

PL1101E: Introduction to Psychology
FASStrack 2025

Schedule: PM Session (2pm-6pm, Singapore Time)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Course Description

Learning Outcomes

This course introduces psychology as an empirical, behavioural science, but with an emphasis on theoretical foundations. The aim is to provide students with a broad overview of the different subfields in psychology. The emphasis of the course is two-fold: first, to provide students with an introduction to the diversity and richness of the discipline of psychology; second, to allow students to critically evaluate the important principles, theories, and concepts in psychology. Topics covered include biological psychology, behavioural psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, and clinical psychology.

Teaching Modes

Classes will be a combination of lectures and discussions.

Here are the course's intended learning outcomes (ILOs):

ILO 1. Begin to see the connection between psychology and society through an understanding of psychology's history and the current psychological perspectives – articulate an example of this

ILO 2. Begin to see the complexity between the physical and the experiential – articulate what is uncertain about the relationship between the mind and the body

ILO 3. Show how we (researchers) define the boundaries and parameters through which we then measure and describe our psychological processes such as thoughts, feelings, perceptions and behaviours

ILO 4. Analyse different psychological theories and perspectives and describe the uncertainties that arise from the divergences. Be able to explain why there is uncertainty and what that means for the field.

ILO 5. Critique a psychological finding or perspective – show how you can challenge an assumption; that you can be sceptical of what seemingly is a “truth”, and identify the context-dependency of the “truth”

ILO 6. Reflect on what psychology can, and can’t, do in solving problems or providing answers, and reflect on your preconceptions about Psychology – what makes for a good psychology scholar and psychologist?

Additionally, there are two learning principles in this course:

Challenge your assumptions

Embrace uncertainty as a path to curiosity

Classes will complement the textbook (rather than regurgitate the textbook) by highlighting important textbook material, providing additional examples and illustrations from outside the textbook, and introducing new material that is not covered in the textbook.

Preclusion/ Prerequisite

Nil

Lecturer

Nina Powell, Senior Lecturer, nina.powell@nus.edu.sg

Course Assessment

Assessments		Assessment deadlines
Three quizzes - Short-answer quizzes on Canvas	30%	Every Friday
Final Essay - 1500-word essay addressing big-picture themes of the course	30%	23 July
Individual Project - Photo journal - Identify a real-world illustration of a concept from the course and discuss the relevance in a written submission	20%	18 July
Discussion Questions/Participation	20%	Continuous
Total for CA:	100%	

Course Topics

Week	Day	Topic	Session Activities
1	1	Introduction and syllabus overview	Lecture, discussion
	2	What is Psychology? History and Perspectives	Lecture, discussion
	3	What is Psychology? Genes and Environment - Chapter 3	Lecture, discussion
	4	Introduction to Biological Psychology - Chapter 4	Lecture, discussion
2	1	Introduction to Sensation and Perception - Chapter 5	Lecture, discussion
	2	Introduction to Motivation and Emotion - Chapter 7	Lecture, discussion
	3	Introduction to Behavioural Psychology - Chapter 8	Lecture, discussion
	4	Introduction to Cognitive Psychology Part I - Chapter 9	Lecture, discussion
3	1	Introduction to Cognitive Psychology Part II - Chapter 10	Lecture, discussion
	2	Introduction to Developmental Psychology - Chapter 11	Lecture, discussion
	3	Introduction to Social and Personality Psychology - Chapters 12 and 13	Lecture, discussion
	4	Introduction to Clinical Psychology - Chapter 14	Lecture, discussion

Reading List

Cacioppo, J. T., & Freberg, L. (2019). *Discovering psychology: the science of mind* (3rd edition, student edition.). Cengage Learning, Inc.
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