

SOSC2980 Personality Psychology (3 credits) | Fall 2026

Lecture: Thursday 1:30 – 4:20PM
Venue: Room 4503 (Lifts 25-26)
CANVAS: <https://canvas.ust.hk/courses/738096>

Instructor: [Professor Michelle YIK](#)
Email: Michelle.Yik@ust.hk
Consultation: By appointment through email

TA's email: sosc2980ta@ust.hk
*Emails will be responded to during weekdays from 10am to 5pm.

- Check CANVAS announcements regularly.
- Do not leave messages in the CANVAS inbox.

When contacting us by email, ALWAYS prefix the subject line of your message with the course code (i.e., [sosc 2980]). Use your university email account only.

Course Description

This course surveys the principal approaches to studying personality and examines relevant modern research.

Goals

1. To survey major approaches to understanding personality. This goal can be achieved by reading the texts.
2. To highlight select topics which I consider to be important and are of interest to me. This goal can be achieved by attending lectures. [The lectures and the readings supplement each other](#) in advancing your understanding of the topics.
3. To apply the principles/theories in understanding individual differences and everyday behaviors. This goal can be achieved by actively participating in group work and class activities.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

1. To identify the issues on which personality theories tend to differ.
2. To list the methods of personality assessment and common measures of personality.
3. To explain theoretical concepts using behavioral examples drawn from everyday life.

Required Textbook

Burger, J. M., & Reevy, G. M. (2027). *Personality* (12th ed.). Cengage.

Assessments

Assessed Task	Contribution to Overall Course Grade
Class Participation	10%
Group Case Analysis & Critique	40%
Closed-book Tests	50%

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Class Participation	ILO-1, ILO-3	This task assesses students' ability to understand the fundamental knowledge related to personality (ILO-1) and apply pertinent concepts in understanding everyday behaviors (ILO-3).
Group Case Analysis & Critique	ILO-1, ILO-2, ILO-3	This task assesses students' ability to understand personality theories and their measurements (ILO-1, ILO-2) and demonstrates higher-order thinking skills of using a theory to analyze a person's life (ILO-3).
Tests	ILO-1, ILO-2	This task assesses students' ability to demonstrate the fundamental knowledge related to personality (ILO-1) and assessment (ILO-2).

Final Grade Descriptors

Grade	Short Description	Elaboration
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter, and expertise in problem-solving. Exhibits a high capacity for scholarship and collaboration, going beyond core requirements to achieve learning goals.
B	Good Performance	Demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, and competence in problem-solving. Displays high motivation to learn and the ability to work effectively with others.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate knowledge of the subject matter, and ability in dealing with familiar problems. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
D	Marginal Pass	Has threshold knowledge of the subject matter, and potential in dealing with familiar problems. Possesses the potential to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of the subject matter and lacks the necessary problem-solving skills. Shows limited ability to think analytically and exhibits minimal effort towards achieving learning goals. Does not meet the threshold requirements for the course.

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.

Class Participation (10%)

- The prerequisite for class participation is attendance.
- Using your questions raised in class or sent via emails, I will prepare a concluding session for each lecture topic.
- Your class participation score will be determined by the quality and quantity of issues raised by you.

Group Case Analysis & Critique (40%)

- You will be randomly assigned to a group after the add/drop period. We will assign a group leader for each group.
- Using Group Member Evaluation (GME), you will evaluate the contributions of fellow members towards the completion of the group tasks. The ratings will be used to adjust each person's grade.
- Each group will prepare a [case write-up \(30%\)](#) and a [critique on an assigned case analysis \(10%\)](#).
- You will be provided with some guidelines and a template on CANVAS to organize your write-up.

Closed-book Tests (50%)

- Two [noncumulative](#) multiple-choice tests; each test is worth 25%.
- Coverage: Each test covers 3 topics (refer to the Lecture Schedule). You are responsible for reviewing all materials covered in [lectures and REQUIRED readings from the Required Textbook](#).
- Be sure to [arrive on time](#) for each test since no additional time will be given to students who arrive late.
- Important Note: There will be **NO** make-up test on this course. This means that if you miss a test, you will simply lose the number of points associated with it. Your grade will therefore be computed as if that particular entry was a zero. The only exceptions to this rule are validated medical notes. Such notes must be in the form of a written note from your doctor, attesting to the fact that on the day of the test, you are too ill to attend it. **Each make-up consists of long answers and an oral session; they are to be taken within 7 days from the day of the test.**

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Required	Optional
1	03 Sep	01. Introduction	Chps 1, 2	
2	10 Sep	02. The Trait Approach	Chps 7, 8	Chp 10
3	17 Sep	02. The Trait Approach Briefing on the Group Case		
4	24 Sep	03. The Psychoanalytic Approach	Chps 3, 4	Chps 5, 6
5	01 Oct	Public Holiday		
6	08 Oct	03. The Psychoanalytic Approach		
7	15 Oct	[No class] ZOOM Group Meetings with Michelle		
8	22 Oct	Test 1 – “Introduction” to “The Psychoanalytic Approach”		
9	28 Oct	Group Case Analysis & GenAI Form due at 12 noon		
	29 Oct	04. The Behavioral Approach	Chps 13, 14	
10	4 Nov	Critique, GenAI Form, & GME ratings due at 12 noon		
	5 Nov	05. The Humanistic Approach	Chps 11, 12	
11	12 Nov	06. The Cognitive Approach	Chps 15, 16	
12	19 Nov	Review		
13	26 Nov	Test 2 – “The Behavioral Approach” to “The Cognitive Approach”		

Note. Both required and optional readings come from the Required Textbook.