

SS5304: PSYCHOLOGY AND CRIME

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Psychology and Crime

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

5304

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course provides an in-depth understanding of how psychological issues impact crime and crime prevention. It will examine a range of different crime types and apply psychological and behavioural economic approaches to understanding

the motivations of offenders and criminal organisations. Both psychological theories and practical applications will be explored throughout the course, complete with contemporary case studies, examples and analyses of existing policy approaches. Students will be equipped with practical skills to enhance their crime prevention and detection capabilities by applying various psychological theories and practices. This course is also one of the first at CityU to utilise the team-based learning approach, where students will work in groups to devise practical solutions to contemporary crime problems during in-class sessions.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describe the theories underpinning psychology and crime, and their contemporary applications	20	x	x	
2	Explain how these theories shape policy and practice, as well as their effectiveness	20	x	x	x
3	Discuss the psychology of victims of crime and harm reduction approaches	20	x	x	x
4	Assess contemporary crime problems through a psychological perspective to aid prevention and detection	20	x	x	x
5	Design procedures and policies to facilitate better crime prevention using psychological approaches	20	x	x	x

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 real-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.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	With help of PowerPoint slides and lecture notes, students will engage in acquiring basic concepts and knowledge on the academic subject.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
2	Readings	Students will study the assigned reading materials on the academic subject.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

3	In-class exercises and team-based learning	Students will work together on mini-class exercises, which will put their understanding of the readings and lecture concepts into practice	2, 3, 4, 5	
4	Group research project	Students will work in groups to produce a report on a crime problem of their choice using psychological approaches, which will also involve exploring potential prevention measures. Groups will present their findings to their peers.	2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Quizzes	1, 2, 3	35	-	No
2	In-class participation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	25	Initial idea generation, Deepsearch functions, proofreading.	Yes
3	Group Research Project	2, 3, 4, 5	30	-	No
4	Group Research Presentation	2, 3, 4, 5	10	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Additional Information for ATs**AT1: Quizzes (35%)**

Short quizzes will be conducted to assess students' understanding on the topics discussed over the course of a semester on the academic subject.

AT2: In-class participation (25%)

Throughout the lectures and in team-based learning exercises, students will complete a range of tasks that will put the concepts learned from the lectures and readings into practice. The purpose of these tasks will be to prepare students for practical work typically encountered in various practitioner and relevant industry environments.

AT3: Group Research Project (30%)

In small groups, students will engage in a deep-dive into a certain crime topic of their choice and use the psychological theories, applications and concepts from the lectures to devise an effective understanding of, and solutions to, the problem. They will produce a report, outlining their approach, the underlying psychological theories used, existing case studies and possible prevention measures. Strong reports will demonstrate evidence of wider research, including the statistical analysis of public data, to evaluate the crime problem and existing policies to motivate their chosen approach.

AT4: Group Presentation (10%)

Students, in respective groups, are required to present their research project during a class session to encourage peer evaluation and learning.

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

1. Quizzes (35%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Clear ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair to limited evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Marginal

(D) Limited evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Assessment Task

2. In-class Participation (25%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Clear ability to think critically about the lecture content or team-based learning exercises, and to apply original thought and ideas to complex dilemmas and problems.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair to limited participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Marginal

(D) Limited participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Failure

(F) Insufficient participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Assessment Task

3. Group Research Project (30%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Clear ability to work as a team effectively to tackle a complex real-world crime problem using a range of approaches discussed in the lectures, readings, and beyond the course materials. Clear demonstration of research methods used to understand and analyse issues, existing approaches, current limitations and methods to overcome them. Groups will need to present a sound, well-rounded, justifiable report that provides strong evidence of wider reading and the use of a range of research methods to provide robust evaluations of both existing policies and their own proposals.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair to limited evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Marginal

(D) Limited evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Assessment Task

4. Group Research Presentation (10%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Clear ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair to limited evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Marginal

(D) Limited evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Assessment Task

1. Quizzes (35%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Clear ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Good

(B+, B) Good evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence for the ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts and theories

Assessment Task

2. In-class participation (25%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Clear ability to think critically about the lecture content or team-based learning exercises, and to apply original thought and ideas to complex dilemmas and problems.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Good

(B+, B) Good participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Failure

(F) Insufficient participation in the in-class exercises, with consistent demonstration of outside-the-box thinking, very good familiarity with the lecture content and readings; ability to formulate robust responses to complex issues

Assessment Task

3. Group Research Project (30%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Clear ability to work as a team effectively to tackle a complex real-world crime problem using a range of approaches discussed in the lectures, readings, and beyond the course materials. Clear demonstration of research methods used to understand and analyse issues, existing approaches, current limitations and methods to overcome them. Groups will need to present a sound, well-rounded, justifiable report that provides strong evidence of wider reading and the use of a range of research methods to provide robust evaluations of both existing policies and their own proposals.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Good

(B+, B) Good evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence for the ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature; to formulate clear, logical, proposals; to evaluate possible risks, challenges and limitations of existing approaches; to use statistical research methods as a means of providing robust evaluations and justifications for proposals; to produce clear and logical report of research findings and implications; to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings to motivate their chosen approach; and to demonstrate overall good organisation and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty

Assessment Task

4. Group Research Presentation (10%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Clear ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Good

(B+, B) Good evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence for the ability to deliver to clear and concise verbal presentation; to do so using well-formatted professional slides; to articulate collective reflection; and to show good responsibility in taking one's share of group tasks

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Psychology and crime; forensic psychology; psychological crime prevention; behavioural economics; deterrence; behavioural psychology

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Davies, G. M., Beech, A. R. and Colloff M. F. (eds). (2024). Forensic Psychology (4th ed). Sussex: Wiley.
2	Hollin C. R. (2013). Psychology and Crime. London: Routledge.
3	Bartol C. R., & Bartol A. M. (Eds.). (2012). Current perspectives in forensic psychology and criminal justice (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
4	Chan, H. C. O., & Ho, S. M. Y. (2017). Psycho-criminological perspective of criminal justice in Asia: Research and practices in Hong Kong, Singapore, and beyond. Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge.
5	Venn, J. (2024). Crime and Psychology: Foundations of Forensic Practice. NY: Routledge.
6	Helfgott J. (2013). Criminal psychology (Vol. 1-4). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
7	Howitt, D. (2009). Introduction to forensic and criminal psychology. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Ainsworth, P. (2000). Offender profiling and crime analysis. Cullompton: Willan.
2	Adler, J. (2004). Forensic psychology: Concepts, debates and practice. Cullompton, Devon: Willan.
3	Strentz T. (2018). Psychological Aspects of Crisis Negotiation. London: Routledge

4	Chan, H. C. O. (2015). Understanding sexual homicide offenders: An integrative approach. Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan
5	Chan, H. C. O. (2019). A global casebook of sexual homicide. Singapore: Springer Nature.
6	Cassam Q. (2021). Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis. London: Routledge.
7	Voss and Raz (2016). Never split the difference. Dublin: Penguin.
8	Dove, M. (2021). The Psychology of Fraud, Persuasion and Scam Techniques. London: Routledge.
9	Brunt, B. V. and Taylor, C. (2021). Understanding and Treating Incels. London: Routledge.
10	Hoffman, B. (2017). Inside Terrorism. Colombia UP: NY.