

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Course Outline

Part I

Programme Title	: Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Psychology/ All Undergraduate Programmes
Programme QF Level	: 5
Course Title	: Professional Issues and Practices in Psychology
Course Code	: PSY4029
Department	: Psychology
Credit Points	: 3
Contact Hours	: 39
Pre-requisite(s)	: Basic Principles of Psychology (or equivalent)
Medium of Instruction	: EMI
Course Level	: 4

Part II

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):

- Professional Excellence;
- Ethical Responsibility; &
- Innovation.

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:

1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills
- 4a. Oral Communication Skills
- 4b. Written Communication Skills
5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

1. Course Synopsis

This course intends to provide students with knowledge about the various ways that psychologists can practice, and the ethical and professional issues involved. Students will acquire an understanding of the intervention approaches at different levels (individual, group, and community) by clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, industrial and organizational psychologists, and psychology researchers. The professional identity of psychologists, their relationship with other professions, and the role of professional and government bodies in forming that identity and in regulating the practice of psychology will be covered. Students would develop an understanding of the principles and guidelines of both local and overseas professional bodies of psychological practice. Critical thinking will be nurtured by applying the knowledge obtained to deal with ethical and professional issues in psychological research and practice.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CILO₁ Gain an understanding of different assessment and intervention approaches at individual, group, and community levels, and the legal, ethical and professional issues involved in practicing psychology at the different levels of intervention;
- CILO₂ Develop critical thinking in issues concerning professional practice of psychology;
- CILO₃ Make informed decisions about ethical issues in research in psychology;
- CILO₄ Understand the need for a multicultural emphasis in practice and research;
- CILO₅ Make informed decisions when facing ethical dilemmas in practicing psychology.

3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
Assessment and intervention approaches at different levels 1. Basic skills of conducting psychological intervention, e.g., active listening, empathy, challenging the clients 2. Different approaches of psychological intervention in clinical and school settings, e.g. behavioural therapy, cognitive-behavioural therapy, humanistic-existential approaches, systemic approaches 3. Psychological intervention at group and community levels, e.g., intervention groups, crisis intervention 4. Psychological assessment in clinical and school settings and its relationship with psychological intervention 5. Psychological assessment and intervention in the work setting, e.g., personality and ability tests, job performance management, training and development	CILO _{1,2,4,5}	Lecture, tutorial, case study, in-class discussion, worksheets, video demonstration, online learning materials, and Moodle discussion forum

Action research in psychology 1. What is psychological research 2. Theoretical vs practical research 3. Process of conducting action research 4. Linking action research to practice	CILO_{2,3}	Lecture, tutorial, case study, in-class discussion, worksheets, online learning materials, and Moodle discussion forum
Professional ethical standards, laws, and regulations in practice, research, supervision and consultation, clinical assessment, psychotherapy, and practicing psychology 1. General ethical principles and ethical decision making - Competence - Privacy and confidentiality - Relationship with clients - Record keeping - Professional relationships - Other related issues 2. Sociocultural and diversity issues - Need for sociocultural sensitivity in practice and research - Awareness to diversity in culture, gender, sexuality, age, health status, and mobility - The contextual significance and related issues in practicing psychology, e.g., academic, clinical, school, and work settings 3. Research ethics - Rights of participants - Informed consent, e.g. Issues related to participants who cannot provide consent on their own (e.g., minors, people cognitively impaired) - Data privacy and integrity	CILO₁₋₅	Lecture, tutorial, case studies, in-class discussion, video demonstration, worksheets, online learning materials, and Moodle discussion forum

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
a. Action Research Proposal Students will write a 1,050-word ($\pm 10\%$) action research proposal to develop a solution for a problem in a realistic setting (educational/ community). Students will apply relevant concepts in psychological assessments and interventions at a level commensurate with their training and qualifications, with an emphasis on identifying and discussing relevant ethical concerns in conducting this project. Students may adapt this proposed project as their Capstone Project upon the agreement and under the guidance of their Capstone supervisor.	35%	CILO₁₋₅

b. Action Research Presentation Students will present their action research proposal, describing the study details, highlighting the potential ethical issues, and addressing the comments given by instructor(s) in the proposal-development process. Students will also critique each other's proposal.	20%	CILO ₁₋₅
c. Quizzes Quizzes (non-cumulative) are set to assess students' abilities in mastering, applying and synthesizing the theories and concepts explained in this course. Quiz items will be designed to test students' understanding of basic terminology and elementary concepts, and their ability to integrate and apply these concepts to analyze hypothetical and/or real life examples.	45%	CILO ₁₋₅

5. Use of Generative AI in Course Assessments

Please select one option only that applies to this course:

☐ **Not Permitted:** In this course, the use of generative AI tools is not allowed for any assessment tasks.

☒ **Permitted:** In this course, generative AI tools may be used in some or all assessment tasks. Instructors will provide specific instructions, including any restrictions or additional requirements (e.g., proper acknowledgement, reflective reports), during the first lesson and in relevant assessment briefs.

6. Required Text(s)

Prochaska, J. O. & Norcross, J. C. (2018). *Systems of psychotherapy: A transtheoretical analysis* (9th ed.). Oxford University Press Inc.

Nagy, T. F. (2011). *Essential ethics for psychologists: A primer for understanding and mastering core issues*. American Psychological Association.

7. Recommended Readings

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Bulger, C. A., Schultz, D. & Schultz, S. E. (2025). *Psychology and work today* (12th ed.). Routledge.

Cascio, W. F., & Aguinis, H. (2014). *Applied psychology in human resource management* (7th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Drogin, E. Y. (2019). *Ethical conflicts in psychology* (5th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Gatewood, R., Field, H. S., & Barrick, M. (2016). *Human resource selection* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists (2019). Code of ethics. Retrieved from <https://www.icphk.org.hk>

Hong Kong Psychological Society (2012). Code of Professional Conduct (2012). Retrieved from the Hong Kong Psychological Society website.

Kaslow, N., & Johnson, B. (2014). *The Oxford handbook of education and training in professional psychology*. Oxford University Press Inc.

- Kitchener, K. S. (2015). *Foundations of ethical practice, research, and teaching in psychology and counseling*. Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Knapp, S. J., & Fingerhut, R. (2024). *Practical ethics for psychologists: A positive approach*. American Psychological Association.
- Knapp, S. J., & Vande Creek, L. (2017). *Practical ethics for psychologists: A positive approach* (3rd ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Koocher, G., & Keith-Spiegel, P. (2016). *Ethics in psychology and the mental health professions: Professional standards and cases* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Nagy, T. F. (2005). *Ethics in plain English: An illustrative casebook for psychologists* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association.
- O'Donohue, W., & Ferguson, K. (2003). *Handbook of professional ethics for psychologists: Issues, questions, and controversies*. Sage.
- Reese, R., & Egan, G. (2018). *The skilled helper: A problem-management and opportunity-development approach to helping*. CENGAGE Learning Custom Publishing.
- Sattler, J. M. (2022). *Foundations of behavioral, social, and clinical assessment of children* (7th ed.). Jerome M. Sattler, Publisher, Inc.

8. Related Web Resources

- American Psychological Association
<http://www.apa.org/>
- Licensure as a Psychologist in Canada
- <https://cpa.ca/practice/practiceregulation/>
- The British Psychological Society: Professional Practice Guidelines 2017
[https://cms.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/BPS%20Practice%20Guidelines%20\(Third%20Edition\).pdf](https://cms.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/BPS%20Practice%20Guidelines%20(Third%20Edition).pdf)
- The Hong Kong Psychological Society
<http://www.hkps.org.hk/index.php>
- Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists (2019). Code of Ethics
<https://www.icphk.org.hk>
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong (2018). The Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance
https://www.pcpd.org.hk/english/about_pcpd/commissioner/commissioner.html

9. Related Journals

Professional Psychology: Research and Practice
International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation
Training and Education in Professional Psychology
Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology
Journal of Applied Psychology
Industrial and Organizational Psychology-Perspectives on Science and Practice

10. Academic Honesty

The University upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. Please refer to the Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity (<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/uploads/docs/000000000016336798924548BbN5>). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

As of 27 Apr 2026

11. Others

Nil