COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Internet Psychology	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Assoc. Prof. Raimonda Sadauskaitė **Other:** –	Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
First	Optional

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Distance learning	Spring (4) semester	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: none	**Co-requisites (if relevant):** none

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	135	48	87

Purpose of the course unit		
To introduce the psychological aspects of media and the internet; to encourage critical analysis of research and theoretical concepts in media and internet psychology; to foster reflection on one's own media and internet use; and to encourage the analysis of media and internet use characteristics in others.		
Learning outcomes of the course unit	**Teaching and learning methods**	**Assessment methods**
Will understand the aims and scope of media and internet psychology; will know key tendencies in online human behavior and the effects of different media and content; will be able to identify the main theoretical models used in media and internet psychology.	Lectures (problem-based teaching) with demonstration of visual material, discussions, simulation games, text analysis.	Written test.
Will be able to apply theoretical models and research findings of media and internet psychology to explain individual and group behavior; will understand the effects of media and the internet on individuals and groups.	Preparation and presentation of an analysis on the psychological impact of media and internet use.	Evaluation of the presentation.
Will know research methods used in media and internet psychology; will be able to explain and interpret media and internet research findings and evaluate their validity; will be able to reflect on ethical aspects of research in this field.	Lectures (problem-based teaching) with demonstration of visual material, preparation and presentation of an analysis on the psychological impact of media and internet use, discussions.	Written test. Evaluation of the presentation.
Will be able to propose alternatives (individual, group or educational) for	Discussions, case analysis.	Written test.

solving psychological interpersonal, group, societal or intercultural problems related to the media and the internet.		
Will be able to clearly and ethically communicate research findings and theoretical models in media and internet psychology; will be able to present personal experiences of media and internet use, and work effectively in a team and collaborate with others.	Preparation and presentation of an analysis on the psychological impact of media and internet use.	Evaluation of the presentation.
Will be able to recognize the conditional and limited nature of their own knowledge and of media- and internet-based explanations, and act in situations related to media and internet use within the limits of their competence.	Group work, discussions, case analysis, preparation and presentation of an analysis on the psychological impact of media and internet use.	Evaluation of the presentation.

Content	**Contact hours**							**Individual work: time and assignments**	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	**Contact hours, total**	**Individual work**	**Tasks for individual work**
1. Introduction to media and internet psychology. The concept of generations and the use of media. Key theories in media and internet psychology.	4						**4**	**7**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: book 2, pp. 20-51).
2. Media and internet use. Characteristics and motives of media and internet users. Personality and media consumption. Personality and internet use. Prediction of users' personality traits based on online behavior.	4		2				**6**	**6**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: book 3, pp. 55-71).
3. Effects of violent content in the media. Online aggression. Violent video games. Cyberbullying.	4		4				**8**	**12**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: book 1, pp. 255-285; book 7, pp. 85-103). Preparation and presentation of a real-life case analysis. Presentations are prepared in small groups.
4. Online fraud and its psychological mechanisms.	2						**2**	**0**	–
5. Negative aspects of internet use. Internet addiction. Consequences of children's screen time. Internet use and well-being.	4		2				**6**	**8**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: book 2, pp. 53-82). Preparation and presentation of a real-life case analysis. Presentations are prepared in small groups. Study of materials provided in the virtual learning environment.

6. Prosocial effects of media and internet use. Media, internet, and strengthening of health. Media literacy. Mediation.	2		2				**4**	**4**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: book 1, pp. 124-132). Preparation and presentation of a real-life case analysis. Presentations are prepared in small groups. Study of materials provided in the virtual learning environment.
7. Media and social groups. Stereotyping. Identity and media. Identity and internet. Virtual communities. Polarization.	2		2				**4**	**10**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: book 1, pp. 53-90 and pp. 133-136). Preparation and presentation of a real-life case analysis. Presentations are prepared in small groups.
8. Pornography and erotica on the internet and in the media, the psychological effects of these phenomena.	2						**2**	**8**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: book 1, pp. 255-285; book 2, pp. 110-113).
9. Friendship and communication online. Online romantic relationships. Online infidelity.	2		2				**4**	**8**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: book 4, pp. 3-18; source 6, pp. 12-23). Preparation and presentation of a real-life case analysis. Presentations are prepared in small groups.
10. Media and politics. Propaganda, public relations, and psychological operations. Propaganda techniques. Fake news. Conspiracy theories. Privacy and safe internet use.	4		2				**6**	**4**	Independent study (Compulsory literature: source 5.
11. The latest trends in media and internet psychology research: use of smart devices, gamification, etc. The internet as a research tool. Use of big data in psychological research.	2						**2**	**0**	–
Preparation for the exam								**10**	
Preparation of the presentation (in groups)								**10**	
Total	**32**		**16**				**48**	**87**	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Written test.	60		The test will consist of 15-25 questions based on the material covered in lectures and independent study of the literature. The test will include both closed- and open-ended questions, each carrying different weight. The test may also be taken at the VU Electronic Study and Examination Center.
Evaluation of the presentation.	40		Attendance of seminars is mandatory – students must attend at least 75% of seminars. Those who do not meet the attendance requirement will not be allowed to take the exam.

			Assessment criteria for presentations: 1. Clear rationale for topic selection; consistency and thoroughness of analysis (30% of the grade). 2. Ability to apply psychological knowledge to real-life situations; clarity of argumentation and evidence-based explanation during the presentation (40% of the grade). 3. Smooth and clear delivery, engaging content, and ability to involve the audience (30% of the grade). Presentations are prepared in groups; group size will depend on the number of students in the course.

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
1. Harris, R. J.	2004	A cognitive psychology of mass communication		Mahwah: LEA
2. Joinson, A. N (ed.)	2003	Understanding the psychology of internet behaviour: Virtual worlds, real lives		Basingstoke: Palgrave
3. Gackenbach, J. (ed.)	2007	Psychology and the internet		Amsterdam: Elsevier Academic Press
4. Shyam Sundar, S. (ed.)	2015	The handbook of the psychology of communication technology		Malden: Willey
5. Pennycook, G. & Rand, D. G.	2019	Lazy, not biased: Susceptibility to partisan fake news is better explained by lack of reasoning than by motivated reasoning	Cognition, 188, 39–50	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2018.06.011
6. Finkel, E. J., Eastwick, P. W., Karney, B. R., Reis, H. T., & Sprecher, S.	2012	Online dating: A Critical analysis from the perspective of psychological science	Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 13(1), 3–66	https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612436522
7. Bauman, S. & Rivers, I.	2023	Mental health in the digital age (2nd ed.).		Springer International Publishing AG https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32122-1
Recommended reading				
1. Joinson, A. N (ed.)	2009	The Oxford handbook of internet psychology		Oxford: Oxford University Press
2. Boyd D.	2014	It‘s complicated. The social lives of networked teens		New Haven: Yale University Press
3. Comstock, G. & Scharrer E.	2005	The psychology of media and politics		Amsterdam: Elsevier Academic Press
4. McCrindle, M.	2014	The ABC of XYZ: understanding the global generations		Bella Vista, NSW: McCrindle Publication