



## **AS / A2 Psychology (Level 3)**

### **WHY TAKE THIS COURSE?**

Psychology is the *scientific study of human behaviour and experiences*. If you have an inquisitive, enquiring mind and are interested in people then you should enjoy the course. However, Psychology is an evidenced based subject and you need to realize that the course involves a lot of reading, independent research and analysis and interpretation of data using statistics.

### **WHAT WILL I STUDY?**

The AS course currently consists of fifteen core studies (academic research papers from peer reviewed journals). These include topics on sleep and dreaming, autism, memory, functions of the hemispheres of the brain and mental illness. You will also get involved with practical work using a variety of research methods.

The A2 course consists of two applied options: Forensic Psychology (e.g. why individuals commit crime, offender profiling, and how decisions are made in a courtroom) and Health and Clinical Psychology (e.g. stress and psychotic disorders like schizophrenia). You also learn about approaches and perspectives, such as behaviourism and become familiar with debates like freewill versus determinism. You also learn more about how research is conducted, including how data is analysed using statistical formulae to assess probability.

### **HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?**

AS examinations: a 1 hour paper in January assessing knowledge of research methods and a two hour paper in May assessing understanding of the Core Studies. A2 examinations: a 1½ hour paper in January assessing approaches, perspectives and research methods and a 2 hour paper in June assessing the applied Psychology options. Assessment is all external, there is no coursework element.

### **WHAT SKILLS AND SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS DO I NEED?**

You will need to have strong literacy and numeracy skills as the course is very demanding in these areas. The course requires a lot of reading and extended writing on a regular basis. You will read and summarise scientific journal articles and need to be able to express yourself well in both the spoken and written word and be prepared to work with statistics. You will be involved in group work at times but also be required to engage in independent study.

### **WHAT CAN I DO NEXT?**

Studying Psychology can lead to a number of specific careers, ranging from Clinical Psychology (working with people with mental health problems) to Forensic Psychology (applying research to crime). There are also many other careers and jobs that a knowledge of Psychology would be useful for, such as Social Work, Marketing and Teaching. Many opportunities in research are also available.

### **PRIESTLEY EXTRA**

You will have the chance to attend conferences covering topics like Forensic Psychology, go on various trips including Chester Zoo to hear talks on primate behaviour and undertake your own observational research and hear from specialist invited speakers.