

PS355-15 Attention

20/21

Department

Psychology

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Melina Kunar

Credit value

15

Module duration

12 weeks

Assessment

30% coursework, 70% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The aim of this module is to provide a broad understanding of attention, why we need it, how it works and what happens when it breaks down.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The aim of this module is to provide a broad understanding of attention, why we need it, how it works and what happens when it breaks down. Topics include how we can select just a few items among many; whether we select the items themselves or the locations they occupy; whether there are some items that we cannot help but attend; how attention can be affected by brain damage; how we can sometimes fail to see items that appear right in front of our eyes; and how we use modern brain-scanning techniques to investigate attention.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Perceptual load and Attention
- 3 The Control of Attention
- 4 Spatial versus Object-based Attention
- 5 Unilateral Neglect
- 6 Divided and Cross Modal Attention
- 7 Visual Search
- 8 Visual Search and Memory
- 9 The Limits of Attention
- 10 Brain Imaging Techniques Within Attention
- 11 Revision
- 12 Revision

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Critically evaluate the 'classical' attention paradigms (such as Inhibition of Return and Negative Priming etc.) along with some more recent experimental paradigms
- Critically evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of multiple brain scanning techniques used to investigate attention, with examples of how each technique has been used in research.
- Critically evaluate the evidence for and against several main theories of attention.
- Critically evaluate theories showing why attention is impaired after brain lesions, as well as critically evaluating theories showing normal temporal and spatial limits of attention.
- Critically evaluate theories of how we use attention to help us search and relate to the visual environment.

Indicative reading list

Styles, E. A. (1997). The psychology of attention. Psychology Press Ltd.
Pashler, H. (1998). Attention. Psychology Press Ltd.
Wright, R. D. (1998). Visual attention. Oxford University Press
Shapiro, K. (2001). The limits of attention: Temporal constraints in human information processing. Oxford University Press
Reisburg, D. (1997). Cognition. Norton
Humphreys, G. (1989). Visual cognition. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Ltd

Subject specific skills

Understanding of the main theories of attention
Understanding of temporal and spacial limits of attention
Evaluation of experimental paradigms
Evaluation of different brain scanning techniques

Transferable skills

Critically evaluation of evidence and research

Effective communication skills to develop a cogent argument supported by relevant evidence and being sensitive to the needs and expectations of an audience

Familiarity with collecting and organising stored information found in library book and journal collections

effective personal planning skills

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	12 sessions of 2 hours (16%)
Seminars	10 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Private study	116 hours (77%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

116 hours Guided Student Study.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group D4

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Essay	30%		Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Online Examination 70%

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

assessed via annotated copy and academic guidance form; exam performance via personal tutor or online.

[Past exam papers for PS355](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C800 Undergraduate Psychology
- Year 4 of UPSA-C801 Undergraduate Psychology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 3 of UPSA-C804 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C804 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 4 of UPHA-VL79 BA in Philosophy with Psychology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 1 of TPSS-C8P9 Postgraduate Taught Psychological Research

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C802 Undergraduate Psychology with Linguistics