

SS5791: ADVANCED HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Advanced Health Psychology

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

5791

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

MSSPSY Students : Nil

Non-MSSPSY Students : SS1101 Basic Psychology I or its equivalent

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

The course aims to provide students with knowledge of the development of health psychology and its contributions to the study of health behaviour and our understanding of health behaviour and its implications. This course aims to stimulate students' interest and curiosity in their own health behaviour and that of others, as well as to equip students with the ability of critical appreciation of health issues from a health psychology perspective. Given the wide array of topics that fall within the scope of health psychology, this course is intended to expose students to some of the major theoretical, assessment, and intervention issues in health, illness and disease, its empirical base and applications to practical situations; enhancing students' knowledge of health psychology creatively through a discovery-enhanced learning strategy.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describe major theories and principles in addition to methods and issues in psychological research relevant to health and illness;	20	x	x	
2	Explain the psychosocial and biological basis of health and illness;	20	x	x	
3	Evaluate critically how psychological, social, and cultural factors affect health and illness; and	30	x	x	x
4	Analyse psychological aspects of health promotion and disease prevention.	30	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	Major theories and principles and concepts in health psychology are described and explained, with emphasis on the utility of various psychological paradigms in testing specific hypotheses in different areas of health psychology. Students will be engaged in discussion and interaction that serve to stimulate their creative thinking and brainstorm innovative ideas on selected issues related to health psychology. Lectures will either expand upon the text by considering some topics in greater detail, or include material not discussed in the text.	1, 2, 3
2	Class Discussions	Class discussion provides an interactive environment for students to develop creative and critical thinking. Through discussion, students can learn to examine assumptions and key themes of theories in health psychology via discovery-enhanced learning. These discussions are designed to promote students' discovery of the association between research and real-life experiences, whilst also promoting a thirst for students' active learning of health psychology.	2, 3, 4

3	Individual Research Report	The empirical research project provides students with a chance to explore in depth through self-discovery current issues addressed within health psychology research. This assignment is meant to be a fun and interesting way to increase students' comprehension of course material and to help students apply theories of health psychology to everyday life.	2, 3, 4	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Quizzes	1, 2, 3	60	-	No
2	Individual Research Report	2, 3, 4	40	Conduct proofreading	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Individual Research Report (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

An individual assignment of around 4,000 words is designed to critically evaluate the applicability of health psychology theories and concepts to understand selected contemporary topics in health psychology. Data will be collected in class which students will be required to independently analyse after selecting their variables, and then write up and report the findings in the form of a research report.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Sensitive location of relevant empirical studies, clear explanation of methods and findings, use of statistical analysis beyond elementary and insightful application to the analysis.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Location of some relevant empirical studies, explanation of methods and findings, and descriptive application, appropriate use of statistical methods.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Inclusion of some studies, sketchy explanation of methods and findings, and “vague” application.

Marginal

(D) Does not show sensitive search for appropriate references, or inappropriate application of findings.

Failure

(F) Project not completed (i.e., components missing).

Assessment Task

Quiz (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Two 90min quizzes will be set to assess students' abilities in mastering, applying and synthesising theories and concepts explained in the course, and to evaluate the applicability of health psychology principles to practical situations. Quiz items will be designed to test students' understanding of terminology and concepts and students' ability to integrate and apply these concepts to analyse hypothetical and/or real life examples.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Score of 75 or above out of 100

Good

(B+, B, B-) Score of between 60 and 74 out of 100

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Score of between 45 and 59 out of 100

Marginal

(D) Score of between 40 and 44 out of 100

Failure

(F) Score of 39 or below out of 100

Assessment Task

Individual Research Report (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

An individual assignment of around 4,000 words is designed to critically evaluate the applicability of health psychology theories and concepts to understand selected contemporary topics in health psychology. Data will be collected in class which students will be required to independently analyse after selecting their variables, and then write up and report the findings in the form of a research report.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Sensitive location of relevant empirical studies, clear explanation of methods and findings, use of statistical analysis beyond elementary and insightful application to the analysis.

Good

(B+, B) Location of some relevant empirical studies, explanation of methods and findings, and descriptive application, appropriate use of statistical methods.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Inclusion of some studies, sketchy explanation of methods and findings, and "vague" application.

Failure

(F) Does not show sensitive search for appropriate references, or inappropriate application of findings.

Assessment Task

Quiz (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Two 90min quizzes will be set to assess students' abilities in mastering, applying and synthesising theories and concepts explained in the course, and to evaluate the applicability of health psychology principles to practical situations. Quiz items will be designed to test students' understanding of terminology and concepts and students' ability to integrate and apply these concepts to analyse hypothetical and/or real-life examples.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of the ability to understand & describe relevant knowledge & concepts. Strong evidence of critical application

Good

(B+, B) Good evidence of the ability to understand & describe relevant knowledge & concepts. Good evidence of critical application

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Marginal evidence of the ability to understand & describe relevant knowledge & concepts. Marginal evidence of critical application

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence of the ability to understand & describe relevant knowledge & concepts. Insufficient evidence of critical application

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Health-Seeking Behaviour; Adherence to Medical Advice; Stress; Coping; Disease; Pain; Alternative Healthcare Approaches; Chronic Illness; Cardiovascular Disease; Cancer; Symptom Perception; Illness Representation; Health-Compromising Behaviours; Health-Enhancing Behaviours; Primary Prevention; Health Promotion; Patient-Provider Relations; Psychosocial Issues in Acute, Chronic Terminal Illness.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Sanderson, C. (2018). Understanding the Mind-Body Connection (3rd Ed.). London: Sage.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed.). Washington DC: American Psychological Association
2	Davies, J. (2014). Cracked: Why psychiatry is doing more harm than good. London: Icon Books.
3	French, D., Vedhara, K., Kaptein, A.A., & Weinman, J. (2010). Health Psychology (2nd Ed.). British Psychological Society: Blackwell
4	Marks, D. F., Murray, M. P., Evans, B., & Estacio, E.V. (2015). Health psychology: Theory, research and practice (4th Ed.). London: Sage.
5	Marks, D. F., & Yardley, L. (2003). Research methods for clinical and health psychology. London: Sage
6	O' Sullivan, S. (2015). It's all in your head: Stories from the frontline of psychosomatic illness. London: Vintage
7	Sarafino, E.P., & Smith, T.W. (2014). Health Psychology: Biopsychosocial Interactions (8th Ed.). London: Wiley.
8	Marks, D. F. (2002). The health psychology reader. London: Sage
9	British Journal of Health Psychology
10	Journal of Health & Social Behaviour

11	Journal of Health Psychology
12	Health Psychology
13	Psychological Medicine
14	Psychology & Health
15	Psychology, Health & Medicine
16	Social Science & Medicine