

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences
with effect from Semester A 2018/2019**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: Applying Psychology to Contemporary Issues

Course Code: SS5755

Course Duration: One semester

Credit Units: 3 credits

Level: P5

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

Prerequisites: MSSPSY Students : NIL
(Course Code and Title) Non-MSSPSY Students : SS2023 Basic Psychology I or its equivalent

Precursors: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Equivalent Courses: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Exclusive Courses: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course aims at sensitizing students to how human problems are determined by the environments in which they function as well as by their own personal attributes. By doing so, it is hoped that students will have a better understanding of psychology's role in responding to social problems and how psychology can contribute toward social progress.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	<i>analyze</i> the extent to which human sufferings are a product of individual deficiency as well as social malady;	60%	✓	✓	✓
2.	<i>compare and contrast</i> the roles played by psychologists when a problem is defined as existing within the individual or within a broader social context; and	10%	✓	✓	
3.	<i>compare and contrast</i> how psychology has responded to social issues or human suffering by working to change individuals versus by working to change their environments.	30%	✓	✓	✓
		100%			

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3				
Lectures	The lectures will explain common psychological approaches and techniques for dealing with human problems and will discuss how such approaches were developed within mainstream psychology. Such approaches will be contrasted with other approaches used or proposed by psychologists to deal with the social or environmental basis of human problems. Case examples will be used to illustrate both approaches, and to facilitate an in-depth analysis of how both approaches can be applied to ameliorate human problems. Small group discussions will also be used in lectures to facilitate such an analysis	✓	✓	✓				
Audiovisual aids	Whereas lectures will be primarily a didactic form of instruction, audiovisual aids will be used to illustrate both the complexity of the causes of human problems, and how different psychological approaches are applied to tackle them. These audiovisual aids will be important supplements to the lectures in order to show how abstract ideas are realized in actual life	✓		✓				

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3					
Continuous Assessment: 100%								
Term paper 1 (10%)	✓						10%	
Term paper 2 (50%)	✓						50%	
Quiz (40%)		✓	✓				40%	
Examination: 0% (duration: , if applicable)								
							100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Term Paper 1 – a case analysis (10%)	Successful identification of the key issues of the given case Innovative application in analysis the case in terms of relevant psychological theories	Sensitive location of a relevant article, clear explanation of methods and findings, and insightful application to the analysis of the child/adolescent.	Sensitive location of a relevant article, clear explanation of methods and findings, and descriptive application to the case of the child/adolescent.	Sensitive location of a relevant article, sketchy explanation of methods and findings, and “vague” application to the case of the child/adolescent.	Does not show sensitive search for appropriate references, or inappropriate application of findings to the analysis of the child/adolescent (i.e., findings cited have no relevance to the case of the child/adolescent).	Assignment not completed (i.e., components missing).
2. Term paper 2 – a review on a self-selected topic (50%)	Critical analysis and evaluation of etiological factors in both intrapsychic and environmental dimension Creative and integrative organization of the literature and evidence-based intervention and practices	These are papers which provide a well-organized, integrated review of the literature that speaks to the identified topic. The paper links empirical findings sensibly and creatively with an individual’s actual life experiences. A sensible and critical assessment of the literature should also be evident	These are papers which provide a good overview of the literature (both intrapsychic and environmental factors), but without much organization and integration to produce a coherent scientific story about an individual with the specified problem. There was some critical assessment of the literature but not enough “depth.”	These are papers which do not evidence going beyond the current learning materials and do not apply any theoretical model to analyze the selected topic. Writing is generally descriptive and summative. Evaluation of the literature is minimal, if existing.	These are papers which do not go beyond the current learning materials, and do not apply any theoretical model to analyze the selected topic. The ideas are not presented coherently. The writing is generally poor, though comprehensible with effort.	Fails to address the objectives of the assignment (eg, covering only the intrapsychic factors, and environmental factors are left out totally).

3. Quiz (40%)	Accuracy in applying psychological concepts and knowledge	Excellent command Of psychological knowledge with >75% of accuracy	Good command of psychological knowledge with accuracy between 60-74%	Adequate command of psychological knowledge with accuracy between 45-59%	Marginal command of mastery of psychological knowledge with accuracy between 40-44%	Fail to demonstrate a basic mastery of psychological knowledge at an accuracy level <40%
---------------	---	--	--	--	---	--

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Historical development of psychological services; orientations of psychological interventions; concept of mental illness and psychodiagnosis; overview of clinical assessment practices; overview of psychotherapy systems; social ecology; resilience; psychological programs to enhance individual development through modifying the environment; mutual assistance groups

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. <i>American psychologist</i> , 32, 513-531.
2.	Compas, B. E., & Gotlib, I. H. (2002). <i>Introduction to clinical psychology: Science & practice</i> . New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
3.	Kazdin, A. E. (2003). Psychotherapy for children and adolescents. <i>Annual Review of Psychology</i> , 54, 253-276.
4.	Monroe, S. M., & Simons, A. D. (1991). Diathesis-stress theories in the context of life stress research: Implications for the depressive disorders. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i> , 110 (3), 406-425.

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Albee, G. W., & Gullotta, T. P. (1997). <i>Primary prevention works</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
2.	Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. <i>American psychologist</i> , 32, 513-531
3.	Cowen, E. L., Hightower, A. D., Pedro-Carroll, J., Work, W. C., Wyman, P. A., & Haffey, W. G. (1996). <i>School-based prevention for children at risk: The primary mental health project</i> . Washington, DC: American Psychological Association
4.	Fairweather, G. W., & Fergus, E. O. (1993). <i>Empowering the mentally ill</i> . Austin, TX: Fairweather Pub
5.	Kazdin, A. E. (2013). <i>Behavior modification in applied settings (7th Ed.)</i> . Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
6.	Kristjánsson, K. (2012). Positive psychology and positive education: Old wine in new bottles? <i>Educational Psychologist</i> , 47(2), 86-105
7.	Levine, M., & Levine, A. (1992). <i>Helping children: A social history</i> . New York: Oxford University Press
8.	Levine, M., Perkins, D. D., & Perkins, D. V. (2005). <i>Principles of community psychology: Perspectives and applications (3rd ed.)</i> . New York: Oxford Univ. Press
9.	Leone, P. E. (1990). <i>Understanding troubled and troubling youth</i> . Newbury Park, CA: Sage
10.	Lorion, R. P. et al. (Eds.). (1996). <i>Psychology and public policy: Balancing public service and professional need</i> . Washington, DC: American Psychological Association
11.	Mandinach, E. B. (2012). A perfect time for data use: Using data-driven decision making to inform practice. <i>Educational Psychologist</i> , 47(2), 71-85
12.	Millon, T. (2004). <i>Masters of the mind: Exploring the story of mental illness from</i>

	<i>ancient times to the new millennium</i> . Hoboken, NJ: Wiley
13	Sarason, S. B. (1974). <i>The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology</i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
14	Sarason, S. B. (1985). <i>Caring and compassion in clinical practice: Issues in the selection, training, and behaviour of helping professionals</i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
15	Shinn, M., & Toohey, S. M. (2003). Community contexts of human welfare. <i>Annual review of psychology</i> , 54, 427-459
16	Woodhead, M. (1988). When psychology informs public policy. <i>American psychologist</i> , 43, 443-454