

Course Syllabus, Spring 2012
Psychology 556: Monday and Wednesday 12 :00 – 1 :20
242 Gerlinger Hall

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Course Description: In the field of social psychology, we study the effects of the real or imagined presence of others on the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals. The questions asked by social psychologists have to do with our daily lives in the social world, and often seek to find answers to social mysteries. For example, why would a teenage boy confess to a murder he never committed? Why would someone join a cult that forces her to give away all her worldly possessions and cease all contact with friends and family? Why would a woman in her 20's be attracted to an elderly man? In this course, we will answer these questions and many others by studying the five major perspectives of social psychology. In the context of these perspectives, we will look at the features of the person, the situation, and the interaction between the person and the situation that govern social behavior.

Research about learning has shown that students learn and retain material better in a situation in which learning is active rather than passive, and cooperative rather than individual. I have incorporated some of the principles of active and cooperative learning into my class, and try to be sensitive to the various types of learning styles that might exist among my students. To this end, we will do active learning exercises in this class that involve your participation. We will also do some group work. Oftentimes these in-class active learning and group exercises will have associated class credit. You must be in class to receive this credit.

Course Objectives: Social psychology is the scientific study of the ways in which people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by their social environment. The aims of this course are:

- To familiarize you with the concepts and theories of social psychology.
- Help you recognize the influence of the environment on behavior, thoughts, and feelings.
- Give you the capacity to interpret research findings.

Required Readings: Weekly readings from the textbook will be required for all students. Additionally, students will be required to read supplemental journal articles for some of the sections. The supplemental readings will be made available online.

Text: Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. *Social Psychology* (6th Edition) Prentice Hall.

Course Requirements: Your grade for this class will be based on 3 things:

1. **Exams:** There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. The exams will include questions taken from the text, lecture, and the supplemental readings. There is no way to cover all of the information contained in the textbook during lecture, so doing well on the exams will require that you learn from the textbook, supplemental readings, and the lecture. The final exam will NOT be cumulative. Each exam will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Makeup Exams: It is important to be prepared and present for all scheduled exams. However, I recognize that there are some situations in which you simply cannot make it to an exam. In the case of a serious illness, emergency, religious observance, or university sponsored event, make up exams will be allowed. If you have a scheduled university sponsored event or religious observance, you must let me know well in advance of the listed exam date (at least 1 week) and we will arrange for you to take an exam before you leave. If you have a serious illness or an emergency, you must let me know prior to the exam (before 9:00am) and we will make arrangements for a make-up. Documentation that verifies the event (e.g., a note from a physician) will be required upon request. If you have questions about what type of documentation is required for a specific situation, contact me.

2. **Paper:** You will have two papers due during the term.

Short Paper: For this paper you should consider the interface at the border of social and your discipline (i.e. Marketing, Clinical, and Sociology). You may either translate a social psychological theory to your discipline or translate a theory or idea from your discipline to social psychology. For example, you could propose a social psychological study based on marketing principles, or use a social psychological theory or research finding to discuss Clinical psychology. In both cases you must discuss social psychological research! This paper should be 3-5 pages long and is due on May 9th. The short paper will be worth 15% of your final grade.

Final Paper: This paper is intended to help you develop a more personal connection to the subject matter, by choosing course concepts that you find interesting to research more extensively. You can either write a proposal for a new study (supported by a literature review of background research) or an applied paper in which you use results of past studies to solve some world problem or improve some institution. Regardless of which paper choice you choose, you should show both your knowledge and integration of past research AND your ability to go beyond previous work by creating something new (e.g., a new study or an application). Please note that the new study or application you propose should be something that is realistic (or doable, in theory). If you propose a new study you can assume you have access to a wide variety of materials (e.g., money, confederates, fMRI or EEG), but make sure you are clear what the expected results are (it is fine to have competing hypotheses). If you propose an application, or a way to improve an institution or problem, please make sure your solutions are possible. However, you can assume that you have resources and power (i.e., you are a hot shot policy creator) and thus, you could propose some kind of reform (e.g., a system-wide educational program). The paper should have complete sentences, good grammar, reasonable organization, and at least 10 complete double-spaced pages of text. APA style should be used for citations and you should include an APA style reference section at the end. The final paper is due Friday June 8th by 5 p.m. via email. Papers turned in late lose 10% of their points for each weekday they are not turned in (starting with the due date).

You will turn in a one-page (or more) proposal describing what you plan to write about in your final paper by May 16th. The more detailed your proposal, the better feedback I can give you. The final paper will be worth 30% of your final grade.

3. Discussion Questions: You will receive "take-home" response questions each week. By Thursday evening of each week, you will receive the questions from me via email. These questions will be based on the readings for the upcoming week (but may also require that you link those readings to information from earlier readings). Sometimes the question will be rather open-ended, and will simply require that you develop and justify a reaction to the set of readings. Your reply will be due to me, as an email attachment, by Monday at 12:00pm--prior to our class discussion of the readings. Please make the subject line read "Social Psychology Response Week X." The discussion questions will be worth 15% of your final grade.

4. Attendance: Attendance is not required but is strongly recommended. We will cover some material in class that is not in the textbook.

Grading: Your final grade in the course is based on your total points accumulated on the two tests, your paper, attendance, and in-class assignments, as described above. To summarize:

Exams (80 points each)	= 160 points
Discussion Questions	= 60 points
Short paper	= 60 points
Final paper	= 120 points
Total	= 400 points

The following grid provides the letter grade associated with each percent.

A	93-100%	B	83-86.9%	C	73-76.9%	D	63-66.9%
A-	90-92.9%	B-	80-82.9%	C-	70-72.9%	D-	60-62.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D+	67-69.9%	F	59.9% or below

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me during the first week of classes. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability. Students without a documented disability who are experiencing learning difficulties are encouraged to consult Disabilities Services (164 Oregon Hall; 346-1155; disabsrv@uoregon.edu; <http://ds.uoregon.edu/>). If you have a non-documented disability, I encourage you to contact Disabilities Services.

Cheating/plagiarism: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating on exams, copying answers off of other students during exams, having other students help you falsify your attendance, and plagiarizing of any kind will absolutely not be tolerated in this class. At the very least, you will receive a zero on the assignment. I encourage you to review the University policy on academic dishonesty; you are responsible for behaving in accordance with this policy and continued enrollment in this class will be considered implicit agreement that you have read and accepted the terms of that policy.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading is to be completed **before** the first class for which it is listed

Note: Last date to drop courses without receiving a “W”: April 9th

Last date to drop courses with “W” or change to pass/no pass: May 20th

Additional Readings may be assigned to Graduate Students. I will notify you of these.

Week One

Textbook Reading: Chapter 1 - Introduction to Social Psychology

No supplemental readings.

Due: Complete Discussion Questions and email by **noon Monday, April 9th**. Discussion questions will be emailed Thursday evenings. (all quizzes will appear on Wednesday and be due by Sunday at midnight).

Week Two

Textbook Reading: Chapter 2 - Methodology

No supplemental readings.

Week Three

Textbook Reading: Chapter 3 - Social Cognition

Supplemental Reading:

Correll, J., Park, B., Judd, C. M. & Wittenbrink, B. (2002). The police officer's dilemma: Using ethnicity to disambiguate potentially threatening individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 1314-1329.

Jussim, L. (1986). Self-fulfilling prophecies: A theoretical and integrative review. *Psychological Review*, 93, 429-445.

Week Four

Textbook Reading: Chapter 4 - Social Perception

Supplemental Reading:

Bodenhausen, G. V., & Macrae, C. N. (2006). Putting a face on person perception. *Social Cognition*, 24, 511-515.

Week Five

Textbook Reading: Chapter 5 - Self-Knowledge

Supplemental Reading:

Gilovich, T., Medvec, V. H., & Savitsky, K. (2000). The spotlight effect in social judgment: An egocentric bias in estimates of the salience of one's own actions and appearance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 211-222.

Week Six

Monday: EXAM 1(Chapters 1-5):

Textbook Reading: Chapter 6 - Justification

Joule, R. V. & Azdia, T. (2003). Cognitive dissonance, double forced compliance, and commitment. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 33, 565-571.

Short Paper due May 9th by 5 PM via email.

Week Seven

Textbook Reading: Chapter 8 - Conformity

Supplemental Reading:

Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 667, 371-378.

One page description of Final Paper due May 17th by 5 PM via email.

Week Eight

Textbook Reading: Chapter 10 - Attraction

Supplemental Reading:

Buss, D. M. (1985). Human mate selection. *American Scientist*, 73, 47-51.

Buss, D. M. & Barnes, M. (1986). Preferences in human mate selection. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 559-570.

Week Nine

Textbook Reading: Chapter 13 - Prejudice

Supplemental Readings:

Sherif, M. (1961). Experiments in group conflict.

Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. M. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African-Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 797-811.

Swim, J. K., Aiken, K. J., Hall, W. S., & Hunter, B. A. (1995). Sexism and racism: Old-fashioned and modern prejudices. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 199-214.

Week Ten

Textbook Reading: Chapter 11 - Prosocial Behavior

Supplemental Reading:

Latané, B., & Darley, J. M. (1968). Group inhibition of bystander intervention in emergencies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 10, 215-221.

Final Paper due June 8th by 5 PM via email.

FINALS WEEK

Thursday June 14, 10:15 a.m. FINAL EXAM (Chapters 6, 8, 10, 11, and 13) in 242 Gerlinger Hall