

Liverpool John Moores University

Title: PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY AND ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOUR
Status: Definitive
Code: **6206PSYSCI** (121395)
Version Start Date: 01-08-2021

Owning School/Faculty: Psychology
Teaching School/Faculty: Psychology

| Team | Leader |
|----------------------|--------|
| Catharine Montgomery | Y |
| Susannah Walker | |

Academic Level: FHEQ6 **Credit Value:** 10 **Total Delivered Hours:** 21
Total Learning Hours: 100 **Private Study:** 79

Delivery Options

Course typically offered: Semester 1

| Component | Contact Hours |
|-----------|---------------|
| Lecture | 16 |
| Online | 1 |
| Seminar | 4 |

Grading Basis: 40 %

Assessment Details

| Category | Short Description | Description | Weighting (%) | Exam Duration |
|----------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Essay | Case Study | A 2000 word case study analysis. | 100 | |

Aims

- 1. To introduce students to popular drugs of abuse, their mechanisms of action and their effects.*
- 2. To examine how the effects of drugs can be harmful, and are related to many factors including purity, dose and route of administration.*

3. *To discuss the neurobiological and psychological basis of the addiction cycle from voluntary drug taking to compulsive drug seeking and relapse.*
4. *To critically evaluate current neurobiological theories of drug addiction*

Learning Outcomes

After completing the module the student should be able to:

- 1 Evaluate the biological and psychological basis of drug effects.
- 2 Critically appraise psychopharmacological theories and concepts (e.g. reward, dependence, tolerance, withdrawal, relapse).

Learning Outcomes of Assessments

The assessment item list is assessed via the learning outcomes listed:

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Case Study Analysis | 1 | 2 |
|---------------------|---|---|

Outline Syllabus

The purpose of the module is to provide a broad understanding of the behavioural and biological mechanisms underlying drug effects and drug addiction. The module starts by introducing students to common drugs of abuse, and examining the effects of these drugs from both phenomenological and pharmacological perspectives. This will involve exploring the relationship between drug-induced changes in neurotransmission, subjective effects of drugs and long-term changes in behaviour and experience. Students will then use this knowledge during a seminar to explore how harmful some of these drugs might be, and will evaluate the UK legal classification of drugs of abuse. The second half of the module will focus on the addicted state, a transition from taking drugs voluntarily because of their positive reinforcing properties to compulsive drug taking triggered by craving the drug, despite no longer liking it. In the context of current neurobiological theories, students will learn how habitual drug use changes the brain, discuss the impact that has on cognitive processes and in a seminar consider whether there are individual differences in vulnerability to addiction.

Learning Activities

A range of methods are utilised to enhance the student learning experience and to give students greater control over their own learning.

Lectures: Part (sometimes all) of most sessions is devoted to a formal lecture in which key concepts and ideas are conveyed.

Online discussions: Online discussion forums will be set up on Blackboard. These can be used to discuss relevant topics between students or groups of students and

will be moderated by the lecturers. Additionally, students are encouraged to use these discussion boards to direct their questions to the lecturers, instead of using e-mail, whenever the question is not confidential in nature. In this way, all students can benefit from the answer and lecturers do not have to answer the same question several times.

Independent study: Guidance will be provided on supplementary texts, where these are pertinent to specific topics. In addition, students are expected to engage in independent reading beyond the book chapters/articles assigned to specific topics. Furthermore, students are encouraged to explore web-links, some of which will be provided on Blackboard.

Students will encounter different teaching styles, enriching their learning experience. Lecturers might use different approaches that are not listed above.

Notes

Psychopharmacology and Addictive Behaviours is a 10 credit optional module at level 6.