics

8. Clive Wearing: The worst case of amnesia ever known
9. Mapping the human brain: Maguire et al's (1998) observation of neuronal activity in navigation tasks.
10. Teaching sign language to a chimpanzee (Gardner & Gardner, 1969)
11. Does language determine thought? Boroditsky's (2001) research on Chinese speakers conceptions of time.
12. Tackling the nature-nurture debate: Bouchard & McGue's (1981) review of familial studies of intelligence.
13. Beyond psychology: Tversky and Kahneman (1981) on heuristics in judgment and decision making.
14. Does psychology matter? A discussion on the methodological and theoretical developments in psychology.
15. Exam

# About the course

## Structure

15 x 2h workshops, each focusing on one major piece of psychological research and its most important follow-ups (see syllabus)

Looking at theoretical as well as methodological aspects

## Class activities

We will read original research reports, play out the experimental conditions in class, watch video footage, but most of all, discuss, debate and analyse their respective strengths and weaknesses.

## Readings

**Are absolutely essential.** Key readings should be done in advance, additional readings will be assigned after each workshop.

# About the course

## Attendance

Attendance is obligatory

Students with more than TWO absences will not pass the course...

...and I mean it...

...unless

you have a legitimate reason for your absences and a proof of it (a note from a doctor, or from the course director- not a letter from your parents, your neighbours, or random passers-by)...

Still...

if you have more than 2 legitimate absences, you will have to do an extra assignment

# Assessment

## **Coursework 60%**

-A 2500-3000 words essay 40%

„Psychology can speak in many languages on a single topic. Discuss ,using examples”

\*\*\*\*\*Due first class after Christmas\*\*\*\*\*

-Class activities 20%- *your participation in class + attendance*

## **Final exam 40%**

1.5h written exam at the end of the term (class 15)

1 short answer section- where you will be asked to explain basic statistical and research terms

1 essay- a general research question will be posed, and students will be asked to write how they would approach it, what methods would they be likely to use, what obstacles and challenges they would expect to encounter, how they would try to overcome them, how would they take their research further etc

## **Candidate numbers**