

City University of Hong Kong

**Information on a Course
offered by Department of Applied Social Sciences
with effect from Summer 2014**

Part I

Course Title:	Social Sciences Theories for Social Work
Course Code:	SS5115
Course Duration:	Pre-semester Workshops
No. of Credit Units:	0
Level:	P5
Medium of Instruction:	English
Medium of Assessment:	English
Prerequisites: (Course Code and Title):	Nil
Precursors: (Course Code and Title):	Nil
Equivalent Courses: (Course Code and Title):	Nil
Exclusive Courses: (Course Code and Title):	Nil

Part II

1. Course Aims

This course aims to introduce the foundational knowledge in social sciences for social work. Selected social sciences perspectives such as relational theory, attachment theory, theories of psychosocial development, social psychological theories, theories of abnormal psychological development, conflict theory, structural theories, feminist perspective, and post-modern perspectives will be taught and used for analysing social problems such as adolescent drug abuse, family violence, mental illness; and human predicaments such as death and dying, traumas, aggression and violence. Similarities and differences of selected perspectives will be highlighted, and the importance of a multi-dimensional understanding of and strategies in dealing with social problems and human predicaments will also be stressed.

This is a supplementary course and is designed to help students who have little to no knowledge of social sciences to get familiarized with fundamental theories and concepts in selected disciplines in social sciences. The course is run in an intensive mode and is to be completed within the first four weeks of the semester, including weekends.

Students who (1) are non-social sciences graduates, or (2) have taken either psychology or sociology but not the other, are required to complete this course. Students who have knowledge of basic psychology (i.e. Sessions 3-6) or sociology (Sessions 7-9) would only need to take the relevant sessions that they have not taken in their previous studies.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting
1.	Identify the theoretical underpinnings of major social science perspectives for understanding social problems and human predicaments;	25%
2.	Apply the theories to critically analysing social problems and human predicaments;	25%
3.	Examine critically the strengths and weaknesses of different social science theories for the understanding of social problems and human predicaments; and	25%
4	Appreciate the multi-dimensional nature of understanding and solving social problems and human predicaments.	25%

3. Teaching and learning Activities (TLAs)

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No.	TLA1	TLA2	TLA3	TLA4	Hours/ Course
CILO 1	√	√	√	√	
CILO 2	√	√	√	√	
CILO 3	√	√	√	√	
CILO 4	√	√	√	√	

TLA1: Lecture

Lectures are used to introduce the concepts of respective social science theories and perspectives and its application to social situations and problems. Evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of respective social science theories and perspectives will be carried out in the lectures.

TLA2: Video Illustration

In order to stimulate students' understanding and application of learnt social science theories and perspectives to real-life situations and human predicaments, audio visual materials will be used to reach the said effects, in which documentaries, television series and related case and news reports are adopted to enhance students' learning.

TLA3: Group Discussion

Students will be divided into groups in the second part of the lecture to discuss the learnt social science theories and perspectives in that lecture through related topics and questions provided, which aims to enhance their usage and application of the core elements of the social science theories and perspectives learnt.

TLA4: Student Presentation

Student presentations allow students to form groups to present a topic that will have them apply a chosen theor(ies) to a specific social problem and issue as a theoretical framework to interpret that social problem and issue and act as the conceptual underpinnings for how to solve the social problem and issue in the chosen topic.

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No.	Type of Assessment Tasks/ Activities	Weighting	Remarks
CILO 1-4	Class Participation	10%	
CILO 1-4	Group Presentation	20%	
CILO 1-4	Individual Term Paper	70%	

AT1: Class participation (10%)

Although this is a non-credit bearing as well as pass and fail course, for best enhancing students' sense in social sciences in order to better prepare their future learning in the social work program and practices after graduation, students are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the activities and discussion of the course.

AT2: Group Presentation (20%)

In the final session (session 10), students are required to form a 4/5-person learning group and select at least one theory/ perspective, or more than one for comparative purpose, to analyze a social problem/ issue/ phenomenon. Students should give background and significance of the selected social problem/ issue/ phenomenon, how the theory(ies)/ perspective(s) are related to it, and also need to elucidate the selected topic theoretically in terms of its etiology, causes, and contents, as well as consequences and solutions if applicable. Example social problems/ issues/ phenomena include individual-level ones, e.g. mental and behavioral problems, homelessness, alcohol and drugs use, sex orientation; family-level ones, e.g. divorce, single-parent family, family violence, the working poor; and societal-level ones, e.g. educational system, social discrimination and inequality, as well as cross-level ones, e.g. racism and problems of minority/ ethnicity, crime and delinquency. In fact, the above-mentioned categorization is just a frame of reference, in reality a social problem/ issue/ phenomenon is far more from clear-cut, so as you are encouraged to use a multi-dimensional approach to analyze a selected social problem/ issue/ phenomenon in a comparative sense. Each group should have 20 minutes to do their presentation, and after the presentation there is a 10-minute Q & A time for the audience students to raise their questions for the presented contents. The presentation contents should be used as the base for the individual term paper.

AT3: Individual term paper (70%)

At the end of the course, students need to write and submit a term paper in around 1500 words. As mentioned beforehand, each student should select a social problem/ issue/ phenomenon as the discussion in the paper, and apply learned theory(ies)/ perspective(s) to analyze it adequately and theoretically, or even comparatively, which means students need to employ the social science theory(ies)/ perspective(s) to expound the nature and contents of the selected problem/ issue/ phenomenon. The student should give rationale why he/ she selects this topic, how it is related to social work profession, and what is the background and nature about this social problem/ issue/ phenomenon, as well as what are the relationships between the selected topic and relevant theory(ies)/ perspective(s). In addition, solutions and recommendations for tackling the problem/ issue/ phenomenon are encouraged.

5. Grading of Student Achievement:

Since this is a non-credit bearing course, student papers will only be given a pass/fail grade. Students will need to obtain a pass in the course within the first semester of their study.

Pass / Fail	Grading Criteria
Pass	Students can: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Join all or the relevant sessions with active participation2. Master the social sciences theories and be able to apply to analyze a social problem or issue3. Write the term paper with critical and analytical thinking4. Do proper referencing
Fail	Students perform poorly by being: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Absence from classes2. Passive and unsatisfactory involvement in classes3. Unable to show sufficient mastery of knowledge of social sciences theories4. Unable to show evidence of critical and analytical thinking in writing up the term paper5. Unable to do proper referencing

Part III

1. Keyword Syllabus

	Topics
Session 1	Social Sciences theories (I): The nature of social sciences and its reasoning and lens on understanding of social phenomenon/ problems; Systems theory
Session 2	Social Sciences theories (II): Family dynamics and functions, Problems in contemporary families, and its theories and perspectives
Session 3	Psychological theories (I & II): What is psychology? Psychology as science; Basic psychological perspectives: Psychoanalytic/ psychodynamic and humanistic approaches; behavioural and cognitive approaches, including learning, memory, language and thought, and cognitive development
Session 4	Psychological theories (III): Theories/ perspectives related to social psychology: socialization, group formation and conflicts, aggression and violence, prejudice
Session 5	Psychological theories (IV): Theories/ perspectives related to abnormal psychology: anxiety disorders, mood disorders, substance-related disorders, childhood disorders
Session 6	Applying psychological theories/ perspectives to social problems and human predicaments
Session 7	Sociological theories (I): What is sociology? Structural-functionalism approach and symbolic interactionism
Session 8	Sociological theories (II): Conflict Theory; Social constructionism
Session 9	Sociological theories (III): Multi-culture and diversity; social class and social stratification
Session 10	Towards a multi-dimensional perspective in understanding social problems and human predicaments

2. Recommended Readings

Readings for session 1

- Dolgon, C., & Baker, C. (2011). *Social problems: A service learning approach*. Thousand Oaks CA.: Sage. Chapter 1: Do we make the world or does the world makes us? Concepts and theories.
- Dale, O. et al. (2009). *Human behavior and the social environment: Social systems theory*. Boston: Pearson Education. Chapter 3: Social systems theory: General features.
- Perry, J. A., & Perry, E. K. (2012). *Contemporary society: An introduction to social science*. Boston: Pearson Education. Chapter 1: Through the lens of science.

Readings for session 2

- Dale, O. et al. (2009). *Human behavior and the social environment: Social systems theory*. Boston: Pearson Education. Chapter 9: The family as a system of roles.
- Saxbe D. E. et al. (2013). Understanding conflicts in families: Theoretical frameworks and future directions. In Mark A. Fine and Frank D. Fincham (Eds), *Handbook of family theories: A content-based approach* (pp. 169-189, chapter 10). New York: Routledge.
- Heyman R. E. et al. (2013). Theories of intimate partner violence. In Mark A. Fine and Frank D. Fincham (Eds), *Handbook of family theories: A content-based approach* (pp. 190-207, chapter 11). New York: Routledge.
- Vecchio T. D. et al. (2013). Theories of child abuse. In Mark A. Fine and Frank D. Fincham (Eds), *Handbook of family theories: A content-based approach* (pp. 208-227, chapter 12). New York: Routledge.
- Fiese B. H., & Hammons, A. (2013). Theories of family health: An integrative perspective and look towards the future. In Mark A. Fine and Frank D. Fincham (Eds), *Handbook of family theories: A content-based approach* (pp. 398-416, chapter 22). New York: Routledge.

Readings for session 3

- Comer R. et al. (2013). *Psychology*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley. Chapter 1: Psychology: Yesterday and Today; Chapter 2: Psychology as a science.
- Glassman W. E. & Hadad M (2009). *Approaches to psychology*. London: McGraw-Hill. Chapter 3: The behaviorist approach; Chapter 4: The cognitive approach; Chapter 5: The psychodynamic Approach; and Chapter 6: The humanistic approach.
- Greene, R. R. (1998). *Human behavior theory and social work practice*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter. Chapter 3: Classical psychoanalytical thought; Chapter 6:

Cognitive theory for social work practice.

Readings for session 4

Michener, H. A. et al. (2004). *Social psychology*. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth. Chapter 3: Socialization; Chapter 6: Attitudes; Chapter 13: Group cohesion and conformity; Chapter 15: Intergroup conflict; Chapter 18: Deviant behavior and social reaction.

Crisp, R. J. et al. (2010). *Essential social psychology*. London: SAGE. Chapter 5: Group processes; Chapter 7: Prejudice; Chapter 8: Intergroup relations; Chapter 9: Aggression.

Readings for session 5

Barlow, D. H., & Durand, V. M. (2012). *Abnormal Psychology: An Integrative Approach*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Chapter 5: Anxiety disorders; Chapter 7: Mood disorders & suicide; Chapter 11: Substance-related and impulse-control disorders.

Oltmanns, T. F., & Emery R. E. (2012). *Abnormal psychology*. Boston : Pearson. Chapter 16: Psychological disorders of childhood.

Readings for session 7

Schaefer, R. T. (2010). *Sociology*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Chapter 1: Understanding sociology.

Ransome, P. R. (2010). *Social theory for beginners*: Bristol: Policy Press. Chapter 6: Talcott Parsons, Functionalism and the social system; Chapter 7: Social interactionism and the real lives of social actors.

Readings for session 8

Ransome, P. R. (2010). *Social theory for beginners*: Bristol: Policy Press. Chapter 4: Karl Marx, capitalism and revolution; chapter 11: feminist social theory; chapter 13: theories of modernity and postmodernity.

Wallace, R. A., & Wolf, A. (1995). *Contemporary sociological theory : continuing the classical tradition*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. Chapter 3: Conflict Theory.

Hamilton R. (2007). *Feminist theories*. In C. D. Bryant and D. L., Peck (Eds), *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook (Vol 2)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Jones, P., Bradbury, L., & Boutillier, S. L. (2011). *Introducing social theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity. Chapter 8: Postmodernity, Postmodernism and its Critics.

Readings for session 9

Sundar, P. & Ly M. (2013). Multiculturalism. In M. Gray, and S A. Webb (Eds), Social work theories and methods (chapter 10, pp. 126-136). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Lemert, C. (2001). Multiculturalism. In G. Ritzer, & B. Smart (Eds), Handbook of social theory (chapter 23, pp.297-307). London: SAGE.

Stolley K. S. (2005). The basics of sociology. Westport: Greenwood Press. Chapter 7: Stratification.

Kerbo, H. R. (2007). Social stratification. In C. D. Bryant, and D. L. Peck (Eds), 21st Century sociology: A reference handbook (vol. 1, chapter 22, pp. 228-236). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.