

December 16, 1991

To UEC:

This description of 456 is from my 1991 report of service:

With respect to my undergraduate teaching, I view my task in both 202 and 456 as 1) introducing students to the subject matter at both a theoretical and empirical level, 2) teaching them the logic of research design---how one puts a question to nature in laboratory or field settings, and 3) illustrating the links between theory and research on the one hand, and real world problems on the other (NB: This is easier to do in social psychology than in other areas).

In 456, I have the additional goal of teaching students how to put together a scholarly paper. I have no exams in 456, but two 10-15 page papers are the requirements for the course. The papers topics are supplied by me, with the first topic on "Attitudes and Behavior" and the second on "Aggression and Prejudice"; each topic is explicated in a lengthy description, and the students are asked to bring in research, covered in readings are in the readings I have collected for the course (see SRISP in the 456 syllabus). In effect, the two papers are analogous to two long take home exams. With the help of two paper graders, we return the first papers within about 10 days after we receive them, with detailed comments on both style and substance. If the students receive a grade below B-, we allow (and encourage) them to rewrite. The goal is to get all the students to write excellent papers. Obviously, only a fraction of the papers turn out to be excellent, but I believe our high expectations produce better papers than we would otherwise receive. I am often surprised to hear students tell me that this is the first paper they have written for a psychology class. Being able to make a cogent argument in writing is an important skill, and I believe our upper division students need a lot more practice than they are getting. In general, I think the two paper requirement is successful, as evidenced by the notable improvement in the quality of the papers from the first to the second topic. However, last year was distressing for me, since it was the first time in memory when the papers did not show substantial improvement over time (no problem if the first papers were already quite good, but that was not the case). I do not know if last year was a fluke, and I am awaiting the results of this years class.

The syllabus for 456 consists of readings I have collated over the years from (almost exclusively) primary source material. Most of the readings are classics in the field (e.g., Allport's 1933 article on attitudes), and newer material is presented in lecture. Particularly in the attitude domain (less true in the intergroup area), the older articles deal with broader issues, but are less methodologically astute, and for this level of student I have had to sacrifice some to assign them the older articles.

Psychology 456 & 556  
Social Psychology I: Attitudes and Social Behavior  
9:30 - 10:50 Tuesdays & Thursdays

M. Rothbart  
Fall 1991  
146 Straub

### LECTURE SCHEDULE

Sept 24 & 26	Introduction to social psychology: some definitions and principles of social perception
Oct 1 & 3	Evidence, inference and the maintenance of social beliefs
Oct 8 & 10	Nature and measurement of attitudes
Oct 15 & 17	Theories of cognitive consistency and attitude change
Oct 22	"
Oct 24	To Be Announced
Oct 29 & 31	Aggression and prejudice
Nov 5	"
Nov 7	To Be Announced
Nov 12 & 14	The nature of good and evil
Nov 19 & 21	Causal attribution and social roles
Nov 26	"
Dec 3 & 5	Organizational processes: Thinking about social problems and social change

### READING LIST

1. Selected readings in social psychology. Reproduced for use in this course, available at EMU Copy Center. (Abbreviation: SRISP)
2. Beliefs, attitudes, and human affairs. By D. Bem. Wadsworth, 1970. (Required)
3. The unresponsive bystander: Why doesn't he help?. By B. Latane & J. Darley. Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970. (Abbreviation: UB) (Optional)

NOTE: Attitude paper due October 31, 1991  
Aggression/Prejudice paper due December 5, 1991

ATTITUDES (Note: Paper on Attitudes due October 31, 1991.)

1. The nature and measurement of attitudes<sup>1</sup>

<u>Source</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
SRISP	Attitudes	Allport
SRISP	The method of constructing an attitude scale	Likert
SRISP	Response biases and response sets	Guilford
SRISP	On the fading of social stereotypes	Karlins et al.
SRISP	Current stereotypes: A little fading, a little faking	Sigall & Page
SRISP	Attitudes vs. actions	La Piere
SRISP	Attitudes vs. actions vs. attitudes vs. attitudes	Schuman
SRISP	When actions reflect attitudes	Snyder & Swann
SRISP	The indirect assessment of social attitudes	Campbell
SRISP	Beliefs, attitudes and human affairs	Bem

2. Cognitive consistency, attitude organization, and attitude change

SRISP	Cognitive dynamics in the conduct of human affairs	Osgood
SRISP	Attitudinal consequences of induced discrepancies between cognitions and behavior	Cohen
SRISP	Modes of resolution of belief dilemmas	Abelson
SRISP	The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness	Hovland & Weiss
SRISP	Assimilation and contrast effects in reactions to communication and attitude change	Hovland et al.
SRISP	An experimental analysis of the contrast effect and its implications for intergroup communication and the indirect assessment of attitudes	Dawes et al.
SRISP	Compliance, identification, and Internalization: Three processes of attitude change	Kelman

<sup>1</sup>Although it will not be fatal to read the various articles out of order, there is an advantage to reading them in the order listed.

AGGRESSION (Note: Paper on Aggression & Prejudice due December 5, 1990)

<u>Source</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
SRISP	Biological factors II: Physiology, genetics and sex	Johnson
SRISP	The frustration-aggression hypothesis	Miller et al.
SRISP	The stimulating vs. cathartic effects of a vicarious aggressive activity	Fishbach
SRISP	Some conditions of obedience & disobedience to authority	Milgram
SRISP	From individual to group impressions	Rothbart et al.
SRISP	Recall for confirming events	Rothbart et al.
SRISP	Arousal for ingroup-outgroup biases by a chance win or loss	Rabbie & Horwitz
SRISP	Social categorization & memory for ingroup and outgroup behavior	Howard & Rothbart
SRISP	Social categorization and similarity in intergroup behavior	Billig & Tajfel
SRISP	The perception of outgroup homogeneity and levels of social categorization	Park & Rothbart
SRISP	Ethnic tolerance: Social & personal control	Bettelheim & Janowitz
SRISP	The authoritarian personality	Frankel-Brunswick et al.
SRISP	Racial identification & preference in Negro children	Clark & Clark
SRISP	Black is beautiful: A reexamination of racial preference and identification	Hraba & Grant
SRISP	The effect of public policy in housing projects upon interracial attitudes	Deutsch & Collins
SRISP	Negro platoons in white companies	Starr et al.
SRISP	Superordinate goals in the reduction of intergroup conflict	Sherif
UB	The unresponsive bystander: Why doesn't he help?	Latane & Darley
SRISP	Efforts of group pressure upon their modification & distortion of judgment	Asch

<u>Source</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
SRISP	Why war? Freud's letter to Einstein	Freud
SRISP	Ritualized fighting	Lorenz
SRISP	Moral Equivalent of War	James

General References (on reserve):

The Nature of Prejudice, by G. W. Allport. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954.

Social learning & personality development, by A. Bandura & R. H. Walters. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963. Contains a good analysis of aggression from a behavioristic point of view.

Frustration & conflict: Selected readings, by A. J. Yates. New York: Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1965 (paperback). Contains some classic experiments on displaced aggression.

Aggression in man & animals, by R. N. Johnson. Philadelphia: Sanders Co., 1972.

Term Paper Topic #1  
Due: October 31, 1991

Psy 456  
**PAPER TOPIC ON ATTITUDES**

M. Rothbart  
Fall 1991

INTRODUCTION: Two of the most basic and enduring questions concerning the nature of social attitudes can be summarized as follows:)

1. What are we able to predict about a person when we know their attitude(s) toward some object (group, issue, nation, individual, etc.)?
2. In what ways, if any, can important social attitudes be changed?

The first paper topic requires that you address both these questions.

1. The meaning and predictive value of attitudes: Although it is possible to predict, with a high degree of accuracy, individuals' voting behavior from their previously expressed preferences for candidates (as with Gallup and Harris polls), some psychologists have been highly skeptical about the usefulness of the concept of attitude. These critics have argued that verbally expressed attitudes, such as those obtained in opinion polls and paper-and-pencil questionnaires, are often unrelated to a person's actual behavior, or even to other (logically related) attitudes that the person holds. Thus, it is possible to review the public opinion literature and find that Americans' attitudes toward the Vietnam war were "inconsistent" (supporting escalation in 1966, and supporting withdrawal in 1970), as are their racial attitudes (strong majority support for school integration and racial equality, and strong majority opposition to busing). It is evidence such as this, as well as from more controlled studies relating attitudes to behavior, that have led people to the conclusion that an individual's verbally expressed attitudes enable us neither to predict behavior, nor even their attitudes, toward similar or related topics.

Although it is possible to find some research (and personal anecdotes) that tend to support this criticism, it is your task to carefully evaluate this criticism and to answer the following set of interrelated questions:

- a. Under what conditions, if any, would there be a close correspondence (good predictability) between a subject's verbally stated attitudes and her/his overt behavior.
- b. What factors might be responsible for producing a poor correlation between attitudes and behavior in some instances, and a good correlation in other instances?

2. Attitude change: In 1906, the sociologist Sumner made the statement that "stateways cannot change folkways," in which he meant, roughly, that government-imposed regulation could not significantly alter the attitudes and values of the governed. More recently, the same principle has found popularity in the belief that "you can't legislate morality."

Re-examine Sumner's statement in the theory and research on the problems of cognitive consistency and attitude change. Consider the following interrelated questions:

a. While considerable governmental legislation is directed toward changing social attitudes (e.g., toward pornography, disadvantaged groups, alcoholism, physical fitness), what does the relevant research and theory in the area of cognitive consistency suggest about the prospects for such change? Obviously, Sumner believes such attempts are a "fool's errand," but your task is to consider to what degree the existing research corroborates or disconfirms Sumner's belief.

b. According to research and theory on the problem of cognitive consistency, what are the conditions that limit the amount of attitude change that can occur through legislation?

IMPORTANT NOTE: One common source of confusion in tackling this question concerns the application of Sumner's statement to overt behavior vs. internalized beliefs. We know that within limits, government legislation can influence behavior (e.g., stop lights, parking restrictions, tax laws), but Sumner's statement refers to the effects of legislation on the implicit or explicit mores, norms, attitudes and values held by a group (i.e., what de Tocqueville had earlier called "habits of the heart").

#### SUMMARY

Both of these questions refer to the general problem of consistency, where the first question refers to the degree of consistency between attitude and behavior; and the second refers to the degree of consistency between behavior change (compliance) and attitude change. In answering these questions it is important to cite the research whenever possible to strengthen your argument, but it is also worth examining the idea of consistency itself. By what standards do we determine whether two events are consistent or not? By whose standards do we decide if a person has behaved inconsistently?

After you have considered the above questions, answer them as clearly as you can, drawing extensively on the ideas and findings discussed in the readings and in lectures.

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This paper is to be typed (double-spaced) and no longer than 10 to 15 pages. Since this will be your first paper for this course, you should seriously consider the following recommendations:

1. This paper is not an essay in which the student pontificates for 15 pages, serving up paragraph after paragraph of unsubstantiated opinion. In a way, the first paper will be a test of your ability to produce a scholarly document. By this I mean a document in which you support your arguments with references to the readings (with standard bibliographic citations), cite empirical evidence whenever possible, and present your ideas in a well-organized, logical progression. Since the nature of the paper topic will require you to do some careful, critical thinking on your own, we do expect you to present your own point of view (and therefore your "opinion"). Your own point of view, however, should be substantiated by evidence whenever possible. Basically, this assignment is designed to see how well you understand and can think about the readings in this course, and how well you can express your ideas in written form.

2. There is obviously no one correct "answer" to the above set of questions, nor is there any single optimum way of approaching the paper topic. Every student is expected to see the problem in a slightly different perspective, and is accordingly expected to structure her/his paper in a unique manner. There are a great variety of ways in which the above question can be attacked.

3. The problem of listing: As a substitute for thinking, many students are in the habit of listing every relevant theory, experiment, or idea that they can think of in the hope that they have "hit" the correct answer. This probability model for writing term papers is not very satisfactory. As a substitute for the listing procedure, it is recommended that the student attempt to organize her/his thinking before writing the paper, and try to present a limited set of arguments as persuasively as possible; i.e., with as much clear thinking and documented evidence as s/he is able. In short, do not try to say everything; say a few important things persuasively.



Term Paper #2: Due December 5  
Alternate Choice 1  
Aggression and Prejudice

Analyze the role of physical differences in the development and maintenance of intergroup hostility. Consider how differences in skin color, eye color, physiognomy, etc., affect the establishment of prejudicial attitudes and examine the possible role that such differences play in the maintenance and/or reduction of prejudice.

COMMENTS:

1. While your success in dealing with the problem will depend on the kinds of questions that you generate about the role of physical differences, it may be profitable to ask yourself the following questions:

"If I had to formulate a general theory of prejudice, how much importance would I assign to physical differences between the antagonistic groups?"

"Do such differences play a central or peripheral role in the establishment and maintenance of prejudice?"

2. Again, you are asked to document your arguments by references to the readings. By necessity, you are going to have to make many assumptions that cannot be supported directly by research findings. There is certainly nothing wrong with this, but you are encouraged to cite evidence whenever possible.

Term Paper #2: Due December 5  
Alternate Choice II

Assume that you are one of those timeless Martian voyeurs who scrutinizes the habits of earthlings from the safety and serenity of your flying saucer. You have been particularly interested in the development of one specific collection of individuals who experienced the following social evolution:

Developmental Stage I

A cruise ship, carrying a group of travelers that were homogeneous with respect to gene type and cultural heritage, struck a coral reef in the central Pacific and sank. There were four survivors who made their way to an uninhabited island that was bisected by a high mountain range (see Fig. I). One female and one male reached the west end of the island, and independently, one male and one female reached the east end of the island. Strangely enough, the only genetic differences among the four individuals was that the two west islanders were both homozygous for brown eyes (hereafter to be called 'browns') and the two east islanders were both homozygous for hazel eyes (hereafter to be called 'hazels'). As is the case following most traumatic events, all four shipwreck victims experienced considerable retrograde amnesia to the extent that they forgot virtually all of their cultural background.

Both the browns and the hazels successfully built shelters, cultivated food, and produced offspring prodigiously.

Developmental Stage II

After returning to the island approximately ten generations after the shipwreck survivors first landed, you observe that the browns and the hazels have developed somewhat "parallel" societies, but the mountain range has still not been penetrated, and the two groups are still unaware of each other's existence. Each society has advanced at a fairly rapid rate with the concomitant social institutions: legal codes, token economies, division of labor, etc.

Developmental Stage III

Upon returning after ten more generations, you discover that the two societies have "discovered" each other; in fact, it is clear that the browns are now in political control of both sides of the island. By almost every indicator imaginable, the hazels suffer the burden of an inferior class: inferior housing, inadequate education, poorer educational opportunities, greater evidence of poverty, fewer hazels in positions of meaningful economic and/or political power, etc.

In light of your knowledge of the available research on aggression and prejudice, please consider the following set of questions. (Note: Any attempt to answer the following questions should be characterized by the inclusion of supporting evidence whenever possible. Obviously, you are going to have to make "best guesses" in many instances, but these guesses should themselves be based on available evidence.

1. How do you account for the outcome in Stage III? Was the outcome evidenced in Stage III inevitable once the two groups came into contact with each other? Why? Under what conditions, if any, could these events have been avoided? Justify.

2. What are the probable attitudes of the browns toward the hazels? What possible events, if any, could cause the browns to modify their attitudes and/or behavior toward the hazels?

3. What are the probable attitudes of the hazels toward themselves? What events, if any, might modify this self-image?

4. Will the hazels continue to be an "inferior" group indefinitely? If yes, justify. If no, what conditions would be most likely to bring about a change in status?

