

SOSC1960-L1 Introduction to Psychology (3 credits)
Spring 2025
Course Outline

Course description

This course examines human thinking and behavior processes from a psychological perspective and illustrates the relevance of psychological insights to the betterment of society. It is designed to help students acquire a basic understanding of psychology as a scientific discipline and prepare them for more advanced psychology courses in the future.

Intended learning outcomes (ILOs)

On successful completion of the course, you will be able to

- (1) recognize some fundamental scientific concepts about human mind and behavior;
- (2) analyze human performance and well-being in various societal settings with reference to these concepts;
- (3) explain how scientific research on human mind and behavior is conducted.

Teaching team

Instructor: Kevin Tam, kevintam@ust.hk

TA: Vivien Pong, vivienpong@ust.hk; Gewen Chen, gchenbr@connect.ust.hk

* Emails will be responded to on working days only. When contacting us by email, always prefix the subject line of your message with the course code (e.g., "SOSC1960 | exam"). Use your university email account only. Tell us who you are in the email; emails with no identity revealed will not be responded to. Do NOT send messages via Canvas.

Learning activities

- * Detailed information regarding the assessed activities can be found in separate documents.
- * Assessment will be made using criterion-referencing; scores and grades will NOT be assigned on a curve.

1. *Lectures*. As the foundation of your learning in this course, the lectures introduce psychology through various activities. (ILOs #1 to 3)
 - * Lectures will NOT be recorded.
2. *Participation (10%)*. Active participation in the lectures helps you and your peers learn more effectively. Each lecture includes some learning activities, for which your participation is expected. For a random selection of 5 lectures (you won't know which ones in advance), you will be asked to complete some tasks and submit your output; depending on its quality, each submission will contribute either 0% or 2% to your course grade. (ILOs #1 to #3)
3. *Required and optional readings*. The required readings complement the lectures and will be covered in the exams. The optional readings are recommendations for students who want to further explore a topic of interest. (ILOs #1 to 3)
 - * Please refer to the class calendar below for the readings list. The readings can be found on the Noba Project platform (<https://nobaproject.com>) or in the "Optional Readings" folder on Canvas.
4. *Investigative project (15%)*. The project will be centered around a specific problem about human mind and behavior. You will learn how to systematically search scientific literature for relevant materials, critically read and evaluate scientific evidence, and apply what you have learned to develop recommendations related to the problem. Stepwise learning support will be provided in the process. That is, the project will be broken down into manageable steps (literature search, reading and argumentation, writing). For each step, you will receive guidance through a workshop, and your understanding will be

assessed. This project is aimed to help you develop skills that will prove valuable for your continued and lifelong learning of psychology. (ILOs #1 to #3)

* Workshop dates: 20 Feb (Workshop 1); 20 Mar (Workshop 2)

* Submission deadlines: 17:00, 6 Mar (Interim Report), 3 Apr (Final report)

5. *Exams (35% + 35%)*. The two exams assess your basic understanding of course materials with multiple-choice questions. They cover all materials discussed in the lectures and the required readings. Exam 1 covers Modules 1 and 2, and Exam 2 covers Modules 3 and 4. (ILOs #1 to #3)

* Exam 1: 10:30 – 11:50, 18 Mar (tentative), venue to be announced

* Exam 2: date, time, venue to be announced by the university; please refrain from scheduling any trips, job interviews, or other activities until the schedule for the exam is known.

6. *Learning reflection (5%)*. At the end of the course, you will be guided to reflect on how your learning experience has transformed your knowledge and yourself as a person. (ILOs #1 and #2)

* Submission deadline: 17:00, 12 May

Communication and feedback

Scores and comments for assessed activities will be communicated via Canvas within two to four weeks of submission. Feedback will include strengths and areas for improvement. Students who have further questions about the feedback should consult the TAs within five working days after the feedback is received.

Final grade descriptors

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration
A	Excellent Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to adequately understand course materials fails to fulfil all course requirements shows minimal motivation to learn and apply materials learned

Policies

1. *Learning attitude.* Your active participation not only helps you and your peers learn more but also enables us to teach better. Think about what you want to learn and how you are going to learn it. 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.* 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.
3. *Lecture slides.* The lecture slides will be available on Canvas before each lecture. Note that some contents (mainly examples and activities) might be removed from the shared version. You are encouraged to take your own notes and generate your own examples. Research has shown that personal notetaking and example generation improve learning and course performance.
4. *Submission policy.* We have a grace period policy that allows for submissions to be accepted up to 5 hours late without penalty. Penalties apply to submissions late for more than 5 hours.
5. *AI policy.* The use of generative AI to assist your own learning is permitted under the conditions that proper acknowledgement is provided, and the use does not replace your own work.
6. *Make-up exam.* Please refrain from scheduling any flights, job interviews, or other activities on the exam dates, as no make-up exam will be arranged in these cases. A make-up exam will only be arranged for medical reasons. If you have to miss an exam due to an acute medical situation, you must contact us within 3 days after the exam and present medical proof; otherwise, your entitlement will be forfeited. The make-up exam will consist of essay questions only.

Class calendar

- * Subject to minor changes
- * Meeting time and venue: 10:30 – 11:50, every Tuesday and Thursday, Room 4620
- * Required readings highlighted in red, optional readings in black

Introduction: Why and how psychologists study human mind and behavior

4 Feb: Overview

- American Psychological Association, APA Task Force on Climate Change. (2022). *Addressing the Climate Crisis: An Action Plan for Psychologists, Report of the APA Task Force on Climate Change*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/science/about/publications/climate-crisis-action-plan.pdf>
- Baker, D. B. & Sperry, H. (2023). History of psychology. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/j8xkgcz5>

6 Feb: Research method

- Rafaeli, A., Ashtar, S., & Altman, D. (2019). Digital traces: New data, resources, and tools for psychological science research. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(6), 560-566.
- Scollon, C. N. (2023). Research designs. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/acxb2thy>

Module 1: How we experience the world

11 Feb: Sensation and perception

- Lachs, L. (2023). Multi-modal perception. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/cezw4qyn>
- Privitera, A. J. (2023). Sensation and perception. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/xgk3ajhy>

13 Feb: Circadian rhythm and sleep

- Finkel, M. (2018, August). Want to fall asleep? Read this story. *National Geographic*, 40-77.
- Foster, R. (2013, June). Why do we sleep? Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/russell_foster_why_do_we_sleep

18 Feb: Consciousness

- Biswas-Diener, R. & Teeny, J. (2023). States of consciousness. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/xj2cbhek>
- Friedrich, F. (2023). Attention. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/uv9x8df5>
- Martinez-Conde, S., & Macknik, S. L. (2008, December). Magic and the brain. *Scientific American*, 72-79

20 Feb: Workshop 1

25 Feb: Emotions

- Hwang, H. & Matsumoto, D. (2023). Functions of emotions. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/w64szjxu>
- Tsai, J. (2023). Culture and emotion. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/gfqmxytw>

27 Feb: Learning

- Bouton, M. E. (2023). Conditioning and learning. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/ajxhcqdr>

Module 2: How we think

4 Mar: Memory

- Dudukovic, N. & Kuhl, B. (2023). Forgetting and amnesia. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/m38qbftg>
- Loftus, E. (2013, June). How reliable is your memory? Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_loftus_the_fiction_of_memory
- McDermott, K. B. & Roediger, H. L. (2023). Memory (encoding, storage, retrieval). In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/bdc4uger>

6 Mar: Rationality

- Bazerman, M. H. (2023). Judgment and decision making. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/9xjyvc3a>
- Kahneman, D. (2003). A perspective on judgment and choice: Mapping bounded rationality. *American Psychologist*, 58, 697-720.
- Thorgeirsson, T., & Kawachi, I. (2013). Behavioral economics: Merging psychology and economics for lifestyle interventions. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 44, 185-189.

11 Mar: Intelligence

- Biswas-Diener, R. (2023). Intelligence. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/ncb2h79v>
- Brackett, M., Delaney, S., & Salovey, P. (2023). Emotional intelligence. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/xzvpfun7>
- Woolley, A. W., Aggarwal, I., & Malone, T. W. (2015). Collective intelligence and group performance. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24(6), 420-424.

13 Mar: Consultation for Exam 1

18 Mar: Exam 1 (tentative, venue to be announced)

20 Mar: Workshop 2

Module 3: Who we are and how we behave

25 Mar: Motivation

- Bhatia, S. & Loewenstein, G. (2023). Drive states. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/pjwkbt5h>
- Baumeister, R. F., Brewer, L. E., Tice, D. M., & Twenge, J. M. (2007). Thwarting the need to belong: Understanding the interpersonal and inner effects of social exclusion. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 1, 506-520.

27 Mar: Personality

- Diener, E. & Lucas, R. E. (2023). Personality traits. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/96u8ecgw>
- Watson, D. (2023). Personality assessment. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/eac2pyv7>

1 Apr: mid-term break

3 Apr: mid-term break

8 Apr: Development

- Siegler, R. (2023). Cognitive development in childhood. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/8uv4fn9h>
- Thompson, R. (2023). Social and personality development in childhood. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/gdqm6zvc>

10 Apr: Parental influence

- Fraley, R. C. (2023). Attachment through the life course. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/s3kj9ufv>
- Diener, M. L. (2023). The developing parent. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/hsv75d46>

15 Apr: Social influence

- Burger, J. M. (2023). Conformity and obedience. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/hkcray8fs>
- Cialdini, R. B. (2006). *Influence: The psychology of persuasion*. New York: Collins.
- Forsyth, D. R. (2024). The psychology of groups. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/trfxbkhhm>

Module 4: Our health and wellbeing

17 Apr: Abnormality

- Farreras, I. G. (2023). History of mental illness. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/65w3s7ex>
- Lilienfeld, S. O., & Arkowitz, H. (2009, November/December). Foreign afflictions. *Scientific American Mind*, 68-69.

22 Apr: Psychological disorders

- DSM-5: <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources>
- ICD: <https://icd.who.int/en>
- MSD manuals: <https://www.msmanuals.com/professional/psychiatric-disorders>

24 Apr: Treatment and therapy

- Boettcher, H., Hofmann, S. G., & Wu, Q. J. (2023). Therapeutic orientations. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/fjtnpwsk>
- Barron, S. (2023). Psychopharmacology. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/umx6f2t8>
- Kazdin, A. E. (2023). Interventions in everyday life to improve mental health and reduce symptoms of psychiatric disorders. *American Psychologist*.

29 Apr : Mind and body

- Hooker, E. & Pressman, S. (2023). The healthy life. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/4tm85z2x>
- Jones, E. J., Ayling, K., Wiley, C. R., Geraghty, A. W., Greer, A. L., Holt-Lunstad, J., ... & Vedhara, K. (2023). Psychology Meets Biology in COVID-19: What We Know and Why It Matters for Public Health. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 10(1), 33-40.

1 May: Labor Day

6 May: Happiness

- Diener, E. (2023). Happiness: The science of subjective well-being. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/qnw7g32t>
- Emmons, R. A. (2023). Positive psychology. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/9z4jf5xe>

8 May: Consultation (for Exam 2)

May: Exam 2 (date, time, and venue to be announced by the university)

< End of Course Outline >