

**MMPH6164 Risk: perception, decisions and communication**

**Coordinator: Prof J Liao**

**Course Description:**

Risk is inevitable in life, yet the ability to accurately judge risk and the decisions made thereafter are usually quite skewed by psychological, social and contextual factors, so much so that serious errors can occur in decision making. In healthcare, the ability to accurately assess risk and the psychological strategies that people adopt to avoid the threat that risk presents means that health hazards are often completely misrepresented both to ones self and to others. Health professionals also have the task of communicating health risk information to the community as well as individuals. How can information be presented in such a way as to effectively communicate the true nature of a hazard without distorting or falling into the trap of being ignored? This course looks in detail at the area of risk perceptions, the distortions of decisions by psychological and other factors and the communication of risk, all core skills for public health professionals.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Tutors/TAs:** Cecilia Tam/ Ripple Yuan/ Clara Chen

**Term 3 (Wednesday)**

**Contact person:** Clara Chen

Date	Time	Lecture Topic	Lecturer	Venue
07 May 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	1. Theorizing risk	Prof J Liao	TBC
14 May 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	2. Cognitive models: representing the world	Prof J Liao	TBC
21 May 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	3. Decision making: Rational and emotional processes	Prof J Liao	TBC
28 May 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	4. Mental Models Approach to risk communication	Prof J Liao	TBC
04 June 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	5. The media impact on risk response and communication: misinformation, fake news, and fact checking	Prof J Liao & Guest speaker: Prof Xinzhi Zhang	TBC
11 June 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	6. Risk, response to risk and trust	Prof J Liao	TBC
18 June 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	7. Presentation 1: Identifying gaps between the expert model and lay models of risk	Prof J Liao	TBC
25 June 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	8. Risk communication: risk statistics and uncertainty	Prof J Liao	TBC
02 July 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	9. Communication about infectious disease outbreaks and vaccines	Prof J Liao	TBC
09 July 2025	6:30 – 9:30 pm	10. Presentation 2: Improving risk communication	Prof J Liao	TBC

**Course Assessment:**

Continuous assessment:

In-class Discussion: 20%

Reflective diary: 50%

Group presentation: 30%

**Recommended Textbooks:**

1. Bennett P, Calnan K. *Risk communication and public health*. Oxford. OUP. 2010.

2. Lupton D. *Risk*. London; New York: Routledge 2013/2023

Contact person: Miss Clara Chen; email : cc77077@connect.hku.hk; Tel : 39179988