

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of Psychology

COURSE OUTLINE (2024/2025, SEMESTER TWO)

1. Basic Course Information

Course Code	PSYC7306
Course Title	Psychology of Personality
Course Credits	6
Lecture Time	Thursday 3:30pm – 6:20pm at CPD-LG07

2. Course Lecturer, Coordinator, and Tutors

Name	Office	Phone	E-mail	Consultation Hour
Dr Henry NG (Lecturer)	6.16, JCT	39178205	nghks@hku.hk	Friday 1:30pm – 2:30pm
Terry TSE	6.19, JCT	39178231	yltsec@hku.hk	Friday 12:30pm- 1:30pm

3. Course Description

This course consists of two parts. The first part includes one-hour lectures that delve into the fundamentals of major theories in personality psychology, providing a solid foundation for the second part. In the second part, you will engage in discussions and reflections on special topics in the field, selected by the instructor. These discussions may not always lead to definite conclusions as they involve case applications, long-debated questions, and emerging trends in the field. Overall, this course aims to not only impart essential knowledge in the field but also encourages you to contemplate important issues that are relevant to personality psychologists.

4. Course Learning Outcomes

On completing the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of key theoretical conceptions within the field of personality based on the major domains of knowledge and from viewpoints of personality theorists covered in the course
- Appreciate the research design and assessment methods of current scientific inquiry in personality psychology while also be able to evaluate the research findings critically
- Develop a critical perspective on some of the ways as psychologists we understand ourselves and our behavior
- Apply personality theories and concepts to situations, familiar or novel, in everyday life.

5. Lectures and online resources

All course materials and announcements will be posted on Moodle. You should check it regularly to update yourself with the latest arrangements.

6. Assessment

There are 4 assessment components. The following weightings apply to your final grade.

Assessment	Weight
1. Discussion questions (#9)	18%
2. Attendance (#6)	12%
3. Reflection papers (best 5 out of 9)	30%
4. Final test	40%

7. Assessment Components

i. Discussion questions (18%)

Following the mini-lecture each week, we will engage in discussions on specific topics. There are 9 discussion topics outlined in the schedule, and for each topic, you will be expected to review designated reading or video materials BEFORE the class discussion. To enhance the discussion, you are required to submit a discussion question related to the topic BEFORE the class session (deadline by 11:59 pm on Tuesday). Each submitted question contributes 2% towards the overall assessment, amounting to a total of 18%.

Assessment	Description
2%	An insightful question that can introduce new perspectives and provoke new ideas. Such a question will be adopted in the discussion session.
1.5%	A question that demonstrates adequate understanding of the assigned materials. While the question is worth discussing, it is shared by other students, deeming it less insightful than the A-tier question.
1%	A generic question that shows little understanding of the assigned materials.
0%	No submission

When submitting your question, please keep it concise. You may include a sentence or two to clarify the motivation behind the question, but avoid providing excessive background information, additional materials, or answering the question in the submission. Lengthy submissions will not be considered for the A-tier evaluation. It is important to note that there is no late-submission policy for this component of the assessment; therefore, failing to submit the question as required will result in a score of zero.

ii. Attendance (12%)

You are required to actively participate in all discussion sessions as they will provide valuable insights for writing the reflection papers (refer to details below). However, you are only obligated to attend a minimum of 6 sessions (2% each) to achieve the total 12% allocated for this component. In other words, you have a buffer of 3 sessions that can be missed without penalty. It's important to note that there is no sick-leave policy for attendance due to the provided buffer.

iii. Reflection papers (30%)

After each discussion session, you are required to submit a reflection paper on the topic within one week (due by 11:59 pm on Wednesday). Your reflection should be concise, containing 400 words or fewer (excluding references and visual aids, if any), focusing on the insights gained from the assigned materials and discussions with your peers. Here are some suggested directions (though not exclusive): respond to a discussion question raised in class, address an opposing viewpoint presented during the discussion, pose a new question related to the topic and provide a response, or reflect on how your perspective on the topic evolved following the discussion.

It's important to note that your reflection paper should not simply summarize the assigned materials or the discussion. Each reflection paper contributes 6% towards the total assessment. A minimum of 5 reflection papers must be submitted to fulfill the assessment requirement ($5 * 6\% = 30\%$). If more than 5 submissions are made, the assessment will be based on the best 5 submissions. Given the buffer and the allocated time, there is no policy for sick leave or late submissions for this component. The paper should adhere to the APA style of publication. Please be aware that all reflection papers will be scrutinized for plagiarism. For the definition of plagiarism, its consequences, and tips on how to avoid it, please refer to the following link: <http://www.rss.hku.hk/plagiarism/page2s.htm>.

Reflection papers (cont'd)

	Assessment	Description
Content	4%	The reflection aligns closely with a key aspect of the discussion. It showcases outstanding insights from the student and has the potential to be further expanded into a formal thesis.
	3%	The reflection effectively addresses a central issue of the discussion. It showcases some insights, although they may not be sufficiently developed to form the basis of a thesis worth pursuing.
	2%	The reflection primarily summarizes the assigned materials and discussion without showcasing any insights derived from the reading and discussion.
	0%	No submission
Mechanics	2%	Professionally written and ready for publication.
	1.5%	Minor issues with the writing style, such as word choice and tone, that could be improved through exposure to more professional works.
	1%	Significant writing issues, such as grammatical errors and inefficient sentence structures, that require fundamental attention to improve the overall quality of the writing.

iv. Final test (40%)

At the end of the semester, you will be required to complete a 2-hour closed-book examination comprising 20 multiple-choice questions (20%) and 2 essay questions (20%). The multiple-choice section will pertain solely to the content covered in the mini-lectures. The essay questions will encompass material from both the lectures and the discussions.

Make-up tests are granted for medical (physical and mental) reasons only. You must present legitimate medical documents to support your requests, such as a note written by a qualified physician, medical doctor, clinical psychologist, or a counsellor. Send your requests for make-up tests or late submission Terry (yltsec@hku.hk), BY 11:59pm of the day in which the tests/the deadlines are scheduled. The make-up test is held within one week of the scheduled date of the test on campus (i.e. NOT online). There will be one make-up session for each test only, and you will get zero mark if you cannot attend the original and the make-up test.

8. Lecture References

The lecture content is loosely derived from the following sources, which are provided for reference purposes only.

- 1 Cervone D., & Pervin, L. A. (2022): *Personality: Theory and Research* (15 Ed). New York: Wiley
Though not compulsory, you can purchase a copy of the book through the A&P bookstore using a purchase link posted on Moodle. The referenced chapters are listed in the teaching schedule on the next page.

Textbook Purchase Link:

<https://apbookshop.com/HKU/EN/Display/PrintedBook?ISBN=9781119891673&ForMaterials=False&Created=False>
(hardcopy)

<https://apbookshop.com/HKU/EN/Display/PrintedBook?ISBN=9781119891635&ForMaterials=False&Created=False>
(e-book)

- 2 Hofstede et al. (2010) – *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, Chapters 1-8
The lecture content of *Culture and Personality* is selected from this work. You do not need to study the 8 chapters, but they serve as a reference for the lecture on the cross-cultural perspective.

HKUL link to the e-book:

https://julac-hku.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9780071770156&context=PC&vid=852JULAC_HKU:HKU&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&tab=Everything&lang=en

- 3 Schimmack, U. (2021). Personality Science: The Science of Human Diversity, Chapters 7 – 9. This free e-book offers a more updated account of the biological aspects of personality, which the main reference lacks. You can access the content by choosing a guest login.

Link to the e-book:

<https://replicationindex.com/2020/08/19/personality-science-the-science-of-human-diversity/>

9. Discussion Materials

You should go through the materials below before each discussion session.

Topics	Discussion Materials/ Activities
MBTI	<p>Pittenger, D. J. (1993). Measuring the MBTI... and coming up short. <i>Journal of Career Planning and Employment</i>, 54(1), 48-52.</p> <p>Stein, R., & Swan, A. B. (2019). Evaluating the validity of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator theory: A teaching tool and window into intuitive psychology. <i>Social and Personality Psychology Compass</i>, 13(2), e12434.</p> <p>If you are not familiar with the MBTI, you can take a free test in the following link: https://www.truity.com/test/type-finder-personality-test-new (Note: You are not required to pay for the evaluation service. The instructor holds no liability for any expenses incurred by students to pay for the evaluation service. The instructor has no conflict of interest with the organization).</p>
Fight Club	<p><i>Fight Club</i> the movie, directed by David Fincher (1999). A copy of the movie is available for a 3-hour loan at the HKU library and is included in the course's reading list. It is also accessible on various streaming services.</p> <p>Vaillant, G. E. (1994). Ego mechanisms of defense and personality psychopathology. <i>Journal of Abnormal Psychology</i>, 103(1), 44-50.</p>
Good Will Hunting	<p><i>Good Will Hunting</i> the movie, directed by Gus Van Sant (1997). A copy of the movie is available for a 3-hour loan at the HKU library and is included in the course's reading list. It is also accessible on various streaming services.</p> <p>Rogers, C. R. (1961). On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. – Chapter 1 & 2</p>
Verbal Magic	<p>Boag, S. (2011). Explanation in personality psychology: “Verbal magic” and the five-factor model. <i>Philosophical Psychology</i>, 24(2), 223–243.</p> <p>Skinner, B. F. (1973). <i>Beyond Freedom and Dignity</i>. Penguin Books. – Chapter 1</p>
Factor Analysis	<p>For this topic, you will submit a questionnaire item (instead of a discussion question) that should assess a personality trait. The item should be set properly so that it can be responded intuitively on a 5-point scale of agreement. You can submit an item that inquires attitudes, beliefs, values, or even behavioral habits.</p> <p>We will have an in-class demonstration of factor analysis using the submitted items, followed by a discussion session guided by the instructor.</p> <p>2% - The submitted item is well set and does not need any editing. 1.5% - The submitted item is clear but needs minor editing. 1% - The submitted item is unclear and cannot be adopted. 0% - No submission.</p>
Personality and Cancer	<p>Pelosi, A. J., & Appleby, L. (1992). Psychological influences on cancer and ischaemic heart disease. <i>BMJ: British Medical Journal</i>, 304(6837), 1295-1298.</p> <p>Jokela, M., Batty, G. D., Hintsala, T., Elovainio, M., Hakulinen, C., & Kivimäki, M. (2014). Is personality associated with cancer incidence and mortality? An individual-</p>

	participant meta-analysis of 2156 incident cancer cases among 42 843 men and women. <i>British Journal of Cancer</i> , 110(7), 1820-1824.
Utopia	<p>Skinner, B. F. (1948/ 1976). <i>Walden Two</i>. Prentice-Hall. Chapters 10, 11, 13, 14</p> <p>The selected chapters from the “utopian” novel focus on discussions about freedom, motivation, and the development of personality among the main characters. These chapters contain debates on these subjects and can be read separately from the overall context of the novel. For additional background information on the fiction, you can refer to the book summary and character list available on this website: https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/walden2/summary/</p>
Rogers and Skinner	<p>Rogers, C. R., & Skinner, B. F. (1956). Some issues concerning the control of human behavior: A symposium. <i>Science</i>, 124(3231), 1057-1066.</p> <p>Skinner, B. F. (1973). <i>Beyond Freedom and Dignity</i>. Penguin Books. – Chapter 2</p> <p>There was a debate between Carl Rogers and B.F. Skinner on the control of human behavior. The Skinner reference elaborates more on his peculiar view on humanity.</p>
On ‘Manifest’	<p>Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. <i>American psychologist</i>, 44(9), 1175-1184.</p> <p>‘Manifest’ is Cambridge Dictionary Word of the Year (2024). Link: https://www.cam.ac.uk/news/manifest-is-cambridge-dictionary-word-of-the-year</p>

10. Meeting Schedule and Dates

#Class	Date	Lecture	Discussion	Reflection paper due (11:59pm Wednesday)
1	23 Jan	Introduction to the psychology of personality (Ch. 1, 2)	-	-
2	6 Feb	Freud's psychoanalytic theory (Ch. 3, 4)	MBTI	-
3	13 Feb	Carl Rogers's phenomenological theory (Ch. 5, 6)	Fight Club	MBTI
4	20 Feb	Trait perspective – I (Ch. 7)	Good Will Hunting	Fight Club
5	27 Feb	Trait perspective – II (Ch. 8)	Verbal Magic	Good Will Hunting
6	6 Mar	Factor analysis	Factor Analysis	Verbal Magic
7	13 Mar	Interim Feedback (Note: Reading week changed to 17 Apr)	-	Factor Analysis
8	20 Mar	Culture, Geography and Climate (Hofstede and research references)	-	-
9	27 Mar	Behaviorism (Ch. 9)	Personality and Cancer	-
10	3 Apr	George Kelly's cognitive approach (Ch. 10)	Utopia	Personality and Cancer
11	10 Apr	Biological perspective (Ch.14 + Schimmack)	Rogers and Skinner	Utopia
	17 Apr	Reading Week		
12	24 Apr	Social cognitive theory (Ch. 11, 12)	On 'Manifest'	Rogers and Skinner
	1 May		-	On 'Manifest'
	8 May	Final test (3:30pm-5:30pm 8th May at CPD3.28)		