



**HKU
SWSA**

Department of Social Work and Social Administration
The University of Hong Kong
香港大學社會工作及社會行政學系



SOWK UNDERGRADUATE ELECTIVE COURSE CATALOG

2025-26 SEMESTER 2

CREDITS EARNED ELIGIBLE FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF:

WEBSITE



Major/Minor in Counselling/SPSD or BSW



Free electives for graduation



Remarks: Successful registration is subject to quota availability.

ELECTIVE COURSE LIST (2025-26 SEM 2)

SOWK1004B	Human behaviour and the social environment I (for Non-BSW students)
SOWK1012B	Communication and counselling skills in everyday life
SOWK2062A	Special topics in policy study
SOWK2062B	Special topics in policy study: Gender, inclusion and inequality
SOWK2119	Mediation & negotiation
SOWK2126A	Special topics in counselling: Exploring Human-Animal Interaction: From Interactions to Policy and Practice with Helping Pawfessionals
SOWK2126B	Special topics in counselling: Recovery-Orientated, Strengths-Based Perspective: Stimulates or Suffocates Personal Development
SOWK2133	Population aging and the controversies
SOWK3033	Working with youth at risk and juvenile offenders
SOWK3091	Mental health sciences and society
SOWK3093	Play therapy
SOWK3097	Trauma, resilience, and growth
SOWK3106	Use of creative arts in social work practice
SOWK3115	Frontiers in interventions around death, dying and bereavement
SOWK3138	Advanced social data analysis
SOWK3142	Compassionate mind and practice: Paths to healing and growth
SOWK3307	Working with families



SOWK1004B

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (I)



Description



This course introduces a holistic approach to an exploration of typical patterns of development from infancy to old age. Social and familial conditions affecting growth at different stages in the life-cycle will be studied, together with related problems of adaptation and adjustment.

SCHEDULE: FRI 0900-1150

Instructor: Prof. LEE Juyeon (leejy@hku.hk)

SOWK1012B

COMMUNICATION AND COUNSELLING SKILLS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

DESCRIPTION

“No man is an island” – John Donne. Human beings are social animals. It is our natural behavior to communicate with others. Good communication skills, however, are learned skills and not innate. Good counselling skills are advanced communication techniques. This course is an introduction to the basic communication and counselling skills required for establishing close and helping relationship with others. Students will be introduced to the concepts, skills and selfawareness needed for helpful interviewing and counselling and they can be applied in everyday 132 life. Students are expected to have developed good listening skills, interviewing skills, and creative thinking and problem solving skills at the end of the course. Most importantly, this course aims to assist students to identify their personal areas of stren

SCHEDULE: THU 1500-1750

Instructor: Dr. Jessica TANG (psjtang@hku.hk)

SOWK2062A

SPECIAL TOPICS IN POLICY STUDY

DESCRIPTION

This course examines special topics in policy study that reflect current topical and changing needs in the community.

SCHEDULE: THU 1300-1550

Instructor: Prof. Vivian LOU (wlou@hku.hk)

SOWK2062B

SPECIAL TOPICS IN

POLICY STUDY:

GENDER, INCLUSION

AND INEQUALITY

Highlights

Explore gender inequalities across family, work, health, and policy. Build critical thinking and research skills through real cases, debates, and applied analysis relevant to social work and public service.

Description

This course examines special topics in policy study that reflect current topical and changing needs in the community.

SCHEDULE: WED 1600-1850

Instructor: Prof. DING Xuejie (xjding@hku.hk)

SOWK2119

MEDIATION AND

NEGOTIATION

Highlights

Know the Conflict :

- Nature and Types of Conflict
- Conflict Management Models
- Negotiation and Mediation Skills

Description

The nature of interpersonal conflicts and strategies of conflict resolution will be examined in this course. The key elements of negotiation and mediation will be reviewed from different perspectives. Students will learn basic skills of negotiation and mediation. A win-win strategy in the conflict resolution process will be emphasized.

SCHEDULE: THU 1500-1750

Instructor: Ms. Clara YIP (clara@solung.com)

SOWK2126A

SPECIAL TOPICS IN COUNSELLING: EXPLORING HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTION: FROM INTERACTIONS TO POLICY AND PRACTICE WITH HELPING PAWFESSINALS

DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary course examines human services relating to animal involvement in social and health care settings through the One Welfare framework. The course emphasizes the interconnected well-being of humans, animals, and the environment. Through experiential learning, inclass debates, and case studies, students will examine the ethical, practical, and research challenges in settings where human-animal relationships are involved. We will touch on generally unattended issues such as animal abuse, compassion fatigue, violence and welfare, grief and bereavement, and volunteerism in animal-assisted services. It is designed for future social sciences, mental health, and social services professionals, preparing them to face these challenges with compassion and a critical lens.

HIGHLIGHTS

Prepare for evidence-informed and ethical practice at the intersection of human services, human-animal relationships, and One Welfare.

SCHEDULE: TUE 1400-1650

Instructor: Prof. Paul WONG (paulw@hku.hk)

SOWK2126B

SPECIAL TOPICS IN COUNSELLING: RECOVERY-ORIENTATED STRENGTHS- BASED PERSPECTIVE: STIMULATES OR SUFFOCATES PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

DESCRIPTION

Counselling is a fast-growing interdisciplinary area that have applications in various settings, including healthcare, social care, educational service, communities, civil society, governments, and the private sector. In this course, students will learn about the latest development in counselling, through experiential learning interwoven with knowledge about related theories and evidence.

HIGHLIGHTS

Discover counselling as an interdisciplinary field.

Explore strengths-based perspectives and controversies through theory, experiential learning, and case studies, applying insights across human services, education, communities, AI coaching, and workplace practice.

SCHEDULE: MON 1400-1650

Instructor: Prof. Samson TSE (samsont@hku.hk)

SOWK2133

POPULATION AGING AND THE CONTROVERSIES

Highlights

Learn how ageing shapes lives and societies! Through debates and real-world cases, build critical thinking and problem-solving skills for future careers tackling ageism, caregiving, and global ageing challenges.

Description

This course studies the ways in which social and cultural factors enter into the aging process. The practical and immediate effects of aging on society are examined. This course provides a comprehensive description of the dimensions of aging. The goal is to provide a holistic view of aging and to point to the ways in which the personal, social and structural levels of the process interact to shape the daily life of the elderly. With these understandings, the ways to deliver appropriate services to the elderly will also be discussed.

SCHEDULE: WED 1300-1550

Instructor: Prof. LU Peiyi (peiyilu@hku.hk)

SOWK3033

WORKING WITH YOUTH AT RISK AND JUVENILE OFFENDERS

DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the various approaches in working with delinquents and young people experiencing emotional or behavioural problems. To facilitate skills development, emphasis will be placed on experiential learning through the use of simulated exercises, games and role-play. Throughout the course, case and group examples will be drawn from a variety of local practice settings—probation, residential facilities for juvenile offenders, correctional services, outreach and school social work.

HIGHLIGHTS

If you want to learn why teens commit crime, like Adolescences, and how to intervene, SOWK3033 may provide an answer to you, enroll and check it out!

SCHEDULE: FRI 1900-2150

Instructor: Mr. Keswick CHUK (keswickc@gmail.com)

SOWK3091

MENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES AND SOCIETY

DESCRIPTION

This course brings together cutting-edge knowledge and discussions on mental health from diverse but related disciplines of philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, epidemiology, and social and healthcare services administration, both in the unique local context and in the international mental health scene. Students will be introduced to the critical examination of theories and practices in mental health with real-world examples. Throughout the course, conceptual explorations will be illustrated by case studies, including two complex syndromes affecting youth (i.e., psychotic disorders) and elderly (i.e., dementia), as well as other common mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety and developmental disorders (e.g., autism spectrum disorder) where appropriate. Using the conventional disease/medical model as a starting point, students will be guided to understand mental health in the broader context of biological, psychological, social and cultural factors that operate in combination to affect mental health outcomes at individual and population levels.

HIGHLIGHTS

Critically examine mental health theories and practices from youth to older adulthood in Hong Kong and globally: bridging theory, evidence, and real-world cases

SCHEDULE: FRI 0900-1150

Instructor: Prof. Ethan CHEUNG (escheung@hku.hk)

2025-26 Semester 2
SOWK BSW / BSS (Counselling) Elective

SOWK3093

PLAY THERAPY

PRE-REQUISITES: SOWK2107 or SOWK2137

DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the class to the use of play therapy in working with children, adolescents and families. The students will be presented with the essential elements and principles of play therapy, including historical development, theoretical modalities, basic techniques and applications.

SCHEDULE: THU 1300-1550

Instructor: Dr. Pandora NG (panokng@hku.hk)

SOWK3097

TRAUMA, RESILIENCE, AND GROWTH

Highlights



From crisis to recovery:
Learn practical
frameworks for
real-world care



Description



From natural disaster to human inflicted violence - landslides, tsunami, earthquake, terrorist attacks, traffic accidents, witness a murder, assaults by a total stranger, domestic violence by a love one, bullying by a classmate... the list goes on and on. Increasingly, traumatic events and the resulting stress have become part of the reality of life. While some of us may have experienced a traumatic event personally, many more witnessed or heard about these events happening around them. Recognizing the impact of traumatic event on a person and understanding the person's post-traumatic reactions is important for both human service professionals and lay persons. This course provides an overview of the study of traumatic stress. Topics covered in this course include the historical development and major theoretical perspectives of trauma research, symptoms and presentation of trauma survivors, post-traumatic stress and growth, treatments available and their research evidence.

SCHEDULE: TUE 0900-1150

Instructor: Dr. Stanley ISANGHA (sisangha@hku.hk)

SOWK3106

USE OF CREATIVE

ARTS IN SOCIAL

WORK PRACTICE

Description

This course introduces the theories of creative arts as healing and illustrates the use of creative arts in local social work contexts, including individual or group counselling setting and community development setting. It is a practical course with hands-on experience to the use of creative arts in expression, communication and healing. Creative arts are action-oriented and process-focused. The development of skills and use of creative arts for self-exploration go simultaneously in this course. Students will have the opportunity to experiment with the use of arts for creative exploration and self-understanding. Different arts media will be introduced, including visual art, craft work, music, sounds, dramatic exercises, spontaneous movement and writing. The students will synthesize their personal experience with conceptual learning through experiential activities, live demonstration, listening exercise, case studies, video analysis and 149 sharing. This course is not a formal creative arts therapy training, but offers opportunities for exploring the resources of creative arts in social work context.

SCHEDULE: THU 1300-1550

Instructor: Prof. Rainbow HO (tinho@hku.hk)

SOWK3115

FRONTIERS IN INTERVENTIONS AROUND DEATH, DYING AND BEREAVEMENT

Highlights

Through lectures, an experiential workshop, and a field trip, students explore death, dying, and bereavement as real-life challenges, developing reflection and foundational intervention understanding for personal life and helping roles.

Description

There are more than a hundred deaths each day in Hong Kong, but death is a taboo for most for us. The unfamiliarity towards death induces a sense of anxiety when this topic is brought up to us. Death-related problem is one of the commonest issues that clients bring to counselling, but is often rated as the most uncomfortable scenario by beginning counsellors. This course is designed for students with an interest in understanding death, dying and bereavement. It offers a close examination on the challenges individuals, families and service providers face surrounding life-threatening illness and death. Theories and intervention strategies on end-of-life and bereavement care are reviewed. This course increases students' competence in working with clients facing death, dying, loss and trauma.

SCHEDULE: THU 0900-1150

Instructor: Prof. LI Yanjuan Janice (lyjanice@hku.hk)

2025-26 Semester 2
SOWK BSW / BSS (SPSD) Elective

SOWK3138

ADVANCED SOCIAL DATA ANALYSIS

PRE-REQUISITES: SOWK2144

DESCRIPTION

Statistical methods play a crucial role in the social sciences. This course aims to equip students with a basic knowledge of how to perform advanced statistical methods commonly used in empirical research. While some mathematical details are needed, the primary focus of this course is the theoretical underpinning and the application of core methods in social work research, program evaluation and policy research. We will build the students' statistical literacy through providing an overview of more advanced topics including linear methods for regressions, generalized linear regressions, multilevel models, survival analysis, factor analysis, and structural equation models.

HIGHLIGHTS

Covers advanced statistical methods with practical applications in social work and policy research, strengthening students' ability to analyze data, interpret findings, and critically evaluate empirical studies.

SCHEDULE: WED 1300-1550

Instructor: Prof. Carrie LI (li.carrie@hku.hk)

SOWK3142

COMPASSIONATE MIND AND PRACTICE: PATHS TO HEALING AND GROWTH

DESCRIPTION

Pain and suffering are universal experiences that often lead individuals to seek counselling. How can practitioners effectively attend to and endure suffering, while fostering growth and flourishing in the face of distress? Compassion may offer a guiding light. In this experiential course, students will learn about the compassion-oriented approach that centers on the evolutionary perspective of our emotion systems and the flows of compassion. They will explore the fear of compassion and practice some evidence-based strategies for developing a compassionate mind to support growth and wellbeing in daily life and counselling contexts. The learning experience will enable students to engage in compassion through awareness, practices and in-depth reflection for applying it meaningfully in their personal and professional lives.

HIGHLIGHTS

An experiential journey to learn the meaning, science, fear, and evidence-based practices of compassion for transforming distress.

“The course content encourages self-care and compassion that are really related to our mental wellbeing.”

SCHEDULE: FRI 1500-1750

Instructor: Dr. Jessica TANG (psjtang@hku.hk)

SOWK3307

WORKING WITH FAMILIES

PRE-REQUISITES: SOWK2107 or SOWK2137

Highlights

Gain essential skills in family social work, including assessment techniques and intervention strategies, benefiting personal growth and professional practice through a comprehensive family perspective.

Description

This course examines the concept of a 'family perspective' and assist students in gaining an understanding of the major approaches to working with families. Theories on family, methods of assessment, and a range of strategies and techniques for effective intervention with the family as well as their applicability to the local context will also be considered.

SCHEDULE: TUE 1000-1250

Instructor: Dr. Anna CHOI (anna.choi@hku.hk)

CONTACT US

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