

PS336
Psychology, Society, & Human Values

Comment Paper (25%)

Indicative word count: 1,000 (c. 3 pages)

Description: A brief paper written on a topic selected from a list provided.

Instructions provided: Week 1

Due date: **16 March 2012**

Instructions: Please write a paper according to any one of the topics listed overleaf. Prepare your paper using **Microsoft Word**, with Times New Roman font (size 12), double-spaced text, and the default margins. Save your file using your Student ID number as part of the file name, as per the following example:

01234567_CommentPaper.doc

Please do not include your name in the text of your paper. This is necessary to preserve the anonymity of your work when it is being marked.

Then submit your file via Blackboard. (Please note that you are responsible for submitting your paper by the deadline. Blackboard will record the submission time and add a time-stamp to your file.)

You are asked to bear the following points in mind:

- Please be sure to keep a copy of all files you submit. In the very unlikely event that a submitted piece of work is electronically misplaced or that a dispute emerges as to whether or not a piece of work was originally submitted, the student will be responsible for supplying a copy of the submission on request.
- The School of Psychology operates a uniform policy regarding the late submission of assignments. All work submitted late will attract a reduced mark, except in particularly extenuating circumstances. The School has decided upon a uniform deduction of 10% of marks per day overdue.
- The system of applying a deduction on work submitted late is not intended to disadvantage students who encounter genuinely problematic circumstances that interfere with their ability to meet deadlines. Should students experience such circumstances, they are requested to notify the School at the earliest possible opportunity (e.g., in advance if possible) so that a fair allowance can be made.
- Students are advised to consult their Psychology *Student Guide*, or the School of Psychology webpage, for information regarding the School's policy on plagiarism. Please be aware that the electronic submission of assignments enables the University to screen it using plagiarism detection software.

Note: A 'comment paper' requires you to offer a personal view based on critical engagement with, and evaluation of, material drawn from authoritative sources. Such a paper does not require you to conduct an exhaustive search of the scholarly literature in a particular area (which would be more akin to a 'research paper' than to a 'comment paper').

It is anticipated that a typical comment paper will cite between 3 and 5 references. Further, references can relate to media reports, popular books, internet sources, and other public domains, as well as to the academic literature.

Please select one of the following topics for your paper.

1. What, in your view, is the most important research priority for psychology in the 21st century? Explain your choice.
2. Should psychology have a 'mission statement'? If so, what should it be?
3. To what extent might psychology be construed as posing a threat to people's values?
4. In what ways does psychology influence society? In what ways does society influence psychology?
5. To what extent should psychologists be apolitical? Give some examples in support of your position.
6. Are there any areas where psychological research should be prohibited? What are they, and why should they be off-limits?
7. Describe ways in which academic psychologists behave that you feel are of ethical concern. Classify your choices as 'minor ethical concerns' and 'major ethical concerns'.