

**The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**  
**Division of Social Science**  
**SOSC3900 Abnormal Psychology**  
**Spring Semester, 2024**

***Instructor***

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Consultation: By appointment

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Consultation: By appointment

\*When contacting us by email, please **prefix the subject line** of your message with the course code [SOSC3900]. Use your university email account only.

**Lecture Time: Wed, Fri 16:30-17:50**  
**Venue: Room 2406**

**Course Description**

Abnormal psychology is the scientific study of psychopathology and abnormal behavior. This course introduces theories, research methods, and the most updated research findings in the field of abnormal psychology. Students will be introduced to various types of psychological disorders, such as mood disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders, somatoform disorders, sex-related disorders, etc. They will also learn about the diagnosis, causes, maintenance, and treatment of major psychological disorders from an integrative perspective.

**Prerequisite**

SOSC1960 Introduction to Psychology, or SOSC1980 Psychology of Personal Growth, or SOSC1969 Discovering Mind and Behavior

**Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)**

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to:

1. demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of selected theories and concepts that are of importance and interest in abnormal psychology;
2. understand how clinical psychologists classify and diagnose various types of psychological disorders;
3. evaluate the development and treatment of psychological disorders from an integrative perspective;
4. apply the theories and concepts to daily lives and real cases of psychological disorders; AND
5. analyze, synthesize, and integrate key ideas within the field in a research project they design.

## Required Textbook

Kearney, C. (2023). *Psychopathology and life: A dimensional approach* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

## Suggested Reading

American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.

## Assessment Scheme

Components	Weighting	ILOs
Quizzes	50%	1, 2
Group Project		
Presentation Session	20%	
PPT Slide	10%	1, 2, 3, 4
Individual Assignment	20%	1, 2, 3

### 1. Quizzes (50%; 25% each)

- Two quizzes will be administered to test your understanding of course materials. Quizzes will include multiple-choice and/or short questions. They are non-cumulative. Both quizzes cover all materials in lectures and required readings (the relevant chapters will appear on the last page of the lecture handouts).
- 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 of the course contents.
- Quiz 1 is scheduled on **Mar 13** and covers topics from **Week 1 to 4**. Quiz 2 is scheduled on **May 8** and covers topics from **Week 5 to 11**.
- 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 quiz date** if you wish to arrange for a make-up quiz. All make-up quizzes will ONLY be in the form of essay questions.

### 2. Group Project (30%)

- In a group of 5 students, select ONE specific psychological disorder (it must be different from the ones listed in the teaching schedule) and complete the following TWO tasks:
  - i. Oral presentation – Illustration (20%)
    - Describe the diagnostic criteria of the disorder
    - Provide a role-play of the disorder
  - ii. PPT slides – Conceptualization (10%)
    - Identify the possible etiology or risk factors of the selected disorder
    - Suggest the major treatment approaches

- Submit your group list to Canvas by **Feb 19**. For students who are not in a group after **Feb 19**, we will assign a group for you.
- At least 2 representatives from each group should discuss with me your presentation in the consultation session on **Apr 24 and 26**.

### 3. Individual Assignment (20%)

- Within TWO pages of an A4 paper, each student has to submit a factsheet describing the major symptoms and current treatment(s) for the selected disorder of their group project. Select one specific treatment and include the evaluation of its effectiveness and limitations.

### Academic Integrity

You should observe the University's policies regarding academic integrity

(<https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/regulations-student-conduct-and-academic-integrity>). Academic dishonesty such as plagiarism and cheating would result in a reduction of scores or even a failing grade in the course. 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 honesty.

### Course Communication Platform

All lecture materials and announcements will be posted on CANVAS. Be sure to check CANVAS frequently 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 discussions 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** – For any group assignment, the group leader will do the 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.

## Teaching Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Textbook Chapter
1	Jan 31	Psychopathology and Life	1
2	Feb 7	Perspectives on Psychopathology	2
	Feb 9		
3	Feb 14	Diagnosis and Study of Psychological Disorders	3
	Feb 16		
4	Feb 21	Anxiety Disorders	5
	Feb 23		
5	Feb 28	Obsessive-Compulsive and related Disorders Trauma and Stressor-related Disorders	
	Mar 1		
6	Mar 6	Depressive & Bipolar Disorders	
	Mar 8		
7	<b>Mar 13</b>	<b>Quiz 1 (Week 1 to 4)</b>	
	<i>Mar 15</i>	<i>Guest Sharing on Gender Dysphoria</i>	
8	<i>Mar 20</i>	<i>Writing Workshop</i>	
	<i>Mar 22</i>	<i>Group Project Consultation</i>	
9	Mar 27	Depressive & Bipolar Disorders (con't)	7
	<i>Mar 29</i>	<i>Midterm Break</i>	
9	<i>Apr 3</i>		
	<i>Apr 5</i>		
10	Apr 10	Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders	12
	Apr 12		
11	Apr 17	Eating Disorders	8
	Apr 19		
12	<i>Apr 24</i>	<i>Group Project Presentation</i>	
	<i>Apr 26</i>		
13	<i>May 1</i>	<i>Labor Day</i>	
	May 3	Revision	
14	<b>May 8</b>	<b>Quiz 2 (Week 5 to 11)</b>	
	<i>May 10</i>	<i>Submission of Individual Assignment</i>	

### Important Dates

Date	Submission
Feb 19	Group List on Canvas
Apr 22	Group Project PPT
Apr 29	Peer Evaluation