Course title	Theoretical Foundations of Psychological Research				
Course code	PSY802				
Course type	Core				
Level	PhD				
Year / Semester	Year 1 / Semester 1				
Teacher's name	Dr. Antonia Zachariou				
ECTS	10	**Lectures / week**	1	**Laboratories / week**	None
Course purpose and objectives	This course provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations underpinning psychological research. It examines major psychological paradigms, theories, and frameworks, fostering an understanding of how theoretical constructs guide research design, interpretation, and application. The course emphasizes critical engagement with contemporary debates in psychology and encourages students to integrate theoretical insights into their research endeavours.				
Learning outcomes	Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to: CILO1: Analyze the historical and philosophical roots of psychological theories and their evolution over time. CILO2: Evaluate the applicability of major psychological paradigms to contemporary research challenges. CILO3: Critically assess the role of theoretical frameworks in guiding research questions, design, and interpretation. CILO4: Synthesize theoretical insights to propose innovative approaches to psychological inquiry. CILO5: Engage in scholarly discussions on the integration of diverse theoretical perspectives in addressing complex psychological phenomena. CILO6: Demonstrate academic integrity and ethical judgment in applying theoretical perspectives, including the transparent use of AI tools in scholarly work.				
Prerequisites	None		**Required**	None	
Course content	Week 1: Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Psychology Week 2: Major Paradigms in Psychology				

	Week 3: Theoretical Frameworks in Neuroscience Week 4: Developmental Theories Week 5: Social and Cultural Theories Week 6: Cognitive and Behavioural Theories – includes discussion on how emerging digital tools and generative AI systems challenge traditional models of cognition and behaviour Week 7: Emotion and Motivation Theories Week 8: Integrative and Systems Approaches Week 9: Critiques and Limitations of Psychological Theories – focus on epistemological limits, algorithmic bias, and the impact of AI-generated content on psychological theorizing. Week 10: The Role of Theory in Research Design – includes ethical considerations and the role of academic integrity in theory-driven research development. Week 11: Case Studies in Theoretical Integration Week 12: Synthesis and Application
Teaching methodology	The course employs: • Interactive lectures and discussions to facilitate critical engagement. • Case studies for applying theoretical insights. • Group presentations and peer review of theoretical applications. • Workshop on Academic Integrity and Research Ethics, including Turnitin training and signing of the Academic Integrity Declaration Form. • Exploration of ethical and epistemological issues in the use of generative AI in theory-building and literature synthesis.
Bibliography	**Required Reading**: Gazzaniga, M. S., Heatherton, T. F., & Halpern, D. F. (2018). Psychological Science (6th ed.). W.W. Norton & Company. Hergenhahn, B. R., & Henley, T. B. (2013). An Introduction to the History of Psychology (7th ed.). Cengage Learning. **Recommended Reading:** Rieber, R. W., & Robinson, D. K. (2012). Wilhelm Wundt in History: The Making of a Scientific Psychology (Path in Psychology). Springer.
Assessment	1. Class Participation (20%): Active engagement in discussions and peer reviews.

	2. Theoretical Analysis Paper (30%): Critical evaluation of a selected psychological theory and its application. 3. Final Research Proposal (50%): Development of a theory-driven research proposal, incorporating course learnings. Note: If students use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot) at any stage of coursework (e.g., for idea generation, theory summary, proposal writing), they must declare this use by submitting the official UoL Declaration of AI Use Form. Failure to do so constitutes academic misconduct. All submissions will be checked via Turnitin.
Language	English