

SOSC1960 Discovering Mind and Behavior Course Outline

Highlights

1. *20 lectures, 20 keywords about human mind and behavior!* With a broad analysis of the scientific concepts and empirical evidences behind, each lecture discusses human mind and behavior around one keyword. Creativity, personality, abnormality etc.
2. *WE don't just talk!* In lectures we teach and learn through all sorts of activities. Watch videos, write stories, draw figures, play games—you name it! In terms of readings, we have websites, magazine articles, scientific reports, TED talks, and so on!
3. *YOU don't just read about research studies; YOU take part in them!* Is there any better way of learning how research studies are conducted than actually being part of them? There are plenty of opportunities for you to be part of real research studies and learn up close!

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 the 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.

Instructor

Kevin Tam, kevintam@ust.hk

Communication platform

<http://canvas.ust.hk>

Learning activities

1. *Lectures.* The lectures introduce the science of human mind and behavior through a variety of activities. They form the foundation of your learning in this course. Though lecture attendance is not compulsory, research has shown that students attending more lectures generally have better course performance. If you plan to skip a lot of lectures, think twice!
2. *Readings.* For each lecture a reading list is provided. You will find some recommended readings (they are highly relevant to the lecture discussion) and some further readings (for those who want further exploration) on the list. The readings complement the lectures by providing deeper analyses and broader coverage. If you like to read, you will definitely find a lot of fun in them!
3. *Quizzes.* The two quizzes (30% of the course grade each) assess your conceptual understanding. Materials discussed in the lectures are tested. The quizzes include multiple-choice questions only. Quiz 1 covers the first half of the course, and Quiz 2 covers the second half.
4. *Essay.* The essay (20% of the course grade) requires that you apply some concepts to the real world. It is a short essay; you don't have to write a lot, but you have to express yourself clearly. A workshop will give you some pointers on how to write a good essay. Submission deadline: **17:00 pm, 28 Oct 2019.**
5. *Learning reflection.* The learning reflection (10% of course grade) requires that you reflect on your learning experience in this course. Through writing, discuss how such experience has transformed your knowledge and yourself as a person. Submission deadline: **17:00 pm, 30 Nov 2019.**
6. *Research experience.* The science of human mind and behavior advances through empirical research. In this course, you can experience such research up close! There are two types of experience: (1) Research studies: You will join real research studies as a participant and learn firsthand how they are conducted; this is something you can rarely experience outside this course, so we highly recommend this to you! (2) Research exercises: You will watch videos about classic research studies on human mind and behavior and write about your thoughts on it; these videos are fun! You have the choice of participating in either one or a combination of both. You gain 1 credit for each 30-minute research study or exercise session completed. At maximum you can obtain 3 credits (which translates into 10% of the course grade). All research studies and exercises will be conducted between **16 Sep 2019 and 8 Nov 2019.**

(Detailed guidelines regarding these learning activities will be released in due course.)

Suggested references (on Library Course Reserve)

- Lilienfeld, S. O. et al. (2014). *Psychology: From inquiry to understanding*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Myers, D. G. (2014). *Psychology* (10th ed.). New York, NY: Worth.

Schedule (subject to minor changes)

10:30 – 11:50, Monday and Wednesday, Rm 2465 (Lift 25-26)

Date	Lecture Contents
2 Sep	Overview: Through understanding human mind and behavior, we can make a better world.
4 Sep	#01 Scientific method: Scientists use a variety of tools to study human mind and behavior.
9 Sep	#02 Perception: What we see is not always what exists.
11 Sep	#03 Circadian rhythm: A lot of things happen in our body and mind while we sleep.
16 Sep	(no lecture)
18 Sep	Essay writing workshop
23 Sep	#04 Consciousness: Our experience of the world is governed by both the conscious and the unconscious.
25 Sep	#05 Emotions: There are universality as well as cultural differences in our emotional experiences.
30 Sep	#06 Memory: Forgetting and false memory can be traced back to how memory is formed.
2 Oct	#07 Learning: It is possible to make wolves retreat from sheep and to train pigeons to play ping pong.
7 Oct	(holiday)
9 Oct	#08 Rationality: It is not always easy to make a rational decision, as we are bounded by capacity and motivation.
14 Oct	#09 Intelligence: IQ scores are useful, but they fail to cover the many abilities that are important to success.
16 Oct	#10 Creativity: Creativity is determined from a number of personal and experiential factors.
21 Oct	Quiz 1 (venue TBC)
23 Oct	#11 Motivation: A number of needs, some basic and some higher-order, direct and energize our behavior.
28 Oct	#12 Personality: Personality, when properly assessed, can predict a lot of things about a person.
30 Oct	#13 Development: We are who we are because of what we were born with and what we experienced growing up.
4 Nov	#14 Parental influence: Our parents shape who we are in both visible and invisible ways.
6 Nov	#15 Social influence: Our behavior is often influenced by actions by other people.
11 Nov	#16 Abnormality: The boundary between what is normal and what is abnormal is fuzzy.
13 Nov	#17 Psychological disorders: A better understanding of mental illness may reduce the stigma around it.
18 Nov	#18 Psychotherapy: Therapists use a number of psychological techniques to treat psychological disorders.
20 Nov	#19 Mind and body: A healthy mind boosts a healthy body.
25 Nov	#20 Positive psychology: Happiness brings success, health and even longevity, but it has dark sides.
27 Nov	(no lecture)
Exam period	Quiz 2 (date, time and venue TBC)

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 them. Use grades, scores, and comments from us to understand how much and how well you have learned and how you can improve!
2. *Academic integrity*. We will thoroughly 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 constitute academic honesty.
3. *Penalties*. Penalties apply to assignments that are submitted late or over the word limit. Find the details in the respective guidelines.
4. *Make-up quizzes*. Make-up quizzes will be granted to absentees with a medical condition. Other requests for a make-up quiz will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Make-up quizzes will consist of both multiple-choice questions and essay questions. Find the details in the respective guidelines.
5. *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 note-taking and example generation improve learning and course performance!