

Social Psychology, Psy 456/556

Mon, Wed 2:00-3:20 p.m., Willamette 110
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Broadcast office hour TBA

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Syllabus

- How do people's self-perceptions influence social behavior?
- How do people form impressions of each other and make sense of human behavior?
- What are the roots of aggression, stereotypes, and prejudice?
- What factors govern attraction and relationships?
- How do social situations influence human thinking and behavior?

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

You will work hard in this course. This is not a threat but a promise. In return for your work 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.

Course Format

1. *Lectures and seminars.* This course combines two formats that are interwoven. For one, we will review the field of social psychology in lectures, handouts, and original readings. In addition, we will study in depth a selection of classic and contemporary social-psychological topics, using recent research articles as starting points for seminar discussions.
2. *Readings.* The course does not have a textbook. I don't approve of the ridiculous prices of textbooks on the market (> \$100). Moreover, most of these books are far too extensive for a quarter system, and they are not critical enough for my taste. So I put together an electronic reader available on Blackboard that contains primarily original research articles. For you this means minimal expenses (printing, if so desired) and somewhat fewer pages of reading assignments, but the assignments are clearly more demanding. Most of the articles are taken from prime research journals and will challenge you with both theory and methodology. It is essential that you keep up with the readings in order to benefit from the lectures, contribute to seminars, succeed in exams, and write creative and thoughtful papers.
3. *Readings.* To facilitate your understanding of the readings, you will be part of a reading group. The groups get together in person or electronically to exchange ideas about the

readings and answer brief questions before each seminar session. Groups are then picked at random to briefly introduce each paper at the beginning of the seminar session. Group members also serve as editors of each student's initial paper drafts (see below).

4. *Papers.* In addition to thinking and talking about social phenomena, you will also write about the topics of this course. Two of your writing assignments are response papers to research articles, one assignment is a more personal analysis paper. For all papers, we require two drafts — the first one is turned in to your reading group, edited by one group member, and revised by you, and the second, revised draft is turned in to us. Everybody can get better at writing, and feedback from another reader is one important step in this process. We will also provide feedback on your first two papers to help you improve your writing. Papers are due in the 6th, 8th, and 10th week of the course.
5. *Participation.* You are expected to attend class sessions, especially seminar sessions, and contribute with questions, comments, analysis. I will learn your names and thus be able to identify your contributions. You are also encouraged to use Blackboard or email to submit your thoughts on the readings or course topics.
6. *Resources.* The course encourages active use of electronic resources. A variety of material is available on the Blackboard course page (and some amount of it will be mirrored on the course web page <http://www.uoregon.edu/~bfmalle/456.html>): syllabus, schedule overview, detailed schedule and reading list, lecture handouts, tips on writing papers, questions and answers emerging during the term, and many links to web resources.
7. *Broadcast.* This course is taught live in Eugene and also broadcast to students in the Bend psychology program. One lecture session (probably 2/12) will be taught live in Bend and broadcast to Eugene. The broadcast structure brings great opportunities for students who cannot attend school in Eugene, but it also comes with challenges. **Students in Eugene** need to heed the following issues:
 - A When speaking up in class, you need to speak clearly and slowly so that everybody can understand you.
 - B During discussions, attend to all students, whether in Eugene or Bend.**Students in Bend** need to heed the following issues:
 - A When there is any technical problem, you need to let me know immediately.
 - B Sit in the front rows, not far spread out so that we can see you on the screen.
 - C When you have a question or comment, draw attention to yourself with gestures (e.g., arm raising or waiving) *and* voice (e.g., “I have a question...”).

Exams

Both quizzes and the final exam cover the entire range of course material: lectures, lecture handouts, required readings, and seminar discussions. Quiz 1 covers weeks 1-3, Quiz 2 covers weeks 4-8, and the final exam covers the entire course. The exams will contain multiple-choice items and short-answer questions. (See Schedule for exam dates.)

We do not write make-up exams, so you will need to take both quizzes and the final exam at the times they are administered. Athletes traveling to official events or students who have a death in

the family **must** speak to us in advance of the exam; we may be able to provide time-delayed administration.

If you are a foreign language speaker, please talk with me about accommodations for exams.

Papers

Over the next 10 weeks you will have many new ideas and make many new observations about social behavior. Writing allows you to communicate these ideas, so you will write two response papers and one more creative paper for this course (see Schedule for due dates).

Assignment 1: Response paper I

From the list of required or optional papers, pick one or two and write a response.

Assignment 2: Response paper II

Pick one or two of the required or optional papers, *or find papers on your own favorite topic in social psychology*, and write a response.

Response papers must be crisp and concise (3-5 pp. double-spaced). They introduce one or two major theses, thoughts, arguments, questions, or comments about the target article. You may critique an article you read, propose a new experiment to follow up the article, you may describe concrete applications of the principles put forth in the article, or you may provide a theoretical analysis of the phenomena discussed in the article. In these papers, **you** are the critic, researcher, theoretician, or social policy maker – I want your own thinking, not just a summary of material or readings covered in class. In fact, introducing or summarizing the target article must not take up more than 50% of your paper. Your own contribution, however, must be well argued. You cannot simply make a claim or speculate without backing it up with arguments, examples, data, or literature sources. Personal experience can contribute to a good paper, but it must be part of a well-constructed argument. A personal story cannot stand on its own; but it can be the starting point for a major illustration of a psychological thesis or argument. If you are in doubt whether an idea you have for a paper is appropriate, talk to me.

Good papers from past years are posted on the course web page. If you write a particularly good paper, I may ask your permission to add it to this collection.

Because good writing requires feedback from others and multiple drafts, the reaction papers are subject to a **peer-editing** system. You write a first draft of your paper and turn it in to a member of your reading group. That person reads the paper, edits it, and provides feedback while you do the same for somebody else's paper. Everybody then makes revisions to their papers and turns in the second, improved version to us. You will receive credit both for writing and for editing. The details of the paper exchange procedure and guidelines for writing and editing will be part of a separate handout.

Assignment 3: At the end of the term you will write a paper that is more creative and flexible. You will choose from one of the following options:

- **Thinking journal.** Pick two weeks during which you keep a journal about the topics we cover during those weeks. Think deeply about the topics, identify and illustrate them in your life, analyze your own and others' behaviors, apply theories. Do not redescribe what is said in class and what can be found in the lecture handouts or readings. *Thoughtfully apply* the material to your life.
- **Film analysis.** Pick a currently playing movie and analyze it from the perspective of social psychology. This may sound easy, but it's challenging, because your analysis must

contribute something new to the understanding of the movie. Use social-psychological concepts or theories to shed light on the movie in a way that has not been done before.

- **Experience report.** Experience and write about either (a) a Day of Empathy, (b) a Day of Nonconformity (compare <http://www.socialpsychology.org/teach/daync.htm>), or (c) a Day of Nonviolence. Your writing must be analytic. Don't just describe what happened but make us understand why it happened and which social-psychological concepts or theories help us achieve this understanding.

You need to think deeply about your paper topics and work independently on them. All ideas that are not your own and all quotes must be referenced. All writing assignments will be checked thoroughly with **anti-plagiarism software** (which includes, for the film analysis, checks against movie databases and discussion forums).

Groups

During week 1 you will join a group of about 6 students who work together during the whole quarter, meeting at least once before each seminar. The group functions primarily as a reading and discussion forum, fostering the exchange of questions and ideas about assigned readings before seminar sessions and preparing starting points for discussion. Groups should meet in person, but if that is difficult, Blackboard offers electronic meeting opportunities.

At the beginning of each seminar session, 2-3 groups will be picked at random to start off the discussion by presenting the important questions that arose for them when discussing the readings. All other students have plenty of opportunities to contribute their own questions, comments, and critiques during the seminar session.

To monitor group activities, a group leader is elected by each group during the first week (the leader can change if necessary). Leaders report to Steve via a weekly email (sgugliel@uoregon.edu) about group meetings, attendance, and activities.

The first emailed report is due Monday, **January 15**. Thus, you have to meet at least briefly with your group this week or weekend to exchange schedules, find a meeting time, and elect your leader, who then sends Steve an Email about these first activities.

Each student can earn up to 100 points for group participation. These points are based (a) on the group's activities as a whole, (b) on each individual student's attendance and contributions to the group (as judged by all other members of the group in a round-robin assessment at term's end).

Grading

A perfect grade consists of 1000 points. You can earn points the following way:

Quiz 1	125 points
Quiz 2	125 points
Final exam	250 points
3 papers	3 × 100 points
2 × editing	2 × 25 points
Reading group	100 points
Individual class participation	50 points

The translation of points into grades will be *approximately* as follows: A > 900, B > 800, C > 700, D > 550.

I do not tolerate any form of cheating and have failed students who have cheated in the past (e.g., copied somebody else's paper).

Communication

Because this course is work-intensive from the first week on, it is important that we communicate effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. Come to class and contribute; see me in my office; make sure you check Blackboard and your Email several times a week. In my experience, there are few problems that cannot be solved by open and effective communication.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please meet with me soon and bring your verification letter from Disability Services.

Schedule Overview

1. Social Cognition

M 1/8	Orientation: Syllabus Lecture 1: Self-awareness and self-concept
W 1/10	Group formation, Photos, Lecture 2: Dissonance and self-enhancement [Homework for seminar]
M 1/15	MLK day
W 1/17	Seminar 1: The Self (groups introduce)
M 1/22	Lecture 3: Social Cognition I
W 1/24	Lecture 4: Social Cognition II [Homework for seminar]
M 1/29	Seminar 2: Social Cognition (groups introduce) [!start with first paper]
W 1/31	Quiz 1; Lecture 5: Stereotypes I
M 2/5	Lecture 6: Stereotypes II [Submit draft of 1 st paper; edit other student's]
W 2/7	Lecture 7: Prejudice and intergroup conflict [Revise 1 st paper]

2. Social Action

M 2/12	Lecture 8: Aggression and Violence BEND [1 st paper due] [Homework for seminar]
W 2/14	Seminar 3: Violence Today (groups introduce)
M 2/19	Lecture 9: Attraction and Relationships [Distribute draft of 2 nd paper; edit other student's]
W 2/21	Lecture 10: Prosocial Behavior [Work on revisions for 2 nd paper]

3. Social Influence

M 2/26	Lecture 11: Personality Psychology [2 nd paper due] [Homework for seminar]
W 2/28	Seminar 4: Person and Situation (groups introduce)
M 3/5	Lecture 12: Guest speaker
W 3/7	Quiz 2 , Opportunity for 3 rd paper feedback
M 3/12	Lecture 13: Persuasion, Propaganda
W 3/14	Lecture 14: Conformity, Obedience [3 rd paper due]
F 3/16	Review (Steve)
Thu 3/22 3:15pm	Final exam