

SOSC1960 Discovering Mind and Behavior
Spring 2022
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 you will learn through various activities. Watching videos, writing stories, drawing, games, and so forth.
3. *Understanding research:* There are a lot of opportunities for you to learn how research studies about human mind and behavior are conducted.
4. *Support for your learning:* You will receive plenty of learning support from the teaching team through guidelines, workshops, consultation sessions, etc.

Teaching team

Kevin Tam, kevintam@ust.hk; Vivien Pong, vivienpong@ust.hk; Kayee Wong, egkayee@ust.hk
Emails will be responded to during working days 10 am to 6 pm Hong Kong Time.

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. Included are not only scientific publications but also magazine articles, TED talks, websites and so forth. If you like to read, you will find a lot of fun in them.
3. *Research experience (10%).* The science of human mind and behavior advances through empirical research. There are many opportunities for you to observe how such research is conducted. You can choose to complete either of the following:
 - Complete a real research study online as a participant and learn firsthand how it is conducted. Write a thought piece (within 200 to 300 words) about your experience.
 - Watch a video about a research study. Write a thought piece (within 200 to 300 words) about it.Your writing 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 deadline: 12 noon, 19 Mar.
4. *Essay (30%).* The essay is designed to encourage you to analyze some concepts and apply them to the real world. A workshop will give you some pointers on how to write a good essay. *Submission deadline: 12 noon, 9 Apr.
5. *Reflective writings (5% x 2).* For each half of the course, you will receive two questions that guide you to reflect on your learning. Select the question that interest you most and write up your reflection (within 300 to 500 words each). In your writing, 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 one-point deduction). A workshop will give you some useful pointers. *Submission deadlines: 12:00 noon, 2 Apr (first submission); 12:00 noon, 14 May (second submission)
6. *Exam (50%).* The exam assesses your conceptual understanding. Materials discussed in the lectures will be tested. There will be multiple-choice questions only. *To be held during the examination period.
(Detailed guidelines regarding these learning activities will be released in due course.)

Schedule (subject to minor changes)

09:00 – 10:20, Tuesday and Thursday, Zoom (access via Canvas)

Date	Lecture Contents
<i>Introduction: Why and how scientists study human mind and behavior</i>	
8 Feb	Overview: Through understanding human mind and behavior, we can make a better world.
10 Feb	Scientific method: Scientists use a variety of tools to study human mind and behavior.
<i>Theme 1: How we experience the world</i>	
15 Feb	Perception: What we see is not always what exists.
17 Feb	Circadian rhythm: A lot of things happen in our body and mind while we sleep.
22 Feb	Consciousness: Our experience of the world is governed by both the conscious and the unconscious.
24 Feb	Emotions: There are universality as well as cultural differences in our emotional experiences.
1 Mar	Learning: It is possible to make wolves retreat from sheep and to train pigeons to play ping pong.
3 Mar	Writing Workshop
<i>Theme 2: How we solve problems</i>	
8 Mar	Memory: Forgetting and false memory can be traced back to how memory is formed.
10 Mar	Rationality: It is not always easy to make a rational decision, as we are bounded by capacity and motivation.
15 Mar	Intelligence: IQ scores are useful, but they fail to cover the many abilities that are important to success.
17 Mar	Writing Workshop
22 Mar	Consultation
<i>Theme 3: Why we behave in the way we behave</i>	
24 Mar	Motivation: A number of needs, some basic and some higher-order, direct and energize our behavior.
29 Mar	Personality: Personality, when properly assessed, can predict a lot of things about a person.
31 Mar	Development: We are who we are because of what we were born with and what we experienced growing up.
5 Apr	(holiday)
7 Apr	Parental influence: Our parents shape who we are in both visible and invisible ways.
12 Apr	Social influence: Our behavior is often influenced by actions by other people.
<i>Theme 4: The dark and bright sides of our functioning</i>	
14 Apr	(holiday)
19 Apr	Abnormality: The boundary between what is normal and what is abnormal is fuzzy.
21 Apr	Psychological disorders: A better understanding of mental illness may reduce the stigma around it.
26 Apr	Psychotherapy: Therapists use a number of psychological techniques to treat psychological disorders.
28 Apr	Mind and body: A healthy mind boosts a healthy body.
3 May	Positive psychology: What makes us happy?
5 May	Consultation
10 May	(no lecture)

Suggested reference

- Lilienfeld, S. O. et al. (2015). *Psychology: From inquiry to understanding*. Boston, MA: Pearson. (accessible via library)

Points to note

1. *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.
2. *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.
3. *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.
4. *Submission policy*. There is a grace-period policy: Submissions late for 5 hours or less will be accepted and NOT penalized. Penalties apply to submissions late for more than 5 hours.
5. *Make-up exam*. There will be NO make-up exam in this course; the only exception is for absentees with a medical reason (a testimony by a medical doctor must be presented). The make-up exam will consist of essay questions and an oral session.