

Psychology 456/556: Social Psychology

Fall 2015, 208 Deady Hall, Tues/Thur 12:00 – 1:20

Instructor Information

Professor: Elliot Berkman

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Course overview

Welcome to what I hope will be one of the most enjoyable educational experiences of your college career. Social psychology is the scientific study of the way in which people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the social context—real or imagined. Social psychology seeks to understand individuals' subjective experiences and the way those experiences impact our behavior. One of the greatest things about studying social psychology is that it is relevant – it pertains to things you are probably already thinking about in your daily life. After this course you should have answers to questions such as “Why did so many people like the Gangnam Style dance?” and “Why do women tend to underperform in comparison to men in math and science?” and “Do opposites really attract?” Be prepared to think. Be prepared to challenge some of your long-held assumptions about human behavior.

This course has several goals:

1. To inform you about important theories and research findings in social psychology
2. To help you become better a consumer of research in your daily life
3. To give you a forum to develop as a critical thinker and writer

Required Texts

- Gilovich, T., Keltner, D., Chen, S., & Nisbett, R. E. (2016). *Social Psychology* (4th edition). New York: Norton.
- Selected articles posted on the course webpage at: <http://canvas.uoregon.edu>

Course Organization and Requirements

Lectures

In general, the material in the lectures will not exactly match the material in the text, as I will be incorporating findings from more recent research. That being said, the topics I cover will generally mirror those in the text. I recommend that you read the assigned textbook chapter *before* class, as it will give you a solid introduction and framework to help you understand the lecture material. Also, we know from cognitive psychology that repetition enhances retention.

In addition to lectures, there will occasionally be a film or in-class demonstration to help illustrate the social psychological theories we will be studying.

I strongly encourage discussion during lecture. You are encouraged to participate in course discussions and to interrupt me when I lecture in order to ask a question or to share an insight.

Exams

There will be 2 exams in this course: 1 midterm and 1 final. The exams will involve multiple-choice questions, and will cover only material since the previous exam. As we delve into the material, I will shed some light on the types of questions that I will ask on the exams. Prior to the first exam, I will distribute a couple sample questions to give you a feel for what I will likely ask. Make-up exams will be scheduled only in exceptional circumstances (e.g., documented medical problems or emergencies), so please check now whether you can be at the exams.

Paper

Being able to clearly articulate in writing what you are thinking is critical both in the academic and non-academic worlds. Because of this, we will spend time in this class focusing on the writing process. Each of you will be required to write a 4-page paper. To give you a taste of the academic writing process, the paper will be written as a series of drafts with feedback in between. You'll hand in a first draft after the midterm, receive feedback on the draft, and then revise and resubmit your paper in final form before the final. I will say more about the particulars of the paper later in the quarter. For now, know that the first draft will be due **Thursday, November 12th** and the final draft will be due **Thursday, December 3rd**.

Funscussion Questions

Critically thinking about the material, and applying it your everyday life, is at the core of what I want you to take away from this class. To help you practice that, I will post a "funscussion" question on Canvas every week that asks you to think about the material for that week in an applied way. You can answer all of these if you want, but you are only *required to answer 5* funscussion questions. Each response should be 200-300 clearly written words.

Extra credit

The process of generating new knowledge with the scientific method is at the core of social psychology. To give you first-hand experience with this empirical process, I am offering **2% extra credit** by participating in two hours of research through the subject pool. Alternatively, you can write a 2-page critique of an approved data paper from a social psychology journal. You should choose one or the other option, as I am offering a **maximum** of 2% extra credit. Note that the determination of grades (see below) is done *after* extra credit points are included.

The posting and scheduling of experiments is handled via the Psychology Department Subject Pool system at <https://uopsych.sona-systems.com>. More information on how to use the system can be found at https://uopsych.sona-systems.com/student_new_user.aspx.

Grading

Total grade = 30% Midterm, 30% Final, 10% Paper draft, 15% funscussions, 15% Paper final

Your scores will be combined and weighted to yield one score out of 100%. I will average the top 10 scores from class, and use that number to determine the cutoff for letter grades. To get an A- you will need to get 90% of the average top score, to get a B- you will need to get 80% of the top score, and so on. That way, if everyone does poorly on the exams because they are too hard, nobody suffers, but it is also possible for every single person to get an A (since you could all do as well as 90% of the average of the top 10 students).

Policies

Late/missed assignments. Due dates for each assignment are listed in the schedule below. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Cheating/plagiarism. Don't do it! You're missing the point of college if you do. Enough said.

Students with special needs. The UO works to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.

Lecture/Assignment Schedule

Month	Day	Topic	Reading	Assignment due
September	29	Introduction: Five questions		
October	1	Automaticity	Chapter 1	
	6	Control	Chapter 4	
	8	Methods in Social Psychology	Chapter 2	
	13	Attribution	Chapter 5	
	15	What is the Self? Part 1	Chapter 3 & Online 1*	Paper assigned
	20	What is the Self? Part 2		
	22	Attitudes & Attitude Change	Chapter 7	
	27	Persuasion & Conformity	Chapters 8 & 9	
	29	Midterm: In Class		
November	3	Groups: Group cognition	Chapter 12	
	5	Groups: Intergroup relations	Online 2*	
	10	Prejudice: The perpetrator	Chapter 11	
	12	Prejudice: The target		Paper draft due
	17	Aggression	Chapter 13	
	19	Judgment & Decision Making	Application Module 2	
	24	Health Psychology	Application Module 1	
	26	Thanksgiving: No lecture		
December	1	Nonverbal Behavior		
	3	Helping & Altruism	Chapter 14	Final draft due
Finals week	8	Final: 8:00 am in 208 Deady Hall		
	10			Extra credit due

*Online papers will be posted on the course webpage as follows:

Online 1: Bem, D. J. (2000). Writing an Empirical Article. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Guide to publishing in psychology journals*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
Read pages 2-7, 12-18.

Online 2: Sidanius, J. & Pratto, F. (2001). *Social Dominance*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. **Read pages 31-59.**