

*Lectures will not be
recorded.*

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

SOSC1960-L2 Introduction to Psychology

Fall 2026

Course Syllabus

The Teaching Team

Instructor

Name: Dr. CHENG Chen
Office: Rm 2385
Email: chencheng@ust.hk
Consultation: By appointment

Teaching Assistant

Names: Ms. Kayee Wong (egkayee@ust.hk)
Vivien Pong (vivienpong@ust.hk)
Consultation: By appointment

Lecture Time: Mon, Wed 10:30-11:50 pm (HKT)

Venue: Rm 2407, near lift 17-18

*When contacting us by email, please **prefix the subject line** of your message with the course code [SOSC1960-L2]. Use your university email account only. Do not send messages via Canvas.

Course Description

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 (ILOs)

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to:

1. recognize some fundamental scientific concepts about human mind and behavior;
2. analyze human performance and wellbeing in various social settings with reference to these concepts; AND
3. explain how scientific research on human mind and behavior is conducted.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve.

Assessments:

1. Attendance and In-Class Participation (10%, allow 2 % compensation bonus)

In-class participation is evaluated based on two ways:

- Attendance (5%) will be recorded throughout the semester through a variety of in-class activities, including but not limited to pop-up mini-quizzes and group discussions. Each recorded activity will count for 1% of your final grade, up to a maximum of 5%. We will conduct approximately 6-8 such activities during the semester, so once you have earned the full 5%, you will have completed this assessment component.

- Another **5%** of the participation assessment will be earned through attending tutorials and completing the required reflections on the day of each tutorial. You are expected to attend **two tutorial sessions**, complete the in-class assignments, and submit them during class. Each tutorial assignment contributes **2.5%** to your final grade.
- Additionally, you can earn up to 2 compensation bonus points through active participation including but not limited to answering questions, getting involved in on-stage demonstrations, each of these experiences will count as one point and will be used to compensate your missing attendance.

2. Research Experience (5%)

- To allow you to gain first-hand experience in psychological research, you are required to **either** 1) complete a psychological research study or 2) watch academic presentations and write reflections on them. Details will be announced in due course.

3. Integrative Essay (25%)

- This essay will be centered around a specific problem about human mind and behaviors. You will learn how to systematically search scientific literature for relevant materials, critically read and evaluate scientific evidence, and apply what you have learned from your literature review to develop recommendations related to the problem. This essay will be broken down into three manageable steps. For each step, you will receive guidance through a workshop, and your understanding will be assessed. This essay is aimed to help you develop skills that will be valuable for your continued and lifelong learning of psychology.
- There will be multiple submission deadlines for this essay. Please refer to the teaching schedule on p. 5.

4. Mid-term quiz (15%) + 5. Final exam (50%)

- The quizzes are administered to test your understanding of course materials. Both are close-booked, multiple-choice questions only quiz.
- The midterm quiz is scheduled on **Oct. 12** and covers lectures from **Week 1 to 6**.
- The final exam is scheduled during the central exam period and covers lectures from **Week 1 to 13**.
- Supplementary readings are also listed in the lecture note but they will NOT be included in the quizzes. These readings are useful for a deeper understanding in the course contents.
- Arrive on time for the quiz as no additional time will be given for students arriving late.
- No make-up quizzes will be given to students who are absent from the quizzes unless students can provide validated medical reasons. You should notify the teaching team (through email) about your absence by attaching your official medical certificate ***within 24 hours of the original exam date*** if you wish to arrange for a make-up exam. All make-up quizzes will ONLY be in the form of essay examinations and oral questions.

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Mapping of Course ILOs	Due date
Class participation	10%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	-
Research Experience	5%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	-
Midterm quiz	15%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Oct 12
Integrative Essay	20%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Part 1 & Part 2: Oct 18; Part 3: Dec 6
Final exam	50%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	TBD

Final Grade Descriptors:

A	Excellent Performance	• demonstrates comprehensive grasp of course materials • exhibits a high capacity for scholarship, going beyond requirements • shows originality in works submitted • shows an extraordinary level of motivation to learn • displays eagerness to apply materials learned
B	Good Performance	• demonstrates good understanding of course materials • exhibits a good capacity for scholarship within course requirements • shows a high level of motivation to learn • displays interest to apply materials learned
C	Satisfactory Performance	• demonstrates adequate understanding of course materials • exhibits some ability to think critically and analytically • fulfils all course requirements satisfactorily • displays moderate motivation to learn and apply materials learned
D	Marginal Pass	• demonstrates poor understanding of course materials • fails to think critically and analytically • barely fulfils all course requirements • displays weak motivation to learn and apply materials learned
F	Fail	• fails to adequately understand course materials • fails to fulfil all course requirements • shows minimal motivation to learn and apply materials learned

Course AI Policy

Restrict ways of using generative AI tools for assessment

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas. Feedback on assignments will include specific details, e.g., strengths, areas for improvement. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received. Please expect that your emails will be responded to during weekdays 10am to 6pm HKT.

Required Texts and Materials

Noba Project. (2023). *Introduction to Psychology*. <http://noba.to/7hymnvpc>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Some Other Notes

- **Interaction in class** – I believe interactions (both verbal and non-verbal) between the lecturer and the students (and among students) are one of the key ingredients to an optimal learning experience. Your active participation in class discussion or activities will not only enhance your learning, but also motivate the teaching team to do better! Stay behind the class and share with me your thoughts about the course contents.
- **Lecture slides** – Lecture slides will be posted to CANVAS before each class, but the contents will be a bit different from the displayed slides as I hope to encourage you to take your own notes. Note-taking facilitates your reflection and assimilation of the lecture contents.

- **Penalties** – Score deduction applies to any assignments over the word limit. Details can be found in the assignment guidelines.
- **Late submission** – Submissions received less than 5 hours after the deadline will not be penalized. No submissions will be accepted after 5pm HKT on the due date.
- **Your feedback** – Your opinions about the course are very valuable to help me improve the course. Feel free to drop by to talk to me. A course evaluation will also be held at the end of the course.

Teaching Schedule (Subject to minor change)

Week	Date	Topic	Chapters from Reading
1	Sep 2	Introduction	1
2	Sep 7		
	Sep 9	Research Methods in Psychology	2-3
3	Sep14		
	Sep 16	<i>Writing Workshop I</i>	
4	Sep 21	Psychology of Learning	4
	Sep 23		
5	Sep 28	Human Memory	5
	Sep 30		
6	Oct 5	[Tutorial 1] Sensation and Perception	
	Oct 7	Midterm review session	
7	Oct 12	Midterm quiz	
	Oct 14	Sleep and Biological Rhythms Part1	10
8	Oct 19(h)	No Class [Holiday]	
	Oct 21	<i>Writing Workshop II</i>	
9	Oct 26	Sleep and Biological Rhythms Part2	10
	Oct 28	[Tutorial 2] Sleep	
10	Nov 2	Human Development	15-16
	Nov 4		
11	Nov 9	Personality	18-20
	Nov 11		
12	Nov 16	Social and Collective Behaviors	21-25
	Nov 18		
13	Nov 23	Mental Health	26
	Nov 25		29, 31-33
14	Nov 30	Final review and wrap-up session	

Deadlines for Submission

Date	Task
Oct 18	Integrative Essay – Part 1 & Part 2
Dec 6	Integrative Essay – Part 3