

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

COURSE OUTLINE (2026/2027, SEMESTER ONE)

1. Basic Course Information

Course Code	PSYC7316A
Course Title	Special topics in psychology (Guided research in psychology)
Course Credits	6
Lecture Time & Venue	7:00pm - 9:50pm; CPD-LG.01
Tutorial Time & Venue	N/A

2. Course Instructor / Course Co-ordinator

Name	Office	Phone	E-mail	Consultation Hour (if any)
Dr Alvin Lee (Course Instructor)	6.51, JCT	39178381	alvinlkf@hku.hk	By Appointment
Dr Fiona Tian (Course Coordinator and Tutor)	4.30, JCT	39177368	tyqfiona@hku.hk	By Appointment
Dr Kejun Zhao (Course Tutor)	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

3. Course Description

This course provides students with an opportunity to explore a psychological topic of interest by developing a research proposal as part of a supervised group project. Throughout the course, students will develop fundamental research skills, including formulating research questions, reviewing and evaluating relevant literature, developing study designs with appropriate research methods, and identifying relevant ethical considerations.

4. Course Learning Outcomes

On completing the course, students will be able to:

- a. Describe, evaluate, and synthesise key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychological research
- b. Describe and evaluate the practical and theoretical implications of psychological research
- c. Interpret and critique psychological research
- d. Develop novel psychological research questions and design studies to address these questions
- e. Identify and evaluate ethical considerations in psychological research

5. Course Contents and Topics

1. Introduction to Psychological Research
2. Ethics in Psychological Research
3. The Scientific Method
4. Reviewing the Literature
5. Study Design and Statistics
6. Research Proposal and Ethics Application
7. Academic Writing

8. Finding Your Research Interest
9. Ethical Dilemmas
10. Asking the Right Research Questions

6. Course Teaching and Learning Activities

Activities	Hours
Lectures-contact hours	21
Assessment	40
Reading / Self study	40
Seminar	9
Total	110

7. Assessment Methods and Weighting

Assessment methods	Weighting in final course grade (%)
Seminar Presentation	30
Research Proposal and Ethics Application	40
Research Proposal Presentation	30
Total	100

Assessment Ratio: 100% Coursework and 0% Examination

8. Course Schedule

Week	Date	Lecture	Topics
1.	1/9	Introduction to Psychological Research	Finding Your Research Interest
2.	8/9	Ethics in Psychological Research	Ethical Dilemma
3.	15/9	The Scientific Method	Asking the Right Research Questions
4.	22/9	Reviewing the Literature	Journal Club
5.	29/9	Study Design & Statistics	Seminar Planning
6.	6/10	Research Proposal and Ethics Application	Proposal and Ethics Planning
7.	13/10	Reading Week	-
8.	20/10	Seminar I	-
9.	27/10	Seminar II	-
10.	3/11	Seminar III	-
11.	10/11	Academic Writing	Proposal and Ethics Consultation
12.	17/11	Research Proposal Presentation	
13.	24/11	Research Proposal Presentation	

9. Required/Recommended Readings & Online Materials

N/A

10. Feedback Policy

This course is committed to ensuring that the provision of feedback aligns with the guidelines of

the psychology department (<https://psychology.hku.hk/useful-information-to-current-students/>). Assignment requirements are explicitly stated in the course and grading criteria are provided alongside assignments. Feedback will be provided to the students within 2 to 3 weeks. In-class exercises and tutorial discussion involve active interaction between instructors and students; feedback will be offered immediately. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss assignment with instructors. Consultation hours are available by appointment. This policy aims to create a supportive learning environment and foster effective communication between instructors and students.

11. Important Notes

- Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on exams, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, interfering with grading, falsification and fabrication of data in any academic exercise etc.) will receive a grade of F on the component(s) of assessment concerned or in this course and will be reported to the Department/Faculty Office/University Disciplinary Committee for further disciplinary action. There will be no exceptions. If you are not sure what constitutes the academic offense of plagiarism, checkout the webpage at <https://tl.hku.hk/plagiarism/>. Department of Psychology has formulated departmental policies/guidelines on student misconduct. Visit the website for more information at (<https://psychology.hku.hk/useful-information-to-current-students/>).

- Plagiarism:

A softcopy is required for all written assignments. The softcopy will be checked for plagiarism against a database of articles, books, webpages, and essays submitted by students at HKU and other universities. Students must hand in a soft copy of all their assignments/theses/ projects in psychology for teaching staff to check possible plagiarism through Turnitin. No credit will be given for an assignment that contains plagiarized materials. Further penalties will also be applied. These penalties include a zero mark for participation in course tutorials and a zero mark for the course. Plagiarism will also be reported to Department/Faculty Office/University Disciplinary Committee for consideration of possible disciplinary action.

The CAES Writing Centre regularly offers “How to Avoid Plagiarism Workshops.” These workshops will be particularly useful for students who might not be completely confident about how to avoid plagiarism in their written assignments. The workshops will focus on basic citation, referencing skills, paraphrasing and synthesizing skills. The CAES consultants are also keen to help you at any stage of the writing process, but they particularly urge you to come at the planning stages in order to get feedback that will put you on a trajectory toward success. To find out what you can do with a consultant at different points in the process, watch the video here (Consultations at Different Stages of the Writing Process - YouTube). Feel free to book your 1:1 consultation, workshop or discussion spot (Writing Centre | CSS Website (hku.hk)).

- Any other course/class policies:

Use and Disclosure of Generative AI in Written Assignments

For all written assignments, submissions will be automatically checked through Turnitin’s built-in AI detection tool. Students are required to maintain documentation demonstrating the development of their work. This includes both:

- Work history, including drafts, showing the evolution of the work. Students may use any versioning method but may find Word versioning or Google docs helpful.
- If any Generative AI tools are used, complete records of AI interactions must be retained. This includes all prompts, outputs, and relevant timestamps (i.e., full chat history).

If a submission is identified as potentially substantially AI-generated, students will be contacted and expected to produce the above documentation. Evaluation of potential AI-related academic misconduct will be conducted holistically by the course instructor/teaching team, taking into account Turnitin's results and the supporting materials provided. Failure to provide the requested information is grounds for failure, notation in student records, and/or alternative penalties, at the discretion of the instructors.

Late-drop Policy

Late drops will not be permitted under normal circumstances. Exceptions will be considered only in cases of verifiable medical conditions that prevent a student from continuing their studies in their entirety for the remainder of the semester (i.e., circumstances requiring withdrawal from all registered courses for the semester). Selective late drop of a single course will not be approved under any circumstance. Requests to late drop due to academic difficulty, dissatisfaction with grades, or changes in interest will not be approved.

Students are fully responsible for managing their course selections and should use the official add/drop period to assess whether their schedule and workload are appropriate. The add/drop period is the designated opportunity to determine which courses students can reasonably commit to for the term.

All late-drop requests must be supported by appropriate documentation. Appeals will be reviewed by the Department Teaching and Learning Committee (DTLC) on a case-by-case basis.