

Lectures will not be recorded.

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology  
SOSC1960-L2 Introduction to Psychology (3 credits)

Spring 2025

Course Syllabus

**The Teaching Team**

**Instructor**

Name: Dr. Chen CHENG  
Office: Rm 2385  
Email: [chencheng@ust.hk](mailto:chencheng@ust.hk)  
Consultation: By appointment

**Teaching Assistant**

Names: Ms. Kayee WONG ([egkayee@ust.hk](mailto:egkayee@ust.hk))  
Ms. Ye SONG ([ysongcg@connect.ust.hk](mailto:ysongcg@connect.ust.hk))  
Consultation: By appointment

**Lecture Time:** Wed, Fri 13:30-14:50 pm (HKT)  
**Venue:** Rm 2502, near lift 25-26

\*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. Class Participation (10% + 2 % compensation bonus)**

In-class participation is evaluated based on two ways:

- Throughout the semester, there will be attendance taking. The attendance will be conducted through a variety of in-class activities including but not limited to pop-up mini-quizzes and group discussions. Each attendance counts for 1% of your final score, which accumulated to 10% in total.
- Additionally, you can earn up to 2 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 complete a psychological research study or read research articles and write reflections on them. Details will be announced in due course.

## 3. Tutorial Reflection (10%)

- Two tutorials will be held on **Feb 21** and **May 2**. There will be brief discussions about some topics related to psychology. You are required to reflect on the discussions, complete some activities and submit a short reflection in the tutorials.
- Your reflection will be graded on a pass or fail (e.g., errors in submission, incomplete submission) basis.

## 4. 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. 4.

## 5. Quiz 1 (25%)

- Quiz 1 will be administered to test your understanding of course materials. The quiz will include multiple-choice questions only and non-cumulative (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 in the course contents.
- The quiz is scheduled on **March 14** and covers lectures from **Week 1 to 5**.
- Please 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.

## 6. Quiz 2 (25%)

- Quiz 2 will be administered to test your understanding of course materials. The quiz will include multiple-choice questions only and non-cumulative (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 quiz. These readings are useful for a deeper understanding in the course contents.
- The final quiz is scheduled on **May 9** and covers lectures from **Week 7 to 13**.
- Please 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 quiz. 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	TBD
Research Experience	5%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	TBD
Tutorial Reflection	10%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	TBD
Integrative Essay	25%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Part 1 & Part 2: March 18; Part 3: May 6
Quiz 1	25%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	March 14
Quiz 2	25%	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	May 9

### Final Grade Descriptors:

A	Excellent Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates comprehensive grasp of course materials</li> <li>exhibits a high capacity for scholarship, going beyond requirements</li> <li>shows originality in works submitted</li> <li>shows an extraordinary level of motivation to learn</li> <li>displays eagerness to apply materials learned</li> </ul>
B	Good Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates good understanding of course materials</li> <li>exhibits a good capacity for scholarship within course requirements</li> <li>shows a high level of motivation to learn</li> <li>displays interest to apply materials learned</li> </ul>
C	Satisfactory Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates adequate understanding of course materials</li> <li>exhibits some ability to think critically and analytically</li> <li>fulfils all course requirements satisfactorily</li> <li>displays moderate motivation to learn and apply materials learned</li> </ul>
D	Marginal Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates poor understanding of course materials</li> <li>fails to think critically and analytically</li> <li>barely fulfils all course requirements</li> <li>displays weak motivation to learn and apply materials learned</li> </ul>
F	Fail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fails to adequately understand course materials</li> <li>fails to fulfil all course requirements</li> <li>shows minimal motivation to learn and apply materials learned</li> </ul>

### 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)**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Chapters from Reading</b>
1	Feb 5	Introduction	1
	Feb 7		
2	Feb 12	Research Methods in Psychology	2-3
	Feb 14		
3	Feb 19	<i>Writing Workshop I</i>	
	Feb 21	[Tutorial 1] Sensation and Perception	
4	Feb 26	Psychology of Learning	4
	Feb 28		
5	Mar 5	Human Memory	5
	Mar 7		
6	Mar 12	Consultation session	
	Mar 14	<b>Quiz 1</b>	
7	Mar 19	Sleep and Biological Rhythms	10
	Mar 21		
8	Mar 26	Human Development	15-16
	Mar 28		
9	Apr 2	No class	
	Apr 4		
10	Apr 9	<i>Writing Workshop II</i>	
	Apr 11	Personality	18-20
11	Apr 16	Social and Collective Behaviors: Part 1	21-23
	Apr 18	No class	
12	Apr 23	Social and Collective Behaviors: Part 2	24-25
	Apr 25	Mental Health I: Stress	26
13	Apr 30	Mental Health II: Psychological Issues and Treatments	29, 31-33
	May 2	[Tutorial 2] Personality test	
14	May 7	Consultation session	
	May 9	<b>Quiz 2</b>	

**Deadlines for Submission**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task</b>
Feb 21	Tutorial reflection 1
Mar 18	Integrative Essay – Part 1 & Part 2
May 2	Tutorial reflection 2
May 6	Integrative Essay – Part 3