**NST – Psychology**

**ADOLESCENCE**

**Sarah-Jayne Blakemore**

**Wednesdays at 12-1pm**

**20th January - 17th March 2021**

**Lecture 1: Adolescence: an overview. [SJB]**

Wednesday 20th January 2021, 12-1

Adolescence is defined as the period of life between 10 and 24 years. This lecture will give an overview of adolescent development across history, species and culture, and the developmental changes that occur during this period of life in the brain, cognition and behaviour.

**Lecture 2: Structural brain development in adolescence. [SJB]**

Wednesday 27th January 2021, 12-1

This lecture will focus on the past two decades of research of developmental MRI studies showing changes in grey matter and white matter during puberty and adolescence, and the proposed underlying cellular and synaptic developmental processes.

**Lecture 3: Development of executive functions in adolescence: brain and behaviour [SJB and Dr Duncan Astle, MRC CBU, Cambridge]**

Wednesday 3rd February 2021, 12-1

Executive functions are a set of mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking (set shifting) and self-control (including inhibition). We use these skills every day to learn, plan, achieve goals and manage daily life. This lecture will focus on the behavioural development of executive functions across adolescence and the development of the brain regions that underlie these processes. We will contrast different ways of measuring changes in executive functions, including laboratory-based tasks and behaviour checklists, and explore the potential role that executive functions might play in neurodevelopmental disorders like ADHD.

**Lecture 4: Adolescent social development: brain and behaviour [SJB]**

Wednesday 10th February 2021, 12-1

The social brain is defined as the network of brain regions that are involved in understanding other people. This lecture will mostly focus on mentalising, the ability to understand others’ minds (their mental states and emotions) and predict their behaviour. Certain aspects of mentalising develop across adolescence and the social brain develops in terms of both structure and function.

**READING WEEK – 17TH FEBRUARY 2021**

**Lecture 5. Social media and adolescence [Dr Amy Orben, MRC CBU, Cambridge]**

Wednesday 24th February 2021, 12-1

45% of US adolescents now state that they are “almost constantly” online. This lecture will examine how online platforms such as social media fit into the developmental process of adolescence. We will discuss what might make adolescents more susceptible to certain aspects of online social life, and how this might be addressed in future.

**Lecture 6: Adolescent mental health [Prof Tamsin Ford, Psychiatry, Cambridge]**

Wednesday 3rd March 2021, 12-1

This lecture will describe the types of mental health condition that are common among children and young people and how they vary in terms of age and gender. The epidemiology will be placed in the context of how methods influence study results and we obviously need to talk about the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of children and young people

**Lecture 7: Adolescence from an evolutionary anthropological perspective [Dr Emily Emmott, UCL]**

Wednesday 10th March 2021, 12-1

Is human adolescence ‘special’? We will examine this question from an evolutionary anthropological perspective, considering the evolutionary history of adolescence (the past), contemporary adolescence across cultures (the present), and the function of adolescence (why does adolescence exist?). Students will be introduced to some key frameworks and theories in evolutionary anthropology, guiding them to understand the ultimate explanations behind human adolescence.

**Lecture 8: Risk-taking and peer influence in adolescence [SJB]**

Wednesday 17th March 2021, 12-1

It is well known that risk-taking increases in adolescence, particular in the presence of friends. This lecture will focus on social influence on risk taking and the theory that adolescents tend to be risk-averse when it comes to social risk taking.