



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

PC1142, Consciousness Studies and Psychical Research, 7,5 higher education credits

Consciousness Studies and Psychical Research, 7.5 högskolepoäng

First Cycle

1. Confirmation

The course syllabus was confirmed by Faculty of Social Sciences on 2007-11-16 and was last revised by Faculty of Social Sciences on 2010-06-10 to be valid from 2010-09-01.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100 %

Department: Department of Psychology

2. Position in the educational system

The course is a core course in the first cycle and given as a single subject course.

G1N.

Main field of studies

Psychology

Specialization

G1N, First Cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements

3. Entry requirements

To be eligible for the course general entry requirements are required.

4. Course content

The course is divided into three separate modules. In the first module a historical review leads to modern concepts of consciousness and the unconscious. The role of consciousness in elite performance and health (flow, mindfulness and self efficacy) is evaluated. The second module reviews historical and contemporary research on altered states of consciousness such as hypnosis, dream states, meditation and mediumship. Normal explanations for many of the claims of extraordinary abilities are evaluated. Clinical states such as dissociation and psychotic experiences are defined and distinguished from healthy ones and the research evidence is presented for some of these experiences being sources of growth and creativity. This leads to the third module which is concerned with the emergence of modern psychical research and experimental parapsychology. A critical review is made of the claims and counter-claims and the possible implications for

theories of consciousness. Contemporary theories and research methods in these areas are presented and along with the areas of practical application.

5. Learning outcomes

After completing the course the student is expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- Describe the emergence of modern views concerning consciousness, unconscious processes and anomalous experiences as core phenomena of psychology.

Skills and abilities

- Describe how research methods have evolved and the precautions necessary for high quality research on consciousness and anomalous experiences.

Judgement and approach

- Show a critical ability in finding normal psychological explanations but also openness in evaluating claims and in formulating researchable questions in this area.

6. Literature

See appendix.

7. Assessment

Attendance at all scheduled teaching occasions is obligatory. Students must contact the course leader or seminar supervisor for instructions on how to make up for work missed in cases of absence from compulsory exercises or seminars.

Students performance on the course will be assessed by an individually written examination. This includes an essay question in an area of chosen and approved interest. This is compulsory only for those seeking the grade pass with credit.

A student who has failed a test twice has the right to change examiner, if practically possible. Applications for a change in examiner must be in written form and are to be sent to the department.

If the course should change with respect to content and/or required reading the student has the right to be assessed according to this syllabus within one year after the change has taken place. The student is guaranteed a minimum of three opportunities to complete the course exam, including the regular exam date. After this, each request to be assessed according to a previous syllabus will be considered separately.

Should the course cease to exist altogether it is still possible to sit the exam within two years after the course was last given. After this time, the request to sit the exam will be considered separately in each case.

8. Grading scale

The grading scale comprises Fail (U), Pass (G), Pass with Distinction (VG).

For the grade Pass the following requirements must be met:

- A minimum of 60% correct on the written exam

For the grade Pass with distinction the following requirements must be met:

- A minimum of 80% correct on the written exam
- It is a further requirement that a short review (without external aids) of a research area or a research plan is made in the form of the essay question

Regarding the application of ECTS scales, please see Vice-Chancellors decision 2007-05-28, dnr G 8
1976/07.

9. Course evaluation

The course director guarantees that the students will be given the opportunity to fill in a course evaluation at the end of the course. These evaluations will then be considered by the working committee for single subject courses and made available both to the students that completed the course evaluation and to future students about to take the course. A compilation of the evaluation results for each course is archived in a folder that is available to future students.

10. Additional information

Language of instruction: English.

Literature – PC1142, Consciousness Studies and psychical research

The literature has been established by the head of department
2008-05-06

Blackmore, Susan (2005). *Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction* 146 p.

or as an alternative by the same author :

Consciousness: An Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 460 p.

Irwin, Harvey & Watt, Caroline. (2007). *An Introduction to Parapsychology* (5th ed). Jefferson, NC: McFarland. 312 p.

Parker, Adrian (2003). We ask does psi exist? *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 10, 111-134. 23 p.

Lecture notes and print-outs will be distributed 50 p.