

SOSC1960-L1 Discovering Mind and Behavior
Fall 2021
Course Outline

Aim

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 the society.

Intended learning outcomes

On completion of this course, you are expected to be able to (i) recognize some fundamental scientific concepts about human mind and behavior; (ii) analyze human performance and well-being in various social settings with reference to these concepts; and (iii) explain how scientific research on human mind and behavior is conducted.

Highlights

1. *4 main themes:* With four main themes, this course offers a broad analysis of the scientific concepts and empirical evidence behind human mind and behavior. Each lecture is structured around one keyword.
2. *We don't just talk:* In lectures we teach and learn through all sorts of activities. Watch videos, write stories, draw figures, play games—you name it! In terms of readings, we have websites, magazine articles, scientific reports, TED talks, and so on.
3. *Understanding research:* There are plenty of opportunities for you to learn how research studies about human mind and behavior are conducted.

Teaching team

Kevin Tam, kevintam@ust.hk; Vivien Pong, vivienpong@ust.hk

Office hour: by appointment

Communication platform

<http://canvas.ust.hk>

Learning activities

1. *Lectures.* The lectures introduce the science of human mind and behavior through a variety of activities. They form the foundation of your learning in this course. Though lecture attendance is not compulsory, research has shown that students attending more lectures generally have better course performance. Think twice before you skip a lecture. **The lectures will be delivered with the real-time online mode. They will NOT be recorded.**
 2. *Readings.* For each lecture a reading list is provided. You will find some recommended readings (they are highly relevant to the lecture discussion) and some further readings (for those who want further exploration). The readings complement the lectures by providing deeper analyses and broader coverage. If you like to read, you will find a lot of fun in them.
 3. *Research experience (5% x 2).* The science of human mind and behavior advances through empirical research. There are opportunities for you to observe how such research is conducted. You will complete two tasks:
 - Research study: Complete a real research study online as a participant and learn firsthand how it is conducted. Write a thought piece (within 100 to 300 words) about your experience.
 - Research exercise: Watch a video about a research study. Write a thought piece (within 100 to 300 words) about it.Your writings will be graded on a pass/fail basis (for failed cases, you will receive comments and have a chance to rewrite and resubmit with a one-point deduction). **Submission deadline: 5:00 pm, 30 September.**
 4. *Essay (20%).* The essay requires that you analyze some concepts and apply them to the real world. A workshop on 27 September will give you some pointers on how to write a good essay. **Submission deadline: 5:00 pm, 1 November.**
 5. *Reflective writings (10% x 2).* You will receive 4 questions that guide you to reflect on your learning. Select the 2 questions that interest you most. For each, write up your reflection (within 300 to 500 words each); try to recognize and clarify the connections between your pre-existing knowledge and life experiences and what you have just learnt. Your reflection will be graded on a pass/fail basis (for failed cases, you will receive comments and have a chance to rewrite and resubmit with a two-point deduction). **Submission deadlines: 5:00 pm, 6 October (Q1), 27 October (Q2), 17 November (Q3), 1 December (Q4).**
 6. *Quizzes (60%).* The two quizzes assess your conceptual understanding. Materials discussed in the lectures will be tested. There will be forced-choice questions. **Both quizzes will be conducted online.**
- (Detailed guidelines regarding these learning activities will be released in due course.)

Schedule (subject to minor changes)

12:00 – 13:20, Monday and Wednesday, Zoom (access via Canvas)

Date	Lecture Contents
<i>Introduction: Why and how scientists study human mind and behavior</i>	
1 Sep	Overview: Through understanding human mind and behavior, we can make a better world.
6 Sep	Scientific method: Scientists use a variety of tools to study human mind and behavior.
<i>Theme 1: How we experience the world</i>	
8 Sep	Perception: What we see is not always what exists.
13 Sep	Circadian rhythm: A lot of things happen in our body and mind while we sleep.
15 Sep	Consciousness: Our experience of the world is governed by both the conscious and the unconscious.
20 Sep	Emotions: There are universality as well as cultural differences in our emotional experiences.
22 Sep	(holiday)
27 Sep	Essay Writing Workshop
29 Sep	Learning: It is possible to make wolves retreat from sheep and to train pigeons to play ping pong.
<i>Theme 2: How we solve problems</i>	
4 Oct	Memory: Forgetting and false memory can be traced back to how memory is formed.
6 Oct	Rationality: It is not always easy to make a rational decision, as we are bounded by capacity and motivation.
11 Oct	Intelligence: IQ scores are useful, but they fail to cover the many abilities that are important to success.
13 Oct	Quiz 1 Dry Run
18 Oct	Quiz 1
<i>Theme 3: Why we behave in the way we behave</i>	
20 Oct	Motivation: A number of needs, some basic and some higher-order, direct and energize our behavior.
25 Oct	Personality: Personality, when properly assessed, can predict a lot of things about a person.
27 Oct	Development: We are who we are because of what we were born with and what we experienced growing up.
1 Nov	Parental influence: Our parents shape who we are in both visible and invisible ways.
3 Nov	Social influence: Our behavior is often influenced by actions by other people.
<i>Theme 4: The dark and bright sides of our functioning</i>	
8 Nov	Abnormality: The boundary between what is normal and what is abnormal is fuzzy.
10 Nov	Psychological disorders: A better understanding of mental illness may reduce the stigma around it.
15 Nov	Psychotherapy: Therapists use a number of psychological techniques to treat psychological disorders.
17 Nov	Mind and body: A healthy mind boosts a healthy body.
22 Nov	Positive psychology: Happiness brings success, health and even longevity, but it has dark sides.
24 Nov	Consultation
29 Nov	Quiz 2

Suggested references (on Library Course Reserve)

- Lilienfeld, S. O. et al. (2014). *Psychology: From inquiry to understanding*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Myers, D. G. (2014). *Psychology* (10th ed.). New York, NY: Worth.

Points to note

1. *Academic integrity*. We will investigate every suspect case of cheating or plagiarism. We will heavily penalize confirmed cases and report them to the Head of the Division of Social Science for further review or action. Read <http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/index.html>. Make sure you understand what constitute academic honesty.
2. *Penalties*. Penalties apply to assignments that are submitted late or over the word limit. Find details in the respective guidelines.
3. *Lecture slides*. A condensed version of the lecture slides will be available on Canvas before each lecture. Note that some contents (mainly examples) will be removed from this version; this is to encourage you 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. *Learning attitude*. Be active in class. Your participation not only helps you learn more but also enables us to teach better! Think about what you want to learn and how you are going to learn them. Use grades, scores, and comments from us to understand how much and how well you have learned and how you can improve.