

Attitudes and Social Behavior

Psychology 456/556

Tue, Thu 9:30-10:50, Straub 146

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Office hours: Wed 1:00-3:00 and Thu 11:00-12:00

- How do attitudes guide social behavior?
- How do we form impressions of other people?
- How does the way we see ourselves influence our social interactions?
- What are the roots of aggression and violence, love and altruism?

In this course you will learn about research and theories in social psychology that help answer these questions. More importantly, you will learn to think about yourself and other people more carefully.

Course format. This course has four important features:

1. It does not use a textbook. Instead, I will introduce each topic in class, review the relevant research and thinking, and apply it to our everyday behavior. Attendance in class is therefore important because the content of the lectures cannot be found in any *one* traditional textbook.

2. For each class meeting you will have 2-5 original articles to read, all of which can be found in the course reader (available at the U of O Bookstore). The articles range from short notes to full-fledged research papers. Some articles are quite challenging and require basic knowledge of research methods and statistics. Some articles are closely related to material presented in class, others cover new material.

3. You will think and write extensively about the topics of this course. Specifically, you will write *4 reaction papers* and be the “editor” of 4 of your classmates’ reaction papers. In addition, you will turn in two material-related *discussion questions* (one during the weeks before midterm, one during the weeks before finals) that will be posted on the world wide web.

4. You will participate “live” as well as electronically in this course. First, an early assignment in this class is to get a gladstone account, learn how to use email, and send me a message (due Friday, Jan 19). Second, class material such as the syllabus, tips on writing reaction papers, comments on the reading assignments, and weekly discussion questions will be posted on the world wide web. Consequently, the second early assignment in this class will be to learn how to use the web and provide a documentation of your web experience (due Friday, Jan 26).

Expect to work hard. This is not a threat but a promise, for in return you will gain excitement about social psychology, insights into the complexities of social behavior, and increased self-awareness of the mechanisms that guide your own behavior and experience.

Grading. A perfect grade would consist of 100 points. 40 points can be earned by writing and editing 4 reaction papers (10 points each). 20 points can be earned by fulfilling the two electronic assignments as well as turning in two discussion questions (5 points each). And another 40 points can be earned by completing midterm and final exams. The translation of points into actual grades will aim at a curve of about 20% A’s, 30% B’s, and 30% C’s, but there will be flexibility to adjust for the current class’s actual performance.

Exams. I am planning to give an early midterm exam February 1, which will be worth 15 points. The final exam on Tuesday, March 19 will be worth 25 points. The exams will consist of an in-class multiple-choice part and take-home short-answer questions.

If you are not able to complete an exam at the scheduled time, you must talk to me before the exam. In case of illness, significant family events (marriage, death of a relative), and away games of collegiate athletes, special arrangements can be made. No other exceptions will be made.

I will not tolerate any form of cheating.

Reaction papers. You will have many new ideas and make many new observations regarding social behavior during the next 10 weeks. I would like you to share these ideas with your classmates (and with me). You will therefore write 4 short reaction papers during the term (rather than one long end-of-term paper). Each paper should be 2 to 5 pages long, double-spaced, typed or computer-printed. A reaction paper contains your intellectual reaction to a topic covered in lecture or to an article from the course reader. In these papers, you are the researcher, the theoretician, the social critic, the policy maker. Intellectual reactions include, for example: a critique of an article you read, a proposal for a new experiment, an application of a principle, a theoretical analysis of an everyday phenomenon, a description of an inconsistency in the literature, a policy proposal to solve a societal problem. Intellectual reactions do not include: a summary of material covered in lecture, an abstract of an article from the course reader, a personal story unrelated to any discussed theory or phenomenon. (When in doubt, ask me during office hours.)

One of the four papers must be a report of a small-scale empirical investigation you conducted yourself. For example, you can run a quick experiment or survey on your friends or dorm mates; you can conduct a systematic observation; you can use archival sources to document a certain phenomenon; or you can create an exercise or intervention method that helps people make better judgments or decisions. A typical investigation has a sample of 10.

The 4 papers will be due on Tuesdays, namely, 1/23 (I), 2/6 (II), 2/20 (III), 3/5 (IV).

Editing. Clear writing teaches clear thinking. Unfortunately, many assigned papers are written in a hurry, packed with redundancy and platitudes, just to meet the page minimum. As a consequence, many creative ideas go unappreciated because they are drowned in muddled language.

An excellent way to learn to write well is by reading and critiquing other people's writing. From the "editor's" viewpoint, unclear presentation, inelegant form, and inconsequential thinking are spotted at once—probably because editors, unlike writers, are not in love with the written product. Each of your papers will therefore be read by one other student—the editor of your paper. And for each paper you write, you will be the editor of someone else's paper.

As a writer, you should be as clear as possible, so your classmate/editor has something to work with. As an editor, you should be as constructive as possible, so your classmate/writer can improve his or her initial draft.

Your editing will cover all levels: from the main message of the paper to the clarity of an argument to grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Your editing—and of course your writing—must follow the guidelines in *The writer's brief handbook*, by Rosa and Eschholz. This book (recommended by a campus-wide committee) is required reading for this class and will be available at the U of O Bookstore.

You will earn credit for each paper you write, but you will also earn credit for each paper you edit. In fact, you will earn credit for a paper you write only if you edit someone else's paper the same week. That way, each reaction paper becomes a collaborative effort between a writer and an editor. Next week, you will receive more detailed information on the procedure of writing and editing papers, including guidelines for the assignment of points that make sure that you will earn your fair credits in both roles.

Communication. Because this course is work-intensive from week 1 on, it is important that we communicate effectively with each other in- and outside the classroom. I expect all students to acquire a *computer account* through the University Computing Center and learn how to use *email* and the *World Wide Web* by week 3 of this course.

Topics. This course focuses on the social psychology of the individual. We will discuss some of the determinants of social behavior—attitudes, perceptions of other people, views of the self, social influence—and we will try to understand the roots of love and altruism as well as violence and aggression. A preliminary lecture schedule follows below:

1/9 The study of social behavior: Theories and methods

1/11 Attitudes and behavior

Oskamp, S. (1977). *Attitudes and opinions*. Excerpts from ch. 1 (pp. 4-16) and ch.3 (pp. 50-53; 61-66). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

LaPiere, R. T. (1934). Attitudes vs. Actions. *Social Forces*, 13, 230-237.

1/16 Person perception

Kelley, H. H. (1950). The warm-cold variable in first impression of persons. *Journal of Personality*, 18, 431-439.

Skowronski, J. J., & Carlston D. E. (1989). Negativity and extremity biases in impression formation: A review of explanations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 105, 131-142.

1/18 Attribution: inference and explanation

Ross, L. D., Amabile, T. M., & Steinmetz, J. L. (1977). Social roles, social control, and biases in social perception processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35, 485-494.

Jones, E. E., & Nisbett, R. E. (1972). The actor and the observer. Divergent perspective of the causes of behavior. In E. E. Jones, D. Kanouse, H. H. Kelley, R. E. Nisbett, S. Valins, and B. Weiner (eds.), *Attribution: Perceiving the causes of behavior* (pp. 79-94). New York: General Learning Press.

Lau, R. R., & Russell, D. (1980). Attributions in the sports pages. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39, 29-38.

1/23 The self-concept: structure and content

Malle, B. F. (1994). *The self in philosophy and psychology*. Unpublished manuscript.

Malle, B. F., & Horowitz, L. M. (1995). The puzzle of negative self-views: An explanation using the schema concept. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 470-484.

1/25 Function and biases of the self.

Greenwald, A. G. (1980). The totalitarian ego: Fabrication and revision of personal history. *American Psychologist*, 35, 603-613.

Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion and well-being: A social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103, 193-210.

Colvin, C. R., & Block, J. (1994). Do positive illusions foster mental health? An examination of the Taylor and Brown formulation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116, 3-20.

1/30 Dissonance, self-perception, self-affirmation.

Festinger, L., Riecken, H.W., & Schachter, S. (1958). When prophecy fails. In Maccoby, E. E., Newcomb, T. M., and Hartley, E. L. (eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 156-163). New York: Holt.

Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 58, 203-210.

Lepper, M. R., Greene, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (1973). Undermining children's intrinsic interest with extrinsic reward: A test of the "overjustification" hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 28, 129-137.

2/1 [Midterm exam]

2/6 Social influence and conformity.

- Cantril, H. (1958). The invasion from Mars. In Maccoby, E. E., Newcomb, T. M., and Hartley, E. L. (eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 291-300). New York: Holt.
- Asch, S. E. (1955). Opinions and social pressure. *Scientific American*, 193, 31-35.
- Cialdini, R. B. (1993). *Influence*. New York: HarperCollins (3rd ed.). Excerpts from ch.4 (118-131).

2/8 Persuasion, compliance, and attitude change.

- Krupat, E. (1994). A conversation with Robert Cialdini. In E. Krupat, *Psychology is social. Readings and conversations in social psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 80-85). New York: HarperCollins.
- Brownstein, R. J., & Katzev, R. D. (1985). The relative effectiveness of three compliance techniques in eliciting donations to a cultural organization. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 15, 564-574.

2/13 Closed systems of thought.

- Snyder, M., Tanke, E. D., and Berscheid, E. (1977). Social perception and interpersonal behavior: On the self-fulfilling nature of social stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35, 656-666.
- Hastorf, A. H., and Cantril, H. (1954). They saw a game: A case study. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 49, 129-134.
- Lord, C., Ross, L., and Lepper, M. R. (1979). Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 2098-2109.

2/15 Obedience.

- Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67, 371-378.
- Gibson, J. T., and Haritos-Fatouros, M. (1986, November). The education of a torturer. *Psychology Today*, 20, 50-58.
- Zimbardo, P. G. (1993). The Stanford prison experiment. In A. Pines and C. Maslach (eds.), *Experiencing social psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 165-174). New York: McGraw-Hill.

2/20 Aggression and violence I.

- Geen, R. G. (1990). *Human aggression*. Pacific Grove, Calif.: Brooks/Cole. Ch.1 Approaches to the study of aggression (pp. 1-30).
- Baron, R. A. (1983). The control of human aggression. An optimistic perspective. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 1, 97-119.

2/22 Aggression and violence II.

- Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1963). Imitation of film-mediated aggressive models. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 66, 3-11.
- Straus, M. A., Gelles, R. J., & Harrop, J. W. (1991). Verbal aggression by parents and psychosocial problems of children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 15, 223-238.
- The Seville statement on violence (1994). *American Psychologist*, 49, 845-846.
- Beroldi, G. (1994). Critique of the Seville statement on violence. *American Psychologist*, 49, 847-848.
- Scott, J. P., & Ginsburg, B. E. (1994). The Seville statement on violence revisited. *American Psychologist*, 49, 849-850.

2/27 Stereotypes and prejudice.

- Allen, B. P., & Niss, J. F. (1990, April). A chill in the college classroom? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 607-609.
- Steele, C. M. (1992). Race and the schooling of black Americans. *The Atlantic Monthly*, April, 68-78.
- Duckitt, J. (1992). Psychology and prejudice. A historical analysis and integrative framework. *American Psychologist*, 47, 1182-1193.

2/29 Interpersonal and intergroup conflict

Mainardi, P. (1970). The politics of housework. In R. Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood is powerful: An anthology of writings from the women's liberation movement* (pp. 447-454). New York: Random House.

Roache, J. (1972). Confessions of a househusband. *Ms. Magazine*, 1(5), 25-27.

Sherif, M. (1956). Experiments on group conflict. *Scientific American*, 195, 54-58.

Rothbart, M., & Lewis, S. (1994). Cognitive processes and intergroup relations: A historical perspective. In Devine, P. G., Hamilton, D. L., & Ostrom, T. M. (eds.), *Social cognition: Impact on social psychology*. San Diego: Academic Press.

3/5 Attraction, love, and relationships.

Byrne, D. (1961). Interpersonal attraction and attitude similarity. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 62, 713-715.

Dutton, D. G., & Aron, A. P. (1974). Heightened sexual attraction under conditions of high anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 30, 510-517.

Pennebaker, J. W., Dyer, M. A., Caulkins, R. S., Litopwitz, D. L., Ackermann, P. L., Anderson, D. B., & McGraw, K. M. (1979). Don't the girls get prettier at closing time: A country and western application to psychology. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 5, 122-125.

3/7 Altruism and conditions of prosocial behavior.

Kohn, A. (1990). Beyond selfishness. In P. Chance and T. G. Harris (eds.), *The best of Psychology Today* (pp. 160-164). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Isen, A. M., & Levin, P. F. (1972). Effect of feeling good on helping: Cookies and kindness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 21, 384-388.

Latane, B., & Darley, J. M. (1969). Bystander "apathy". *American Scientist*, 57, 244-268.

3/12 A broad view on social psychology.

McGuire, W. J. (1973). The Yin and Yang of progress in social psychology: Seven Koan. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 26, 446-456.

Ross, L., & Nisbett, R. E. (1991). *The person and the situation*. Ch.1 Introduction (pp. 1-24). New York: McGraw-Hill.

This syllabus is subject to changes.