UCL SUMMER SCHOOL

Business Psychology

Key Information

Module code: ISSU0041
Taught during: Session One: Monday 29 June - Friday 17 July 2020
Module workload: 45 teaching hours plus approximately 100 study hours
Module leader: Richard Pettinger
Department: School of Management, Faculty of Engineering
Credit: 15 UCL credits, 7.5 ECTS, 4 US
Level: Level 1, first year undergraduate
Pre-requisites: Standard entry requirements
Assessment: Weekly quizzes (30%), Essay (70%)

Module Overview

This module introduces students to the key findings and theories concerning how people think, feel and behave in organizations. It is equally relevant to students wishing to gain an understanding of business psychology at the university level as it is to students keen on developing hands-on skills that can be applied in organisational settings. The module focuses on topics such as motivation, negotiations, group and network dynamics, social status, influence, and individual personality. The module features interactive lectures, research exercises, and experiential activities, including individual negotiations, group problem-solving, and using data analysis to make strategic business decisions.

Week One:
- Personality and interpersonal processes
- Intelligence and judgment in the workplace
- Principles of motivation

Week Two:
- Negotiations
- Leadership and power
- Social status and the science of strategic influence

Week Three:
- Social networks in organizations
- Group and team dynamics

Please note that this module description is indicative and may be subject to change.
Module Aims

Drawing on theory and research in personality and social psychology, organizational behavior, sociology, and network science, the module aims to provide an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how people function in business settings. Each core topic (e.g., personality and cognitive assessment) will be matched with an applied problem in organizations (e.g., hiring). A particular focus will be made on UCL’s rich history in business, psychology and statistics, from which so many fields benefit today. Many figures with ties to UCL, including Charles Spearman (who helped lay the foundation for the assessment of cognitive ability used in hiring scenarios) and Edwin Waterhouse (founding partner of accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers), will be featured in lectures to highlight UCL’s (and London’s) critical role in the world of business as we know it today. In addition to these applied and historical elements, the module offers opportunities for students to gain valuable research experience by conducting data analyses using standard statistical and network analysis software, and making business recommendations on the basis of their analyses. The module also provides experiential opportunities by involving students in Harvard-style one-on-one and group negotiations with their classmates.

Teaching Methods

The module features interactive lectures, research exercises, and experiential activities, including individual negotiations, group problem-solving, and using data analysis to make strategic business decisions. A typical day involves a brief review, an interactive lecture where students actively engage with the material, a hands-on activity (e.g., for negotiations, the students read a case, prepare notes, and then negotiate) and a feedback discussion, and then a summary of the key lessons learned with a brief outlook of the next day’s focus.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students will:

- Understand how to use theory and evidence to inform their decisions at work
- Know how to critique and offer useful alternatives to dubious management practices
- Know the foundational concepts and theories in business psychology, preparing them for further study in organizational behaviour, psychology, sociology, or related fields
- Have the skill to conduct basic statistical and network analyses to address business issues
- Have the skill to improve their outcomes in one-on-one and group negotiations

Assessment Methods

- Weekly quizzes (30%)
- 2,000 word essay (70%)

Key Texts


Module Leader
Richard is Principal Teaching Fellow (Reader) in Management Education at the UCL School of Management, where he teaches general management and foundations of management. He also supervises dissertations, research and consultancy projects. Richard is the author of over 50 books and numerous papers on all aspects of management practice and development, and also on many aspects of management development and education. Richard continues to work and consult with companies and organisations in all sectors around the world. His research interests are the professionalisation of management, privatisation and restructuring, and the effects of behavioural pressures on business and corporate decision making.