

BA (Hons) in Psychology (8th Semester)

COURSE NAME: CYBER PSYCHOLOGY

COURSE No. PSYC1822M

MAXIMUM MARKS: 100

CONTACT HOURS: 120

CONTACT HOURS PER CREDIT: 15/30

CREDITS: 06

THEORY: 04

PRACTICUM: 02

Course Objectives

- To introduce students to key concepts, theories, and the evolution of Cyber Psychology in the digital age.
- To explore the psychological impact of digital media, social networking, gaming, and AI on identity, relationships, and behavior.
- To promote ethical reflection and psychological strategies for mental health, digital well-being, and responsible online engagement.

Course Outcomes

- Students will understand how digital technologies influence human cognition, emotion, and behaviour.
- Students will critically analyse the psychological implications of social media, cyberbullying, gaming, and AI.
- Students will apply cyber psychological principles to promote digital wellness and informed online interaction.

Unit I: Foundations of Cyber Psychology

- a) Cyber Psychology and the Digital Mind: Origins, evolution from telegraphs to TikTok, and defining the digital self
- b) Key Theories in Cyber Psychology: Media equation theory, online disinhibition effect, hyperpersonal model, and digital dualism
- c) Understanding the Online Self: Digital identity, avatars, self-presentation, and impression management in online spaces
- d) Ethics and the Internet: Moral disengagement, digital empathy, online behavior norms, and psychological implications of disconnection

Unit II: Cyber Psychology and Social Media

- a) Social Media Addiction and Mental Health: Psychological underpinnings, dopamine feedback loops, and well-being
- b) Cyberbullying and Online Abuse: Psychology of trolling, trauma impacts, victim mentality, and coping strategies
- c) Digital Relationships: Online dating, friendships, parasocial interactions, and intimacy in virtual environments
- d) Algorithms and Belief Systems: How filter bubbles, echo chambers, and recommendation engines influence attitudes and polarization

Unit III: Redefining Human Connections

- a) Psychology of Gaming: Motivations, rewards, behavioral patterns, risks, and benefits of digital games.
- b) AI and Human Interaction: The emotional impact of AI, empathy gaps, human-robot relationships, and artificial emotional intelligence.
- c) Technostress and Digital Burnout: Psychological fatigue, information overload, digital fatigue, and its management.
- d) Cybersecurity and Deception: Cognitive biases in phishing, scams, online fraud, and user vulnerability

Unit IV: Building a Digital Future

- a) Privacy and the Digital Footprint: Digital shadow, personal data, surveillance psychology, and managing online privacy.
- b) Digital Wellness and Balance: Screen time management, digital detox, mindfulness in the digital age.
- c) Cyber Psychology of the Future: Trends in neurotechnology, virtual reality, transhumanism, and digital identity research
- d) Technology and Child Development: Screen exposure effects on cognitive, emotional, and social development in children and adolescents

PRACTICUM: Any four (04) practicum from the below listed themes, two (02) from each Unit.

Unit V: Practicum-I

- a) Internet / Social Media Addiction
- b) Cyber Victimization
- c) Technostress
- d) Digital Wellbeing

Unit VI: Practicum-II

- a) Digital Detox
- b) Digital Identity
- c) Virtual Reality
- d) Seminar on Cybersecurity

Readings

1. Aiken, M. (2016). *The cyber effect: A pioneering cyberpsychologist explains how human behaviour changes online*. Spiegel & Grau.
2. Suler, J. (2016). *Psychology of the digital age: Humans become electric*. Cambridge University Press.
3. Norman, K. L. (2017). *Cyberpsychology: An introduction to human-computer interaction*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Przybylski, A. K., & Weinstein, N. (2019). Digital screen time limits and young children's psychological well-being: Evidence from a population-based study. *Child Development, 90*(1), e56–e65.
5. Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2007). Online communication and adolescent well-being: Testing the stimulation versus the displacement hypothesis. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 12* (4), 1169-1182.