

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Division of Social Science
Fall Semester 2026

Course Title: Counselling Psychology

Course Code: SOSC 2260

No. of Credits: 3

Pre-/co-requisites: SOSC1960/1969/1980

Lecture Time: Tue & Thu 16:30-17:50pm (HKT)

Venue: Room 5583 (Lift 29-23)

	Lecturer	Teaching Assistant
	Dr. Nicolson Siu	Wong Ka-yee
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Consultation	By appointment	By appointment

******The format of the course will follow University guidelines. Consistent with the other SOSC Psychology courses offered, this course will **NOT** be recorded.

******When contacting us by email, please prefix the subject line of your message with the course code [MASS5020]. Use your university email account only.

Course Description

This course addresses the emotional, social, vocational, and health-related concerns individuals encounter throughout their lives. By integrating psychological theories, counseling techniques, research, and practical application, it aims to enhance well-being and foster personal growth. Students will engage with various therapeutic methods, assessment techniques, and ethical considerations within a diverse cultural context. A strong emphasis is placed on developing interpersonal skills, fostering resilience, and understanding the complexities of human behavior. The course also encourages self-reflection and personal development, equipping students to become empathetic and effective communicators who can make a meaningful impact on their communities. Through a blend of hands-on experience and rigorous coursework, students will learn to navigate the complexities of mental health and well-being, empowering them for successful personal and professional development.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of fundamental psychological theories, counselling techniques, and concepts related to mental health, emotional well-being, and human behavior
2. Effectively apply foundational counseling techniques, such as active listening, empathy, and reflective questioning, to support personal growth and assist peers in informal settings
3. Engage in critical self-reflection to foster greater self-awareness of personal mental health challenges and development needs
4. Understand societal issues related to mental health, including stigma and access to care, and develop the ability to advocate for mental health awareness and support within their communities
5. Practice effective communication through written and oral presentations

Assessment Scheme

Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessment Tasks	Alignment of ILOs	Weighting
1. Course Participation	1,2,3,4,5	10%
2. Learning Portfolio	1,2,3,5	25%
3. Group Project Presentation	1,2,4,5	25%
4. Mid-Term Quiz	1,2,3,4,5	15%
5. Final Quiz	1,2,3,4,5	25%

1. Course Participation

The percentage of class attendance and quantity and quality of participation will contribute to students' course participation. The course participation grade is not only determined by the quantity of participation behaviors, but also its quality, i.e. having salient contributions, reflecting preparation and knowledge of the materials, and raising thought-provoking and/or salient contributions.

2. Learning Portfolio

The Learning Portfolio is a comprehensive assessment designed to showcase your development and understanding of key concepts in counseling psychology.

Throughout the course, you will compile a collection of reflective pieces, case studies, and theoretical analyses that demonstrate your growth.

****Further details will be provided in class.*

3. Group Project Presentation

Students are expected to demonstrate their counselling skills by interviewing a volunteer client. Students will form groups and choose one interviewing session from among the group members to evaluate.

- This interview should last at least 15 minutes and should be either audio or videotaped (preferably video). The purpose is to practice the skills taught in class, understand students' natural style of helping, learning to classify interviewing leads/micro-skills, and evaluating a counselling session.
- Choose a 10 to 15-minute segment of the session to transcribe.
- Develop a power-point presentation that provides brief information on the background of the client and conceptualization of their issues. After playing the recording, make comments on the use of your skills – both your strengths and weaknesses.
- The entire presentation should last no more than 20 minutes with at least 5 minutes for Q and A.

****Further details will be provided in class.*

4. Mid-Term Quiz

The Mid-Term Quiz is designed to evaluate your understanding of core concepts, theories, and practices in counseling psychology covered in the first half of the course. This assessment will consist of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and case analysis.

5. Final Quiz

The Final Quiz serves as a comprehensive assessment of your understanding and application of counseling psychology concepts learned throughout the course. It will include a variety of question formats, including essay questions, case studies, and practical scenarios.

Final Grade Descriptors

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	• Demonstrates exceptional understanding of counseling theories and practices. • Integrates advanced research and critical thinking in case analyses. • Exhibits strong interpersonal skills and empathy during client interactions. • Consistently reflects on personal biases and their impact on practice. • Contributes significantly to group discussions and peer feedback.
B	Good Performance	• Shows a solid grasp of counseling concepts and techniques. • Analyzes cases with clarity and thoughtful consideration. • Communicates effectively with clients and peers, demonstrating empathy. • Reflects on personal growth and areas for improvement. • Participates actively in discussions, offering constructive insights.
C	Satisfactory Performance	• Understands basic counseling theories and methods. • Provides adequate analysis of case studies, with some critical thinking. • Demonstrates basic communication skills in client interactions. • Engages in self-reflection, recognizing some biases. • Participates in group discussions but may lack depth in contributions.
D	Marginal Pass	• Shows limited understanding of counseling principles. • Analysis of cases lacks depth and critical engagement.

		• Struggles with effective communication and empathy in client interactions. • Limited self-reflection and awareness of personal biases. • Rarely contributes to discussions, often requiring prompting.
F	Fail	• Fails to demonstrate understanding of key counseling concepts. • Lacks analysis and critical thinking in case studies. • Does not communicate effectively with clients or peers. • Shows no evidence of self-reflection or awareness of biases. • Does not engage in discussions and avoids participation.

Course AI Policy

Students are allowed to use AI-powered tools and models for tasks such as research, brainstorming, and proofreading, provided that the final work submitted is their own. Students must disclose the use of any AI-powered tools or models in their work. This includes acknowledging the use of AI-powered assistants, such as chatbots, for research or ideation purposes.

Course Communication Platform

All lecture materials and announcements will be posted on CANVAS. Be sure to check CANVAS from time to time for any updated news.

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.
- **Communication** – Please expect that your emails will be responded to during weekdays 10am to 6pm HKT.
- **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.

Required Texts and Materials

Ivey, A. & Ivey, M. (2022). Intentional interviewing and counseling: Facilitating client development in a multicultural society (10th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole

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. We will investigate every suspected case of plagiarism and report the confirmed case to the Division of Social Science for further review or action. Make sure you understand academic dishonesty would result in a reduction of scores or even a failing grade in the course.

Teaching Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Submission Deadline
Foundation of Counselling			
1.	2 Set	Introduction	
	4 Sep	Awareness of Natural Style of Counselling	
2.	9 Sep	Characteristics of a Counsellor and Multicultural Competence	
	11 Sep	Ethical Concerns	
3.	16 Sep	Core Microskills I	
	18 Sep	Core Microskills II	
4.	23 Sep	Tutorial 1: Assignments Overview	Finalized Group List
	25 Sep	Establishing the therapeutic alliance	
Counselling Theories and Practice			
5.	30 Sep	Major Theories of psychotherapy I	
	2 Oct	Major Theories of psychotherapy II	
6.	7 Oct	Presentation Consultation (No Class)	
	9 Oct	Presentation Consultation (No Class)	
7.	14 Oct	Major Theories of psychotherapy III	
	16 Oct	Designing treatment plans	
8.	21 Oct	Conducting intake interviews	
	23 Oct	Mid-Term Quiz	
Counselling on Specific Client Issues			
9.	28 Oct	Managing Stress and Anxiety	
	30 Oct	Depression	
10.	4 Nov	Grief and Loss	
	6 Nov	Addiction Issues	
11.	11 Nov	Relationship and Marital Dynamics	
	13 Nov	Trauma	Power-point Submission
12.	18 Nov	Case Presentation & Discussion	
	20 Nov	Case Presentation & Discussion	
13.	25 Nov	Case Presentation & Discussion	
	27 Nov	Revision	Learning Portfolio
TBC		Centralized Final Quiz	