PSYC7309 Abnormal Psychology

Instructor:
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Tutor:
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Consultation hour: By appointment
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Lecture: Wednesday 3:30pm-6:20pm; Venue: CPD-2.42

Course overview
This course provides an introduction to the modern concepts of psychopathology. It covers topics on the core features, conceptualization, and treatment of major groups of mental disorders. Relevance in everyday life, cultural issues and ethical dilemmas will form part of the discussion.

Learning outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the basic concepts and models of psychopathology. Students will be able to critically evaluate scientific evidence on psychopathologies and their interventions. Course assignments are specifically designed for students to apply acquired knowledge to conceptualize psychological problems in daily life situations using validated models. Students are also equipped and encouraged to reflect on their own assumptions and biases regarding psychopathologies and to demonstrate sensitivity to the ethical issues relating to clinical practice in mental health profession.

Course materials
Copies will be available in HKU bookstore and from Main Library Reserve for 3-hr loans.

Readings: Selected journal articles and readings are recommended for further understanding of specific topics. The citations will be posted on Moodle and links to the electronic copy of the references will also be provided when possible.

Website: A Moodle site for this course is ready for use. Login with your HKU Portal UID and PIN at: http://hkuportal.hku.hk and follow the instructions to get into Moodle through “My eLearning”. Moodle will be used for making announcements regarding class and assignment schedules, posting lectures notes, and reference materials, etc. You are expected to check Moodle regularly for information updates; failure to do so will not be accepted as an excuse for missing important dates, deadlines, or other information.
### Course contents and schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Textbook chapter</th>
<th>Content</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>Basic concepts in psychopathology (online)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>Clinical assessment &amp; diagnosis (online)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>19/2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mood disorders (online)*</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>26/2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Anxiety disorders I (online)*</td>
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<td>4/3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Anxiety disorders II (online)*</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Group Presentations (online):</td>
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<td>1. School based programme – Mood disorders (Group 1)</td>
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<td>2. Case conceptualisation (Group 2)</td>
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<td>3. Developmental disorders - ADHD (Group 3)</td>
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<td>4. School based programme – Anxiety disorders (Group 4)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>18/3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Physical disorders and health psychology (online)*</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>25/3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders (online)*</td>
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<td>1/4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sexual dysfunction, paraphilic disorders and gender dysphoria*</td>
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<td>1. Mental health problems in older adults I (Group 5)</td>
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<td>2. Case conceptualisation (Group 6)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>8/4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sleep-wake*</td>
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<td>1. Developmental disorders – ASD (Group 7)</td>
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<td>2. Case conceptualisation (Group 8)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>15/4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ethical and legal issues in mental health *</td>
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<td>1. School based programme – Schizophrenia (Group 9)</td>
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<td>2. Case conceptualisation (Group 10)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>21/4</td>
<td>6,12</td>
<td>Personality disorders, dissociative disorders*</td>
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<td>(Tuesday)</td>
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<td>1. Mental health problems in older adults II (Group 11)</td>
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<td>2. Case conceptualisation (Group 12)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>29/4</td>
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<td>Revision + Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>6/5</td>
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<td>Term test</td>
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*Mini quiz will take place.

The course schedule may change. If this happens, every effort will be made to make sure that you have ample notice. You are responsible for being aware of those changes by attending classes and checking on Moodle. Most lectures will generally follow the outline of your textbook while expanding on key concepts and issues but some may deviate substantially from the textbook in order to cover more updated and/or culturally relevant materials. You are expected to attend class regularly and punctually, as well as to obtain help from the tutor and the instructor if you are having any difficulty.
Course assessment:
The assessment is entirely by coursework and consists of five components:

1. In-class group presentations 20%
2. Lecture quizzes 27%
3. Research discussions 18%
4. Term test 35%

In-class group presentations (20%)
Each group will be responsible for one in-class presentation (one of the following topics: A, B, C, D) and each presentation should last for no longer than 15 minutes. The purpose of the group presentation is to facilitate the application of knowledge learned in the course. You will form teams of three or four. Within-group peer rating will also be adopted and taken into account when evaluating individual performance. Your group will be working on the following topics based on a pre-selected disorder.

A. Each team will prepare a presentation on the conceptualization of a psychological problem of a public figure (e.g. John Nash, “A beautiful mind”). Please use the multidimensional integrative approach introduced in the textbook and lecture to describe the problem. The presentation should cover some background details of the “case”, the manifestation of the problem, an analysis of the nature and etiology of the problem, and potential intervention strategies.

B. Your team are commissioned by the Educational Bureau to launch a school-based programme to promote mental health of students in secondary school. The aim of this programme is to promote students’ mental health at schools by enhancing teachers’ and students’ mental health literacy and raising their awareness towards mental health issues. It is hoped that stigma associated with help-seeking can be reduced and a supportive environment that encourages students to develop adaptive coping skills can be created. As a team, you are asked to do a presentation with two parts: 1) to illustrate a tailor-made project action plan for a school to launch this school-based programme; and to: 2) deliver an educational talk to students with a focus on the pre-selected psychological problem (e.g. depression, anxiety disorders).

C. Your team are commissioned by the Social Welfare Department to organise a public talk in their District Elderly Community Centre. The aim of this talk is to provide psychoeducation to the community-living elderly people about common mental health problems in older adults.

D. You are working in the Child Assessment Centre (Department of Health) as assistant psychologists. You are asked to prepare a workshop on childhood developmental disorders for parents. The workshop can be focused on one of the following disorders: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autistic Spectrum Disorders. This event is designed to help parents to better understand ADHD/ASD and how to best support their children.
Mini quizzes (27%):
There will be mini quizzes taking place either at the beginning of the selected face-to-face lectures or after the online lectures (please refer to the course timetable). Each quiz carries 3% to the total mark. Each quiz covers the topic of the corresponding lecture (i.e., the quiz is assessing students’ preparation/learning about the lecture).

Research discussion (18%)
Submission of three short summaries (max. 500 words each) of selected journal articles that contribute to solve an identified learning issue. The topic of your selected article(s) should be relevant to that week’s lecture content. All summaries are to be handed in via moodle before the start of the respective lecture. Late submission will not be accepted and graded.

You need to find and read one or two recent research articles (published within the last 5 years, i.e., between 2015 and 2020) selected from a list of the suggested journals. The selected article must come from the list below and be a data-based study (i.e., data were collected, presented, and analyzed), not a review or conceptual article (i.e., an article where no new data are presented). You should summarise the methods and research findings, conduct a critical analyses of the study, and discuss how the findings advance our understanding of psychopathology on this particular topic.

Suggested journals:
- American Journal of Psychiatry
- Behaviour Research and Therapy
- British Journal of Psychiatry
- JAMA Psychiatry
- Journal of Abnormal Psychology
- Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology
- Journal of Clinical Psychology
- Journal of Clinical Psychiatry
- Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
- Lancet Psychiatry
- Psychological Medicine

Guiding questions for the summaries:
- What are the limitations of the study?
- How could the study design be improved?
- What do you think about it?
- What can we learn from the findings?
- How did it relate to ideas presented in the text?
- Did it raise other interesting questions for you?

Term test (35%)
The end-of-term test may consist of multiple-choice questions and short questions on the materials covered in the whole course. You will need to have a good understanding of the terminology, concepts, as well as theories covered in the required readings and lectures. Make-up exam policy:
If you were too sick to write a test and you have a valid medical certificate stating explicitly that you are unable to write the test on the test date, you may be given the opportunity to write a make-up test in a format that may differ from the test taken by the class.

Academic difficulties
Some students may regularly experience academic difficulty because of trouble managing time
effectively, an inability to adequately prepare for exams, or anxiety associated with test-taking. Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS) offers programs to enhance study effectiveness and stress management. Students experiencing difficulties due to sensory or physical handicaps should notify the instructor; an attempt will be made to accommodate the special learning needs. Students in this situation are also encouraged to contact CEDARS for supportive services.

Plagiarism
The University takes a strong stance against plagiarism. All cases of suspected plagiarism will be investigated and if substantiated, reported to the University Disciplinary Committee. You are strongly advised to read the booklets “What is Plagiarism” (http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/) and “Plagiarism and How to Avoid It” (http://ec.hku.hk/plagiarism/). A lack of understanding of what constitutes plagiarism will not be considered as an acceptable excuse for the offence. No credit will be given for an assignment that contains plagiarized materials. Department of Psychology has formulated departmental policies/guidelines on student misconduct. Visit the website at http://www.psychology.hku.hk/~main/?page_id=1814 for more information. Plagiarism will also be reported to your Faculty for the consideration of possible disciplinary action.

Student Etiquette
Your cooperation is necessary in maintaining a productive environment for everyone’s learning. By taking this course, you agree to abide by these classroom expectations:

▪ Be punctual in lectures and tutorials so that the teaching/learning process will not be disrupted.
▪ If you have a question or a comment, share it with the whole class or within your group in designated discussion times.
▪ Keep your electronic devices on silent mode.

Feedback Policy
An interactive discussion forum is available on Moodle. Students are encouraged to post their ideas or questions related to the course material on the forum. The forum shall serve as a public space for course members to discuss course matters. Two optional tutorials will be offered (time and venue TBC) to clarify assessment expectations— one before the deadline of your first research discussion, and one before the end-of-term test. In addition, weekly consultation hours are set up for individual consultation. Students are welcome to set up appointments with the teaching team shall you require individual progress check.

We hope you will enjoy this course and gain a different perspective on abnormal psychology.