

**Lingnan University**  
**Department of Philosophy**

|                                 |                                                               |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Course Title</b>             | Philosophy of Psychiatry                                      |
| <b>Course Code</b>              | PHI3286                                                       |
| <b>Recommended Study Year</b>   | NIL                                                           |
| <b>No. of Credits/Term</b>      | 3                                                             |
| <b>Mode of Tuition</b>          | Sectional approach                                            |
| <b>Class Contact Hours</b>      | 3                                                             |
| <b>Category</b>                 | Programme Elective - Philosophy of Natural and Human Sciences |
| <b>Discipline</b>               | -                                                             |
| <b>Prerequisite(s)</b>          | NIL                                                           |
| <b>Co-requisite(s)</b>          | NIL                                                           |
| <b>Exclusion(s)</b>             | NIL                                                           |
| <b>Exemption Requirement(s)</b> | NIL                                                           |

### **Brief Course Description**

Philosophy of psychiatry is a field at the intersection of philosophy of science and philosophy of medicine. It focuses primarily on conceptual issues surrounding the study and diagnosis of mental disorders such as schizophrenia, Major Depressive Disorder, and derealization, to name just a few. Mental disorders are philosophically interesting because they straddle a number of divides. They are products of our brain and biology, yet often do not occur with any identifiable physical disorder or deficit. Mental disorders are clearly real, but also seem to some extent socially constructed. Different cultures in different times and places are affected by very different mental disorders. And persons affected by mental disorders often display a mix of seemingly normal behavior and disordered behavior. A subject with Capgras delusion might mistake their spouse for a robot, but otherwise behave normally. How, then, should we understand the concept of a mental disorder, both in relation to physical diseases and disorders (such as heart disease or a broken leg) and in relation to 'normal' cognition? This and other such fundamental questions are the focus of this course.

### **Aims**

The aim of this course is to:

1. Provide students with an in-depth understanding of the philosophy of psychiatry and the concept of mental disorder
2. To locate the concept of mental disorder with respect to concepts of other medical conditions as well as the concept of 'normal' cognition
3. To understand the conceptual and philosophical controversies surrounding several central psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, and addiction.
4. To relate issues in the philosophy of psychiatry to broader debates in the philosophy of mind (e.g. the mind-body problem) and philosophy of science (e.g. scientific realism)

### **Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

LO1: Understand the philosophical dimension of core concepts in psychiatry such as that of a mental disorder

LO2: Characterize different psychiatric disorders (schizophrenia, addiction, etc.) and identify philosophically salient aspects of them

LO3: Relate issues in psychiatry to foundational questions in philosophy of mind (e.g. the mind-body problem) and philosophy of science (e.g. scientific realism)

LO4: Develop and employ philosophical skills of argumentation and critical thinking to debates in the philosophy of psychiatry

## Indicative Content

1. The philosophy of psychiatry; the history of psychiatry; the philosophy of science
2. The concept of a mental disorder; distinguishing illness vs. disease vs. disorder; classifications such as the DSM-5.
3. The ontology of mental disorder; are mental disorders real; analyses of mental disorder
4. The medical (or biological) model of mental disorder; strengths and weaknesses of it
5. Mental illness and moral responsibility; compatibility of different types of explanation of human behavior
6. Cultural variation and mental disorder; distinguishing 'pathological' mental states; cultural sensitivity and cultural relativism
7. Schizophrenia; progression of disease; major symptoms; analyses of schizophrenia
8. Delusional disorders; monothematic delusions; Capgras delusion; Cotard delusion; 'double bookkeeping' phenomenon
9. Depression; depressive feelings vs. Major Depressive Disorder; depression as an adaptive response vs. pathology
10. Addiction; addiction and the self; addiction and responsibility; addiction vs. habit
11. Treating mental disorder; psychopharmacology; therapy; mental disorder and the self

## Teaching Method

The course will be taught in a sectional format.

## Measurement of Learning Outcomes

|                              | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Attendance and participation | ✓   |     |     | ✓   |
| Quizzes                      |     | ✓   | ✓   |     |
| Essay                        |     | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| Midterm and final exam       | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |

## Assessment

Student' progress towards the learning outcomes will be measured by:

1. Attendance and participation - 10%
2. In-class quizzes - 15%
3. Essay - 20%
4. Midterm exam (22.5%) and final exam (32.5%) - 55% total

## Required/Essential Readings

Dominic Murphy, 'The Philosophy of Psychiatry, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020. URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/psychiatry/>

Fulford, K.W.M, Thornton, T. & Graham, G., *Oxford Textbook of Philosophy of Psychiatry*, Oxford University Press, 2006 (Excerpts)

George Graham, *The Disordered Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Mental Illness*, Routledge, 2010 (Excerpts)

Sam Wilkinson, *Philosophy of Psychiatry: A Contemporary Introduction*, Routledge, 2023 (Excerpts)

### Recommended/Supplementary Readings

American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* [DSM-5], 5<sup>th</sup> edition, American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

Lisa Bortolotti, *Delusions and Other Irrational Beliefs*, Oxford University Press, 2009.

John Campbell, 'Causation in Psychiatry', in Kenneth Kendler and Josef Parnas (eds.), *Philosophical Issues in Psychiatry*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

Rachel Cooper, *Psychiatry and Philosophy of Science*, Routledge, 2007

Martin Davies, Anne Aimola Davies, and Max Coltheart, 'Anosognosia and the Two-Factor Theory of Delusions', *Mind and Language*, 2005.

Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, Princeton University Press, 1995.

Kenneth Kendler, Peter Zachar, and Carl Craver, 'What Kinds of Things Are psychiatric Disorders?,' *Psychological Medicine*, 2011.

Neil Levy, 'Addiction is Not a Brain Disease (and it Matters)', *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 2013.

Hanna Pickard, 'Addiction and the self', *Noûs*, 2021.

Kathryn Tabb, 'Philosophy of psychiatry after diagnostic kinds', *Synthese*, 2018.

Şerife Tekin, *Reclaiming the Self in Psychiatry: Centering Personal Narratives for a Humanist Science*, Routledge, 2025

Jerome Wakefield, 'Disorder As Harmful Dysfunction: A Conceptual Critique of DSM-III-R's Definition of Mental Disorder,' *Psychological Review*, 1992.

### **Important Notes:**

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations and Coursework. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.
- (5) Students must adhere to the University's guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents "Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University" and "Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments" can be found here: <https://www.ln.edu.hk/tlc/generative-artificial-intelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices>.

### Rubric for Evaluating Attendance and Participation

| Excellent<br>(100%-90%)                                                                                                                                          | Good<br>(89%-80%)                                                                                                 | Fair<br>(79%-70%)                                                                                                                      | Poor<br>(69%-60%)                                                                                                      | Unsatisfactory<br>(59%-0%)                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attempts frequently to answer or raise questions; comments are mostly cogent and relevant; full attendance (except absence with prior notice and valid reasons.) | Attempts frequently to answer or raise questions; comments are often cogent and relevant; almost full attendance. | Attempts sometimes to answer or raise questions; comments are sometimes cogent and relevant; skips quite a few classes without notice. | Seldom attempts to answer or raise questions, but can sometimes offer relevant answers when asked; skips many classes. | Almost never makes cogent or relevant comments, even when asked; skips most classes. |

### Rubric for Grading an Essay

|                                                    | Excellent<br>(100%-90%)                                                                                          | Good<br>(89%-80%)                                                                                                            | Fair<br>(79%-70%)                                                                                                                     | Poor<br>(69%-60%)                                                                                                 | Unsatisfactory<br>(59%-0%)                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Knowledge of Course Material<br><br>(Weight: 30%)  | Demonstrated knowledge goes substantially beyond what is expected of students in this course.                    | Demonstrates knowledge of most important points; shows understanding of the basic philosophical positions and disagreements. | Demonstrates knowledge of most important point, and the most important points of disagreement, but with some unclarity or inaccuracy. | Some of the basic points are understood, but the student shows substantial misunderstandings.                     | Student's understanding deviates significantly from the positions discussed in class/Student fails to write on the assigned topic. |
| Argumentation and Originality<br><br>(Weight: 30%) | Presents compelling arguments, shows understanding of important objections, and offers novel arguments or ideas. | Presents compelling arguments and shows understanding of important objections. Novel aspects are less                        | Presents arguments that successfully motivate the main claims, but details are overlooked, and objections are                         | Arguments are often vague and impressionistic, or supported with dubious claims or fallacious modes of reasoning. | No discernible arguments/ No engagement with the ideas of the class.                                                               |

|                               |                                                                            |                                                                                       |                                                                           |                                                                                            |                                                          |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
|                               |                                                                            | compelling or absent.                                                                 | not handled as well.                                                      |                                                                                            |                                                          |
| Organization<br>(Weight: 20%) | Ideas are clearly arranged to allow easy understanding of their relations. | As excellent, but with slightly more mistakes in arrangement of ideas.                | Basic structure is good, but sometimes arrangement of ideas is confusing. | Essay seems to switch topics at points or is difficult to follow due to unclear structure. | Lack of organizational structure/<br>Largely incomplete. |
| Writing<br>(Weight: 20%)      | Clear, engaging writing, with almost no mistakes in grammar or spelling.   | Occasional mistakes in grammar or spelling which do not interfere with comprehension. | Substantial mistakes that sometimes make comprehension difficult.         | Significant portions cannot be accurately assessed because of problems with the writing.   | The content is difficult or impossible to evaluate.      |

### Rubric for Evaluating Midterm and Final Exam

#### Rubric for Grading an Examination

*For questions with clear-cut answers:*

|                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Perfect<br>(100%)                                                                                         | Partial Credit<br>(80-20%)                                                                                                                                                 | Zero<br>(0%)                                                                          |
| The concluding answer is correct, with a clear, sound, and sufficient argument or explanation, if needed. | The concluding answer is correct, but the argument or explanation unclear or insufficient, or the concluding answer is incorrect, but some intermediate steps are correct. | Neither the concluding answer nor anything in the argument or explanation is correct. |

*For essay questions or open-ended questions:*

|                                | Excellent<br>(90-100%)                                                                   | Good<br>(80-89%)                                                                              | Fair<br>(70-79%)                                                                             | Poor<br>(60-69%)                                                     | Unsatisfactory<br>(0-59%)                                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Knowledge<br>(Weight: 70%)     | Demonstrates knowledge of all the relevant points, with a clear and accurate exposition. | Demonstrates knowledge of most relevant points, with a largely clear and accurate exposition. | Demonstrates knowledge of most relevant points, but the exposition is unclear or inaccurate. | Demonstrates only a limited understanding of the basic points.       | Demonstrates very little understanding of even the basic points. |
| Argumentation<br>(Weight: 30%) | Presents novel, compelling arguments with enough details.                                | Presents compelling arguments, with less novelty or some gaps.                                | Presents reasonable arguments that are not novel or very compelling.                         | Attempts to express an argument, but the result is unclear or messy. | Makes little or no attempt to present arguments.                 |