

SYLLABUS

Introduction to psychology

University year 2025-2026

1. Information regarding the programme

1.1. Higher education institution	Babeş-Bolyai University
1.2. Faculty	Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
1.3. Department	Department of Psychology
1.4. Field of study	Psychology - Cognitive Sciences
1.5. Study cycle	Bachelor level
1.6. Study programme/Qualification	Psychologist
1.7. Form of education	Full-time

2. Information regarding the discipline

2.1. Name of the discipline	Introduction to Psychology I			Discipline code	PLE1101		
2.2. Course coordinator	Lecturer Ramona Buzgar						
2.3. Seminar coordinator	Lecturer Ramona Buzgar						
2.4. Year of study	1	2.5. Semester	1	2.6. Type of evaluation	E	2.7. Discipline regime	DD

3. Total estimated time (hours/semester of didactic activities)

3.1. Hours per week	4	of which: 3.2 course	2	3.3 seminar/laboratory	2
3.4. Total hours in the curriculum	56	of which: 3.5 course	28	3.6 seminar/laborator	28
Time allotment for individual study (ID) and self-study activities (SA)					hours
Learning using manual, course support, bibliography, course notes (SA)					30
Additional documentation (in libraries, on electronic platforms, field documentation)					12
Preparation for seminars/labs, homework, papers, portfolios and essays					20
Tutorship					4
Evaluations					2
Other activities:					1
3.7. Total individual study hours					69
3.8. Total hours per semester					125
3.9. Number of ECTS credits					5

4. Prerequisites (if necessary)

4.1. curriculum	NA
4.2. competencies	NA

5. Conditions (if necessary)

5.1. for the course	Classroom with at least 80 seats, omputer and video projector
5.2. for the seminar /lab activities	Classroom with at least 80 seats, omputer and video projector

6.1. Specific competencies acquired ¹

¹ One can choose either competences or learning outcomes, or both. If only one option is chosen, the row related to the other option will be deleted, and the kept one will be numbered 6.

Professional/essential competencies	<p><i>1. Knowledge and Understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding core concepts related to scientific reasoning, paradigms in psychology, and human behavior. • Knowledge of fundamental psychological processes: perception, memory, learning, emotion, motivation, and development. • Familiarity with psychological explanations of health, stress, and psychopathology. • Understanding theoretical and practical aspects of positive psychology and interpersonal functioning. <p><i>2. Explanation and Interpretation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to compare and critically assess different psychological paradigms and theories. • Ability to explain human behavior through biological, cognitive, and social-emotional mechanisms. • Ability to interpret psychological concepts in relation to social context, personality, and individual differences. • Ability to analyze real-life psychological examples based on scientific principles. <p><i>3. Instrumental, Applied and Attitudinal Competencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying psychological theories to understand real-world phenomena (e.g., coping, communication, interpersonal dynamics). • Using appropriate terminology and academic references in written and oral communication. • Demonstrating ethical sensitivity and openness to diversity in the interpretation of human behavior. • Managing time, resources, and collaboration effectively in seminar tasks and projects.
Transversal competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to critically read and evaluate psychological research articles, distinguishing between valid scientific evidence and intuitive or common-sense claims. • Capacity to synthesize key psychological theories and apply them to real-world issues such as learning, stress, emotional regulation, and mental health. • Competence in formulating arguments based on empirical data and in constructing coherent oral or written presentations on psychological topics. • Skills in planning and conducting basic psychological inquiries, including hypothesis formulation, observation, and interpretation of behavioral patterns. • Ability to manage time effectively, work both independently and in teams, and reflect on personal and group learning processes in academic settings. • ☑ Openness to interdisciplinary perspectives and sensitivity to ethical and cultural issues in the application of psychological principles.

6.2. Learning outcomes

Knowledge	<p>The student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know the distinctions between common sense and scientific reasoning in psychology; • understand the core paradigms in psychology (psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, evolutionary); • describe basic processes such as sensation, perception, memory, and thinking; • explain key mechanisms of emotional experience and emotion regulation; • understand major theories of motivation and their biological and cognitive components; • identify developmental stages and psychological aspects of human development; • know major personality theories and their applications; • understand the relationship between stress and health and basic notions of health psychology; • recognize the main types of psychological disorders as defined in DSM classifications; • be familiar with the principles and applications of positive psychology and social cognition
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Skills	<p>The student is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply research methods to evaluate psychological claims and differentiate between anecdotal and scientific evidence; • analyze real-life behaviors using theories of classical, operant, and observational learning; • interpret cognitive and perceptual processes, including illusions and constancies; • use psychological concepts to explain individual differences in emotion, attachment, and personality development; • evaluate coping strategies and approaches to stress management; • discuss the effectiveness of various psychotherapy approaches (CBT, RBT, systemic therapy); • reflect on the role of emotional intelligence, empathy, and interpersonal communication in mental well-being.
Responsibility and autonomy:	<p>The student has the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage independently with academic literature and seminar resources to deepen understanding of psychological concepts; • contribute to seminar discussions, case analyses, and group projects by integrating theory and application; • reflect on personal emotional and motivational dynamics in connection with course themes (e.g., self-determination, empathy, goal-setting); • demonstrate openness, curiosity, and ethical responsibility in analyzing behaviors and psychological phenomena in diverse contexts.

7. Objectives of the discipline (outcome of the acquired competencies)

7.1 General objective of the discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The discipline aims to provide students with a foundational understanding of key psychological processes, theories, and paradigms, as well as their practical applications. Emphasis is placed on the development of scientific thinking, the analysis of mental and behavioral processes, and the understanding of human development, emotion, motivation, personality, and health-related factors, including psychopathology and positive psychology
7.2 Specific objective of the discipline	<p>By the end of the course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between common sense and the scientific approach in psychology. • Describe and compare the major paradigms in psychology: psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, and evolutionary. • Explain basic processes related to sensation, perception, and mental representation. • Understand key mechanisms of memory, thinking, and information processing. • Analyze the stages of human development and the nature vs. nurture debate. • Define and differentiate basic emotions and emotion regulation strategies. • Apply theoretical models of motivation and personality to psychological functioning. • Explore the relationship between stress, health, and psychological adaptation. • Identify and describe major psychological disorders and diagnostic categories. • Understand core concepts of positive psychology and their relevance to well-being. • Analyze how social cognition and interpersonal relations influence behavior •

8. Content

8.1 Course	Teaching methods	Remarks
1. Common sense vs. scientific approach in psychology	Interactive lecture, exemplification, case study, guided discovery	

Keywords: common sense, scientific approach, observation, experiments, generalization, biology, mental processes, behavior		
2. Paradigms in psychology Keywords: psychodynamic perspective, behavioral,	Interactive lecture, exemplification, questioning, guided discovery	
3. Paradigms in Psychology Keywords: Cognitive psychology, humanistic paradigm, evolutionary psychology	Interactive lecture, exemplification, case study, guided discovery	
4. Sensation and perception Keywords: sensation, perception, absolute threshold, sensory experience	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
5. Mental processing Keywords: mental representation, memory, thinking	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
6. Human development Keywords: developmental stages, normativity, nature vs. nurture, cognitive development, intelligence	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
7. Emotions Keywords: basic emotions, evaluative response, facial expressions, subjective experience Human development	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
8. Emotion regulation Keywords: emotion regulation strategies, appraisal, attention, beliefs	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
9. Motivation theories Keywords: needs, innate, drive, incentives achievement, goal-setting, evolutionary perspective	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
10. Personality Keywords: psychodynamic theories, trait, humanistic and cognitive theories	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
11. Health and stress Keywords: health behavior, sources of stress, transactional process, adaptation	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
12. Health and psychopathology Keywords: DSM, ADHD, anxiety, depression, attachment disorders, mood disorder, personality disorder	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
13. Positive psychology Keywords: well-being, happiness, social support	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
14. Social cognition Keywords: stereotype, attitude, social bias, persuasion, cognitive dissonance	Interactive lecture, exemplification, guided discovery	
Mandatory bibliography: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kowalski, R., Westen, D., (2011). Psychology. 6th edition. John Wiley & Sons, ISBN-13 978-0-470-64644-1, 		

- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Fredrickson, B., Loftus, G. and Wagenaar, W., 2009. Atkinson & Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology. 15th ed. Hampshire: Cengage Learning EMEA
- Spielman, R. M., Dumper, K., Jenkins, W., Lacombe, A., Lovett, M., & Perlmutter, M. (2020). *Psychology 2e* (2nd ed.). OpenStax. <https://openstax.org/books/psychology-2e>

Optional bibliography:

- Griggs, R. A. (2017). *Psychology – a concise introduction*. Worth Publishers, New York.
- Myers, D. G. (2013). *Psychology*. Worth Publishers, New York.
- Bargh, J., Lee-Chai A., Barndollar, K. et al (2005). The automated will: Nonconscious activation and pursuit of behavioral goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81, 1014-1027.
- Beck, A. T. (2008). The evolution of the cognitive model of depression and its neurobiological correlates. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 165, 969-977.
- Cohen, S. Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 385-396.
- Cox, T. (1993). *Stress research and stress management: putting theory to work*. HSE Contract Research Report No. 61/1993.
- David, D (2000). *Unconscious information processing; Psychological contamination in the media, clinical and legal practice*. Ed. Dacia. Cluj-Napoca
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, L. M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development and health. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 182-185.
- Duckworth, A. L., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Self-discipline outdoes IQ in predicting academic performance of adolescents. *Psychological Science*, 16, 939-944.
- Ekman, P. (1992). An argument for basic emotions. *Cognition and Emotion*, 6, 169-200.
- Ellsworth, P. C., & Scherer, K. R. (2003). Appraisal processes in emotion. In R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer, & H. H. Goldsmith (Eds.) *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, pp. 572-595. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hayes, N., & Joseph, S. (2003). Big 5 correlates of three measures of subjective well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 34, 723-727
- Izard, C. (1992). Basic emotions, relations among emotions and emotions-cognition relations. *Psychological Review*, 99, 561-565.
- Lilienfeld, S. O., Lynn, S. J., Namy, L. L., & Woolf, N. J. (2011). *Psychology. From inquiry to understanding*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Miclea, M. (1994), *Cognitive Psychology*. Ed. Gloria. Cluj-Napoca.
- Opre, A. (2007 /) *Introduction to personality theories*. ASCR Publishing House, Cluj Napoca
- Opre, A. (2012) *The Cognitive Unconscious. Theoretical models, experimental support and applications*, Ed. Polirom, Iasi
- Parot, F, and Richelle, M., (1995). *Introduction to Psychology: History and Methods*, Ed. Humanitas
- Pytlik Zillig, L. M., Hemenover, S. H., & Dienstbier, S. H. (2002). What do we assess when we assess a Big 5 Trait? A content analysis of the affective, behavioral and cognitive processes represented in the Big 5 personality inventories. *Journal of Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28, 847-858.
- Russel, J. A. (2003). Core affect and the psychological construct of emotion. *Psychological Review*, 110, 145-172.
- Scherer, K., Wraniak, T., Sangsue, J., Tran, V., & Scherer, U. (2004). Emotions in everyday life: probability of occurrence, risk factors, appraisal and reaction patterns. *Social Science Information*, 43, 499-570.

8.2 Seminar / laboratory	Teaching methods	Remarks
1. Characteristics of good psychological research. Research methods in psychology Keywords: research ideas, standardizes procedures, generalizability, descriptive research, experimental research	Interactive lecture, group activity, experiential learning	
2. Applications of learning theories - classic conditioning, operant conditioning Keywords: stimulus, associations, response, reinforcements, punishment, extinction	Interactive lecture, case study, individual activity, learning by discovery	
3. Applications of learning theories - observational learning Keywords: learning, cognition, modelling, observation, mental processes	Interactive lecture, case study, individual activity, learning by discovery	

4. Perceptual constancy and perceptual illusions. Perception of pain Keywords: constancy, illusion, visual perception, pain perception	Interactive lecture, case study, group activity, learning by discovery	
5. Creative thinking Keywords: creativity, lateral thinking	Interactive lecture, case study, group activity, learning by discovery	
6. Attachment theory Keywords: attachment style, parent-child relation, relations in adulthood	Interactive lecture, exemplification, case study, guided discovery	
7. Emotional intelligence Keywords: EQ, emotional intelligence	Interactive lecture, case study, group activity, learning by discovery	
8. Social- emotional development Keywords: development, emotions, social skills, self-management	Interactive lecture, case study, group activity, learning by discovery	
9. Self-determination theory Keywords: self-determination, motivation, competence, autonomy, relationship, intrinsic motivation	Interactive lecture, case study, group activity, learning by discovery	
10. Personality development Keywords: attitudes, behavior, self-confidence	Interactive lecture, case study, group activity, learning by discovery	
11. Stress management Keywords: stress reactions, coping mechanism, social support	Interactive lecture, exemplification, case study, guided discovery	
12. Treatment of psychological disorders Keywords: RBT, CBT, group therapy, systemic therapy	Interactive lecture, exemplification, case study, guided discovery	
13. Positive psychology Keywords: love, compassion, gratitude, empathy	Interactive lecture, exemplification, case study, guided discovery	
14. Interpersonal relations Keywords: interpersonal attraction, impression management	Interactive lecture, exemplification, case study, guided discovery	
<p>Mandatory bibliography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kowalski, R., Westen, D., (2011). Psychology. 6th edition. John Wiley & Sons, ISBN-13 978-0-470-64644-1, • Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Fredrickson, B., Loftus, G. and Wagenaar, W., 2009. Atkinson & Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology. 15th ed. Hampshire: Cengage Learning EMEA <p>Optional bibliography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Griggs, R. A. (2017). Psychology – a concise introduction. Worth Publishers, New York. • Myers, D. G. (2013). Psychology. Worth Publishers, New York. • Bargh, J., Lee-Chai A., Barndollar, K. et al (2005). The automated will: Nonconscious activation and pursuit of behavioral goals. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81, 1014-1027. • Beck, A. T. (2008). The evolution of the cognitive model of depression and its neurobiological correlates. American Journal of Psychiatry, 165, 969-977. • Cohen, S. Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 24, 385-396. • Cox, T. (1993). Stress research and stress management: putting theory to work. HSE Contract Research Report No. 61/1993. • David, D (2000). Unconscious information processing; Psychological contamination in the media, clinical and legal practice. Ed. Dacia. Cluj-Napoca 		

- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, L. M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development and health. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 182-185.
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9. Corroborating the content of the discipline with the expectations of the epistemic community, professional associations and representative employers within the field of the program

- The proposed lecture and seminar offer central topics in fundamental and applied research in the fields of cognitive sciences, and their approach is based on the most recent results found in the literature. The course also offers state of the art research skills that are transferable to any scientific and applied field of knowledge.

10. Evaluation

Activity type	10.1 Evaluation criteria	10.2 Evaluation methods	10.3 Percentage of final grade
10.4 Course	10.4 Lecture	Capacity of analysis, synthesis and integration of theoretical knowledge	Written exam
10.5 Seminar/laboratory	10.5 Seminar / laboratory	Capacity of analysis, synthesis and knowledge transfer in ecological/ real life contexts	Research project

10.6 Minimum standard of performance

The final grade consists of:

- a. score obtained in the written exam in proportion of 50% (minimum of 3.5 points)
- b. minimum of 50% of the final grade (5 points obtained by summing the written exam and the project)

11. Labels ODD (Sustainable Development Goals)²

	General label for Sustainable Development							
								

² Keep only the labels that, according to the [Procedure for applying ODD labels in the academic process](#), suit the discipline and delete the others, including the general one for *Sustainable Development* – if not applicable. If no label describes the discipline, delete them all and write „*Not applicable.*”.