

SOSC1960 Discovering Mind and Behavior
Spring 2023
Course Outline

Aim

This course introduces the fundamental scientific knowledge about human thinking and behavior processes and illustrates the relevance of this knowledge to the betterment of human performance and well-being in a wide variety of settings in society.

Intended learning outcomes

On completion of this course, you are expected to be able to (i) recognize some fundamental scientific concepts about human mind and behavior; (ii) analyze human performance and well-being in various social settings with reference to these concepts; and (iii) explain how scientific research on human mind and behavior is conducted.

Teaching team

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*Emails will be responded to during working days 10 am to 6 pm Hong Kong Time. When contacting us by email, always prefix the subject line of your message with the course code (e.g., “sosc1960 | essay”). Use your university email account only. Do not send messages via Canvas.

Learning activities

(Detailed guidelines regarding the assessed activities will be released in due course.)

1. *Lectures*. As the foundation of your learning in this course, the lectures introduce the science of human mind and behavior through various activities.
*Lectures will NOT be recorded.
2. *Readings*. For each topic, a list of recommended readings is provided. Though optional, these readings complement the lectures by providing deeper and broader analyses. Included are not only scientific publications but also magazine articles, TED talks, websites and so forth.
3. *Workshops (5%)*. The two workshops prepare you for lifelong learning regarding human mind and behavior in the future.
*Completion of mini exercises during the workshops contributes to your course grade.
4. *Research experience (5%)*. It is important for you to understand how research regarding human mind and behavior is conducted. You can choose to either take part in a real research study online as a participant or watch a video about a classic research study. You will then write a thought piece about your experience (within 200 to 300 words).
*Your writing will be graded on a pass/fail basis; for failed cases, you will receive comments and have a chance to rewrite and resubmit with a one-point deduction.
*Submission deadline: 17:00, 21 Apr.
5. *Essay (15%)*. The essay represents an opportunity for you to analyze concepts related to human mind and behavior and apply them to the real world.
*Submission deadline: 17:00, 3 Apr
6. *Learning reflection (5%)*. At the end of the course, you will be guided to reflect on how your learning experience has transformed your knowledge and yourself as a person.
*Your reflection will be graded on a pass/fail basis; for failed cases, you will receive comments and have a chance to rewrite and resubmit with a one-point deduction.
*Submission deadline: 17:00, 8 May
7. *Exams (30% + 40%)*. The mid-term and final exams assess your conceptual understanding. They cover all materials discussed in the lectures and include only multiple-choice questions.

Schedule (subject to minor changes)

12:00 – 13:20, Monday and Wednesday, Rm 2502

Date	Contents
6 Feb	<i>Overview</i> : Through understanding human mind and behavior, we can make a better world.
8 Feb	<i>Research method</i> : Scientists use a variety of tools to study human mind and behavior.
13 Feb	<i>Perception</i> : What we see is not always what exists.
15 Feb	<i>Circadian rhythm</i> : A lot of things happen in our body and mind while we sleep.
20 Feb	<i>Consciousness</i> : Our experience of the world is governed by both conscious and unconscious processes.
22 Feb	<i>Emotions</i> : There are universality as well as cultural differences in our emotional experiences.
27 Feb	<i>Learning</i> : It is possible to make wolves retreat from sheep and train pigeons to play ping pong.
1 Mar	Workshop 1
6 Mar	<i>Memory</i> : Forgetting and false memory can be traced back to how memory is formed.
8 Mar	<i>Rationality</i> : It is not always easy to make a rational decision, as we are bounded by capacity and motivation.
13 Mar	<i>Intelligence</i> : IQ scores are useful, but they fail to cover the many abilities that are important to success.
15 Mar	Workshop 2
20 Mar	Mid-Term Exam
22 Mar	<i>Motivation</i> : A number of needs, some basic and some higher-order, direct and energize our behavior.
27 Mar	<i>Personality</i> : Personality, when properly assessed, can predict a lot of things about a person.
29 Mar	<i>Development</i> : We are who we are because of what we were born with and what we experienced growing up.
3 Apr	<i>Parental influence</i> : Our parents shape who we are in both visible and invisible ways.
5 Apr	(holiday)
10 Apr	(holiday)
12 Apr	<i>Social influence</i> : Our behavior is subject to the influence from actions by other people.
17 Apr	<i>Abnormality</i> : The boundary between what is normal and what is abnormal is fuzzy.
19 Apr	<i>Psychological disorders</i> : A better understanding of mental illness may reduce the stigma around it.
24 Apr	<i>Psychotherapy</i> : Therapists use a variety of psychological techniques to treat psychological disorders.
26 Apr	<i>Mind and body</i> : A healthy mind boosts a healthy body.
1 May	(holiday)
3 May	<i>Well-being</i> : What makes a good life?
8 May	(no lecture)
Exam period	Final Exam

Suggested reference

- Lilienfeld, S. O. et al. (2015). *Psychology: From inquiry to understanding*. Boston, MA: Pearson. (accessible via library)

Points to note

1. *Learning attitude*. Be active in class. Your participation not only helps you learn more but also enables us to teach better. Think about what you want to learn and how you are going to learn it. Use grades, scores, and comments from us to understand how much and how well you have learned and how you can improve.
2. *Lecture slides*. A condensed version of the lecture slides will be available on Canvas before each lecture. Note that some contents (mainly examples) will be removed from this version; this is to encourage you to take your own notes and generate your own examples. Research has shown that personal notetaking and example generation improve learning and course performance.
3. *Academic integrity*. We will investigate every suspect case of cheating or plagiarism. We will heavily penalize confirmed cases and report them to the Head of the Division of Social Science for further review or action. Read <http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/index.html>. Make sure you understand what constitutes academic honesty.
4. *Submission policy*. There is a grace-period policy: Submissions late for 5 hours or less will be accepted and NOT penalized. Penalties apply to submissions late for more than 5 hours.
5. *Make-up exam*. In principle, there is NO make-up exam in this course. The only exception is for absentees with medical reasons; in this case, the make-up exam consists of essay questions only.