

## BA Honours with a Major in Psychology

The BA Honours with a Major in Psychology is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the subject to its students. It is an interesting combination of papers from different fields of psychology (social, health, indigenous, abnormal, organisational, etc.) coupled with a sound exposure to hands on experience through special practicum planned with various theory papers. Overall, this programme aims at giving deep theoretical and applied understanding of the discipline intertwined with a rigorous training in research skills.

Of the 96 credits required to get a BA Honours degree with a Major in Psychology, a student has to acquire a minimum of 48 credits (equivalent to 12 courses) in Psychology to earn this degree at AUD. It is also possible for a student to earn an additional 8 credits (equivalent to 2 courses) in Psychology. There will normally be 14 courses in Psychology comprising of core (compulsory) and optional courses of the discipline.

The core courses aim at providing the students with adequate competence at par with the standard undergraduate courses of Psychology across Indian Universities. Special care is taken in providing the students a steady exposure to the content of the subject. In the second Semester there are Psychology courses on *Cognition*, where they learn to appreciate the cognitive facet of human behavior. *Understanding Personality* is another paper, where understanding the individual with his/her uniqueness is dealt with.

The third semester courses include Social Psychology that looks into the importance of context in determining human behaviour. Another course titled *History of Psychology*, will take students through a brief journey on the developments of the systematic approaches to the study of psychology (from the inception to the contemporary times). In the paper titled *Statistics* students will learn how to analyse data quantitatively.

In the fourth Semester, the focus shifts to the child (who is embedded in the context), hence a paper on *Contextualising Child Development*. In this paper, students would be taken through the world of the growing child. A course on *Methods in Psychology*, is also offered, where students would innovatively reflect on the tools employed for research in Psychology through classic research studies in the discipline. This semester also includes a course involving practical work using experiments from various fields of Psychology.

The Fifth Semester courses are designed to enable students in knowing the physiological basis of behavior. The topics in the paper *Neuropsychology* will ground the complex psychological experiences and expressions of the human in the processes of the brain and the neural network. A linked course on *Understanding Abnormality* will help students understand pathology and normalcy. In this course students will be familiarised with the conceptual tools required for understanding the complex world of mental illness and distress. This semester will also have practical components through the course titled *Special Practicum*. The study of the unique individual forms one of the bedrocks of contemporary psychology. This course will help students learn the processes of psychological measurement, interviewing, observation and case study taking.

The Sixth Semester gives students the option of choosing two out of the three offered courses; *Counselling*, *Organisational Psychology* and *Psychology for India*. The course on *Counselling* will teach aspects of the counselling process beginning with the first contact with a client to the point of termination of the counselling relationship. The course on Organisational Behavior (or OB) introduces the students to how individuals, groups, and organisational structure have influence on behavior within organizations. *Psychology for India* is a paper which will critically examine the assumption of universality and consider the possibility of a culturally located psychology.

The salient feature in teaching of Psychology at AUD is the interactive mode of teaching where students are encouraged to understand the subject by exploring links with their self. Teaching will also use films and popular narratives to highlight and illustrate significant contexts of the course.

Varied forms of assessments will be adopted for evaluating students. A combination of presentations, book reviews, written and oral examinations will be used. Assignments, practical and dissertation work will be based on the on going work/courses; these will be followed by an oral examination.

Students doing a Major in Psychology will also be encouraged to take courses from other disciplines such as English, Hindi or Sociology. It is also possible for a student to spend an extra year of study and earn a Dual Major degree, for example, a Dual Honours Major in Psychology and Sociology.

Students doing a Major in Psychology from AUD would be eligible for a Masters in Psychology or Gender Studies or Masters in other allied areas. Some of the Masters programmes are already available at AUD. The course would also be a good facilitator in some applied areas like, mass media, advertising, education, child development, counselling and organisational psychology. It would enable the students to work in varied fields where they are required to engage with human beings in different contexts. Further information about Psychology Honours at AUD can be sought by writing to Dr Rachana Johri (rachana@aud.ac.in).

Brief descriptions of various courses offered in different semesters are provided below:

## **2nd Semester**

### **Understanding Personality**

4 Credits

This course introduces students to the issue of personality: what makes each of us different and unique. The course introduces students into the varied approaches to the understanding of psychology and the methods of personality assessment. Are all aspects of personality in our awareness? How do the person and the social context interact? What makes some people more aggressive and others helpful and what is the relationship between personality and distress?

## **Human Cognition: Understanding how we know**

4 Credits

This course introduces students to the area of human cognition: what are the ways in which we come to know ourselves and the world in which we live. Questions such as how does the human mind develop, how do we perceive and remember, how is intelligence understood, how does culture influence what we know will be taken up. The course will cover the historical development of the field of cognitive psychology, approaches to cognition, and contemporary issues in thought and memory.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Semester**

### **History of Psychology**

4 Credits

Disciplines, like nations and people have a history. When was Psychology born? Who were the major contributors to the development of the subject? What were some of the greatest debates in the young discipline and how were these answered? These are some of the questions studied in this course. While attempts at understanding the human mind and psyche seem to have a long past, contemporary psychology has a relatively short life. This course provides a basic introduction to the development of the discipline from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when it emerged as separate from physiology and philosophy to the present. The course presents the history of psychology through the systems that emerged in multiple attempts to give meaning to a new emerging discipline. Throughout the course there will be an attempt to understand the forces involved in each systematic construction of Psychology, the relationship of the system to definitions of science and the significant contributions and limits of the system.

### **Statistics**

4 Credits

Statistics is the science of classifying, organizing, and analyzing data. Without Statistics, data collected in our everyday observations or in carefully controlled experiments would have very little meaning. This paper on Statistics introduces the students to the basic and foundational concepts of how data are classified, organized, measured, and analyzed. The paper will focus on some of the basics of Statistics such as introduction to statistics, central tendency (mean, median and mode), normal curve, correlation, testing hypothesis about single means (z and t), one way analysis of variance (ANOVA), graphical representation of frequency distributions such as histogram, frequency polygon, bar diagram, pie chart etc.

## **Social Psychology**

4 Credits

### Psychology as a Social Process

Humans are forever relating to others in different ways and differing contexts. This happens only in relationships and conversations with others. If we look at our relations and conversations to study their effects on our actions, on *who* we are, then we have begun to see psychology as a deeply social process. This course opens up questions around psychology as a social process and asks how the “actual, imagined or implied” presence of others affects our thoughts, feelings and behavior and how we, in turn, also influence others. We will ask why we see one social group or people belonging to one group in one way and another group or its people, differently. What attracts us to some people and not others? Why do we often think one way and act another? Are we naturally aggressive or are we naturally helpful or is our behavior determined mostly by our circumstances? How important is it for us to have identities that make us integral parts of groups? Is it us or is it our groups which determine the kind of leaders we are or we have? What, or who, *makes* a leader? We will also study our own views on the salient social categories and groups to which we belong and think of the many ways in which these constitute us. Such queries constitute the field of Social Psychology, and we will study this through some of the best research done on the subject while developing its links to our own intuitive thoughts as humans, young or old. Classroom exercises and simulated social situations will be the preferred route to entering and negotiating such questions in the course as, through the semester, we explore the dynamic relations between individuals, society and social change.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Semester**

### **Methods in Psychology**

4 Credits

This is an innovative course that introduces students to the issues of research and the methods of data generation through some classic works in Psychology. Students will read one major work each that has employed a laboratory experiment (Thorndike, Tolman, Asch), field experiment (Sherif and Sheriff), observation (Piaget), case study (Freud, Erikson) and correlational studies. The development of some classical psychological tests including the Stanford Binet, MPI and Rorschach will also be discussed. Issues of sample selection, the determination of variables, designs will be discussed through the studies we chose. We hope the course will help to understand the multiple ways of doing psychology, to see the relationship between the questions asked and the methods followed and the impossibility of determining any one method to grasp the entire complexity of humans.

### **Understanding Childhood**

4 Credits

The adult human develops through multiple complex processes starting even before birth. Studying the lives of children throws light on the processes and contexts within which these transformations take place. How does psychology understand the world of children? What are the key concepts involved in understanding the experience of childhood-normative/global and the unspoken/local? What are the different worlds occupied by children? Do we possess a notion of childhood that applies to each of these worlds? Families provide a significant context for the development of children. The course introduces students to the varied familial contexts in which children grow up. The development of emotion and self within families is studied with an emphasis on the socialization of children in India. This section draws upon the theoretical work of Bronfenbrenner, Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson and Bowlby. As children move out of the family, the moral regulation emerges as a significant feature of their lives. The course introduces students to the theories of Kohlberg and Gilligan as they present alternative stories of the development of morality.

### **Practical 1: Experiments in Psychology**

4 Credits

Experiments have been a major tool in psychological investigation. In this course students will learn to design and perform experiments in the areas of learning, cognition and social processes. Students will write up each practical in the form of a report. They will also be encouraged to make preliminary statistical analysis of data.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Semester**

### **Neuropsychology through Clinical Cases: Possibilities and Limits**

4 Credits

Humans see, hear, feel, touch, learn, remember, write, investigate and create. Humans suffer. Humans are in pain. Humans feel happy. Humans appreciate beauty. Humans build moral and just worlds. Humans work towards ethical relations. What role does the brain – a three-pound mass of jelly that one can hold in one's palm – play in all of the above? What relation does this three-pound mass of jelly and the extensive neural network in the interstices of the human body have with how and what we think, feel, dream and create? This paper will ground the complex psychological experiences and expressions of the human in the processes of the brain and the neural network. The paper shall give the student an in-depth understanding of the structure (both macro and micro) and function of the brain and the neural network and show through analysis of clinical cases how they are related to psychological states like learning, sleeping-dreaming, communication and emotion. However, the relation between the neurological and the psychological is not 'one to one' or one of simple 'cause-effect'. The paper shall therefore generate an appreciation of the complexities, the multi-axial nature and the plasticity of neurological functions. It will show how simple and rigid ideas of neural localization are not representative of the inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of brain areas and functions.

## **Understanding Abnormality**

4 Credits

'Schizophrenia', 'mania', 'obsessive', 'hysterical! The terms have become part of everyday conversations. Yet for most people as much as for those who first enter psychology, the world of abnormality is both mysterious and frightening. Abnormality can seem to lie at once in others as in the self. In this course students will be familiarized with the conceptual tools required for understanding the complex world of mental illness and distress. Debates on the conceptualization, classification and diagnosis of abnormality will be followed by case studies through which the clinical picture of some disorders will be illustrated. The course will then look at the causes **usually cited** and therapies **commonly deployed** to alleviate the distress of the mentally ill. The pedagogy of the course will include reading short stories and film screenings. Throughout the course the attempt will be to acknowledge the continuity between states of normality and abnormality. A person with a mental illness shares the world of the normal in large measure. Yet, students will also learn to recognize when distress reaches levels that require special attention.

### **Practical 2: Case Study**

The study of the unique individual forms one of the bedrocks of contemporary psychology. This course will help students learn the processes of psychological measurement, interviewing, observation and case study taking. Each student will administer one test of intelligence, structured personality test and a semi projective technique to the same person. Broad aspects of psychometric theory as well as the process of conducting and analyzing tests will be carried out. Following up the tests with an interview and some observational work, students will compile all of the above to form a case study.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Semester**

Students will chose 2 out of 3 available theory courses in this semester. Each student will also do a dissertation under the supervision of the faculty.

## **Counselling Psychology**

4 Credits

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This is envisaged as a course taught in the workshop mode. Crisis, trauma and distress seem to be almost universal to human experience. At such times people reach out for help. An empathic listening can often assist the distressed person to see new choices and experience hope rather than despair. Counselling then becomes a vital component in work with children, adolescents, couples and families and in situations of crisis intervention. This course will teach aspects of the counseling process beginning with the first contact with a client to the point of termination of the counseling relationship. Students who take this course will be encouraged to reflect upon their interest in the field. What are the personal qualities that enhance the capacity for

counseling and which characteristics might impede the work of a counselor? Ethical issues in counseling will also be discussed in the context of India.

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## **Organizational Behaviour**

Credits: 4

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Individuals and groups of people, who are dedicated, motivated and direct their efforts in achieving organizational goals effectively and efficiently play a vital and pivotal role in today's modern organizations. The course on Organizational Behaviour introduces the students to how individuals, groups, and organizational structure have influence on behaviour within organizations. Basically, OB refers to the study of people at work. OB focuses on the three determinants of behaviour in organizations: individuals, groups and organizational structure. It opens the door for the students to some of the most important issues and challenges that our modern organizations are facing today such as motivation, decision making, interpersonal communication, leadership, job satisfaction, organizational culture, stress management etc in organizations.

## **Psychology for India**

Credits: 4

The paper, premised on the limits of a universal psychology, shall first circumscribe what passes off as the discipline of psychology into a culturally located form. Is such a psychology (emanating from West/Europe) relevant to non-western and non-European cultures? It will then look for resources for a culturally sensitive psychology in the Indian material and in psychological material produced by Indians. Does the Indian context provide a tradition of Psychology and what one can draw from that tradition? In the process the paper shall ask a set of questions: is the discipline of psychology western? What use do we have of insights emanating from western psychology in the Indian context? Does it offer us an understanding of the Indian psyche? Or do we need to turn elsewhere for an understanding of the Indian psyche? What indeed is the specificity of the Indian psyche? Have Indian psychologists, psychoanalysts and psychiatrists dealt with the question of the Indian psyche? Can one get clues to an understanding of the Indian psyche in their writings or in their clinical practice? Do they in the process offer something valuable to western psychology? Do they redefine psychology? Or do we need to critically examine the insights emanating from the Indian side as well? The paper shall thus be premised on a critical engagement with both the west and the east, with both the received discipline of psychology and its Indian counterpart. Through this dual or bivalent critique the paper shall carve out a space and an appreciation of a possible 'Psychology for India'.

**Dissertation**

Credits 4

Each student will write a short dissertation based on research in an area of interest. The dissertation will be an opportunity for students to integrate learning of Psychology with their own specific interests.