

SOSC1960-L1 Discovering Mind and Behavior
Spring 2020
Course Outline

Highlights

1. *4 main themes!* With four main themes, this course offers a broad analysis of the scientific concepts and empirical evidences behind human mind and behavior. Each lecture is structured around one keyword.
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. *Understanding research!* There are plenty of opportunities for you to learn how research studies about human mind and behavior are conducted!

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.

Teaching team

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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. *Research experience (5% x 2).* The science of human mind and behavior advances through empirical research. There are opportunities for you to observe how such research is conducted. You will complete two tasks:
 - Research study: Complete a real research study online as a participant and learn firsthand how it is conducted. Write a thought piece (in no more than 100 words) about your experience.
 - Research exercise: Watch a video about a research study. Write a thought piece (in no more than 100 words) about the study.
 - Your thought pieces will be graded on a pass/fail basis (for failed cases, students will receive comments and have a chance to rewrite and resubmit). Submission deadline: **5:00 pm, 27 March**
4. *Learning journal (5% x 4).* For each main theme in this course, you will write up a reflection (in no more than 300 words) to recognize and clarify the connections between your pre-existing knowledge and life experiences and what you have just learnt. Your reflection will be graded on a pass/fail basis (for failed cases, students will receive comments and have a chance to rewrite and resubmit). Submission deadlines: **5:00 pm, 20 March (Theme 1), 3 April (Theme 2), 29 April (Theme 3), 20 May (Theme 4).**
5. *Essay (30%).* The essay 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 on **13 March** will give you some pointers on how to write a good essay. Submission deadline: **5:00 pm, 14 April.**
6. *Exam (40%).* The exam assesses your conceptual understanding. Materials discussed in the lectures are tested. The tentative plan is that it will include essay questions only.
(Detailed guidelines regarding these learning activities will be released in due course.)

Schedule (subject to minor changes)

15:00 – 16:20, Wednesday and Friday, Zoom / Rm 2502 (Lift 25-26)

Date	Lecture Contents
<i>Why and how scientists study human mind and behavior</i>	
19 Feb	#01 Overview: Through understanding human mind and behavior, we can make a better world.
21 Feb	#02 Scientific method: Scientists use a variety of tools to study human mind and behavior.
<i>Theme 1: How we experience the world</i>	
26 Feb	#03 Perception: What we see is not always what exists.
28 Feb	#04 Circadian rhythm: A lot of things happen in our body and mind while we sleep.
4 Mar	#05 Consciousness: Our experience of the world is governed by both the conscious and the unconscious.
6 Mar	#06 Emotions: There are universality as well as cultural differences in our emotional experiences.
11 Mar	#07 Learning: It is possible to make wolves retreat from sheep and to train pigeons to play ping pong.
13 Mar	Essay Writing Workshop
<i>Theme 2: How we solve problems</i>	
18 Mar	#08 Memory: Forgetting and false memory can be traced back to how memory is formed.
20 Mar	#09 Rationality: It is not always easy to make a rational decision, as we are bounded by capacity and motivation.
25 Mar	#10 Intelligence: IQ scores are useful, but they fail to cover the many abilities that are important to success.
27 Mar	#11 Creativity: Creativity is determined from a number of personal and experiential factors.
1 Apr	Consultation
<i>Theme 3: Why we behave in the way we behave</i>	
3 Apr	#12 Motivation: A number of needs, some basic and some higher-order, direct and energize our behavior.
8 Apr	#13 Personality: Personality, when properly assessed, can predict a lot of things about a person.
10 Apr	(holiday)
15 Apr	#14 Development: We are who we are because of what we were born with and what we experienced growing up.
17 Apr	#15 Parental influence: Our parents shape who we are in both visible and invisible ways.
22 Apr	#16 Social influence: Our behavior is often influenced by actions by other people.
<i>Theme 4: The dark and bright sides of our functioning</i>	
24 Apr	#17 Abnormality: The boundary between what is normal and what is abnormal is fuzzy.
29 Apr	#18 Psychological disorders: A better understanding of mental illness may reduce the stigma around it.
1 May	(holiday)
6 May	#19 Psychotherapy: Therapists use a number of psychological techniques to treat psychological disorders.
8 May	#20 Mind and body: A healthy mind boosts a healthy body.
13 May	#21 Positive psychology: Happiness brings success, health and even longevity, but it has dark sides.
15 May	Consultation
Exam period	Exam (date and time TBC)

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.

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 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 exam*. A make-up exam will be granted to absentees with a medical condition. Other requests for a make-up exam will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. 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!