

# PSY 4013 – Portfolio

## Essay writing assignment

### Instructions

For this part of the assessment, you need to **plan and write an essay** on one of the questions below, in three steps due at different times.

#### Step 1: Essay Plan (due 17/11/2020 at 3pm) – 20% of the final grade

Submit a brief essay plan, including a statement of focus and approach for the entire essay (see materials on writing on Moodle), a topic sentence for each paragraph, a brief list of key points and sources for each paragraph, and some notes on the conclusion. This should be one to two A4 pages (approximately 400 words, bullet points are fine for the details).

*Your grade will be based primarily (~70%) on the quality of your structure and argument, and focus on whether you manage to connect all the points in pursuit of a clear and compelling answer to the essay question. The remaining part of your grade is based on the quality of sources you identified beyond those given to you and the level of understanding you show in how you use them in your plan.*

#### Step 2: Introduction (due 01/12/2020 at 3pm) – formative assessment

Submit the introductory paragraph to your essay (approximately 150-250 words). Then, you will be asked to give feedback on introductions drafted by three of your peers and receive feedback from others.

#### Step 3: Full essay of 1,500 words (+/- 10%, due 07/01/2021 at 3pm) – 40% of your final grade

Make sure to use **at least eight references that are specifically relevant to the question** and that you use APA style for citations and references. Also, make sure you check your spelling and grammar before submitting, for example by using [www.grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com) (the free version is sufficient).

*Your mark will be based on your content, your argument and your style. Have a look at the marking criteria on <https://mymodules.stmarys.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=28580#section-4> to make sure that you meet the requirements in each of these sections.*

## Your choice of questions

Choose **one** of the questions. You do not need to include the suggested readings into your work; in any case you need to do independent reading beyond them, in order to find more evidence and in order to fully understand the key theories and ideas that underpin the questions. Where appropriate, we encourage you to draw on sources from both development and social psychology.

### 1. Why do people show a tendency to favour members of their own groups and disadvantage others?

#### What strategies can be used to reduce such behaviour?

You can focus your answer on children or adults, or consider developmental changes over time. Note that there are many reasons and many strategies you could consider; make sure to maintain a clear focus and ensure that the strategies you highlight address the reasons that you highlight. Initial readings might include:

- Spielman, D. A. (2000). Young children, minimal groups, and dichotomous categorization. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26(11), 1433-1441.
- Wölfer, R., Schmid, K., Hewstone, M., & van Zalk, M. (2016). Developmental dynamics of intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes: Long-term effects in adolescence and early adulthood. *Child Development*, 87(5), 1466-1478.

Especially if you want to write about children, you might also want to watch the Channel 4 documentary on “The school that tried to end racism”: <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-school-that-tried-to-end-racism>

### 2. Discuss the implications of early attachments on later life relationships.

This question enables you to talk about the relationship between attachments developed in infancy and early childhood and a wide range of relationships in later life. Make sure to focus on specific types of relationships (e.g., romantic relationships, peer relationships in school, relationship with own children) and to critically consider research designs. Initial readings might include:

- Holland, A.S. & Roisman, G. I. (2010) Adult attachment security and young adults’ dating relationships over time: self-reported, observational, and physiological evidence. *Developmental Psychology*, 46, 2, 552-557.

- Thompson, R.A.(2000). The legacy of early attachments. *Child Development* 71(1), 145-152.
- Wood, J.J., Emmerson, N.A. & Cowan, P.A. (2004). Is early attachment security carried forward into relationships with pre-school peers? *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 22, 245-253.

**3. Discuss how children, adolescents and/or adults develop a gender identity and an understanding of gender roles.**

You can focus your answer on one age group or consider developmental changes over time. Initial readings might include:

- Martin, C. L. & Ruble, D. (2004) Children's search for gender cues: cognitive perspectives on gender development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13 (2), 67-70.
- Schroeder, K. M & Bámaca-Colbert, M. Y. (2019). Cultural Underpinnings of Gender Development: Studying Gender Among Children of Immigrants. *Child Development*, 90 (4), 1005-1015.
- Costa Jr, P. T., Terracciano, A., & McCrae, R. R. (2001). Gender differences in personality traits across cultures: robust and surprising findings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(2), 322.

**4. What do Milgram's experiments on obedience and subsequent replications reveal about human nature?**

Stanley Milgram's experiments on obedience are among the most famous in social psychology because they address important questions about human nature in a very memorable way, and were supposed to provide evidence for strong conclusions. However, in recent years it has been debated to what extent the traditional conclusions are actually supported by the experiments, and how the results should be best interpreted. This essay invites you to make up your own mind and present an argument for a specific interpretation of the evidence. You should start by reading the following magazine article that is full of ideas and possible further readings. However, remember that it is not an academic journal article and should certainly not be cited as evidence.

- Room, C. (2015) Rethinking One of Psychology's Most Infamous Experiments. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/01/rethinking-one-of-psychologys-most-infamous-experiments/384913/>

## **5. What are the most important reasons for the replication crisis in psychology and how can it be overcome?**

In recent years, psychology (and especially social psychology) has experienced a 'replication crisis' when many historically important and trusted findings could not be replicated in new research. This had led to a reduction of trust in psychological research, and to many calls to change research practices. When writing this essay, make sure to focus on academic sources and to critically compare and synthesise different articles – you cannot just summarise one writer's ideas at a time. Initial readings could include:

- Open Science Collaboration. (2015). Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science. *Science*, 349(6251), aac4716.
- Świątkowski, W., & Dompnier, B. (2017). Replicability crisis in social psychology: Looking at the past to find new pathways for the future. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 30(1), 111-124.
- Davis-Kean, P. E., & Ellis, A. (2019). An overview of issues in infant and developmental research for the creation of robust and replicable science. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 57, 101339.
- *For a good argument regarding the limitations of some proposed solutions, see* Baumeister, R. F. (2016). Charting the future of social psychology on stormy seas: Winners, losers, and recommendations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 66, 153-158.