

Social Psychology - PSY 456 (CRN 35239) Spring 2015

Pacific Hall 16, TR 12-1:20pm

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30, Straub 468

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Course Overview

Social psychology is the study of people in context – in other words, social psychologists are interested in the thoughts and behaviors of people as they are out and about in real-world situations: with a group of friends at a football game, meeting a stranger for the first time, listening to a speech by the President, and so on. Social psychology deals directly with the fact that people are not thinking or behaving in vacuums. In that way, it can be one of the most fascinating and relevant topics, because the material deals with processes that happen in your everyday life: wondering about why people act against their better judgment; deciding whether to give anything to the homeless person on the corner today; why your friend might have shoved that guy on the basketball court, etc. This class will give you insights on why we do the things we do, or think the things we think, and all the many influences that our environment can have on us. It's my hope that this class will affect the way you see yourself and others interacting in the social world.

Learning Goals

1. Develop an understanding of the central questions, issues, and topics in social psychology, and learn that social psychology is a field of *scientific inquiry*.
2. Be familiar with the range of methods used to investigate psychological questions.
3. Respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes, both when encountering situations in your own life and in the media.
4. Apply a psychological principle to an everyday problem; or take an everyday situation and identify the relevant psychological mechanisms/issues.
5. Weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a discipline.

Required Materials:

1. Textbook: Aronson, E., Wilson, T.D., & Akert, R.M. (2010). *Social psychology* (8th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

2. Selected articles posted on Canvas**

Note: We are using Canvas for this class! As early adopters, we get to experiment with features and see how things go, so please be patient and flexible with the new system and me as we learn together!

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, repetition has been shown to be a great way to enhance retention!

In addition to lectures, there will occasionally be a film or in-class demonstration or activity to help illustrate the social psychological topics we will be studying. I aspire to have an engaging learning environment, which means I will try my best to reach out and keep everyone interested in a variety of ways. However, I need your help to facilitate this environment with your attention and your active participation. I hope that you all will be willing to interact with me and the other students in ways that are both respectful and effective for a productive learning environment.

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 (non-cumulative). 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 (note what kind of clicker questions I am asking too...). Make-up exams will be scheduled only in *exceptional* circumstances, for students with documented medical problems or emergencies.

Paper

The paper will help me to make sure that you all are able to see a situation in everyday life and apply what we have learned to explain the behavior of others. You will get more details on the assignment in Week 3. **The final paper is due at the end of Week 10 on Canvas (see the "Lecture/Assignment Schedule").**

To facilitate learning and experience with the real scientific writing enterprise, you are required to do a 1st draft of your paper that will be subject to peer review. Instructions for these activities will be given out at a later date, but please note the due dates for the 1st draft, the subsequent peer reviews, and the final draft in the "Lecture/Assignment Schedule."

Critical Thinking Assignments (CTAs)

I want to make sure that you are using critical and creative thinking when it comes to learning about and applying social psychology, so the way I will assess how you're doing on that goal is to do a Critical Thinking Assessment every other week. There will be a prompt posted on Blackboard **every other week** (first one in Week 2- see the "Lecture/Assignment Schedule") and I will expect a written response to that prompt- **due on the next Tuesday before class**. These assignments will be very short and will have guidelines for each prompt- write concisely! Overly long statements will get downgraded.

The grading system will be as follows: 0 (didn't turn it in, or turned in something wholly unrelated), 1 (turned it in, but didn't put in a good faith effort or didn't understand the concept, or made me read 2 pages of stuff), 2 (put in a good faith effort and said something reasonable about the prompt). Your lowest CTA grade will be dropped. My goal is for these to be fun topics to think about; hopefully you will think they are fun too!

Extra credit

The process of empirical research is at the core of social psychology. To give you first-hand experience of how the research process works, I am offering **2% extra credit** by participating in three hours of research through the subject pool. The posting and scheduling of experiments is handled via the Human Subjects 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.

Alternatively, you can earn the same credit by writing a two-page critical summary of an empirical research paper from a social psychology journal (contact me for a list of approved journals). You should choose one or the other option, as I am offering a **maximum** of 2% extra credit.

Policies

Late/missed assignments

Due dates for each assignment are listed in the "Lecture/Assignment Schedule." Late assignments will not be accepted; there are no make-ups for Critical Thinking Assignments. If you do not turn in a first draft of your paper on time, then you do not get to participate in the peer review process, which means you'll lose out on 15% of the final paper grade (that's a lot!). (Hint: you also must turn in your peer reviews on time to get those points too.)

Cheating/plagiarism

Please do not engage in any behavior that you think might be considered Academic Misconduct. I am generally easy-going, but I take academic integrity very seriously. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Also, **I have to make a mandatory report to Academic Misconduct for every suspected instance.** It's my policy to give a 0 on the assignment that you were found to be cheating/copying/plagiarizing on/in; the penalty could be more severe for more serious infractions. The work you put in on your Critical Thinking Assignments, your paper, and your exams is all expected to be your own.

Students with special needs

I want to create an inclusive learning environment for all my students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation, or if you need particular accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Grading

Midterm	25%
Final	25%
Paper	35%
1 st Draft and Peer Review: 15% of Paper Grade	
Critical Thinking Assignments	15%

The final grade assigned for the course should reflect the student's overall performance in the course, as described by the following guidelines:

A	<i>excellent</i> work, complete mastery of course material
B	<i>good</i> work, grasps most of the important concepts
C	<i>average</i> work, grasps many but not all aspects of course material

D	<i>poor</i> work, insufficient understanding of material
F	Failing

Grades will be assigned based on your total percentage points in the course:

GRADE	PERCENTAGE	GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A+	99-100%	C	72-77%
A	92-98%	C-	70-71%
A-	90-91%	D+	68-69%
B+	88-89%	D	62-67%
B	82-87%	D-	60-61%
B-	80-81%	F	59% and Below
C+	78-79%		

Lecture/Assignment Schedule

Month	Day	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
March	31	Introduction: What is Social Psychology?	Chapters 1 & 2	
April	2	Social Cognition: Automaticity and Biases	Chapter 3	
	7	Self and Social Identity	Chapter 5	
	9	Basic Human Needs	Online Reading**	
	14	Self Justification	Chapter 6	CTA (due Tuesday @12pm)
	16	Attitudes & Attitude Change	Chapter 7	
	21	Attitudes & Attitude Change (2)		
	23	Persuasion & Conformity	Chapter 8	
	28	Social Influence		CTA (due Tuesday @12pm)
	30	Person Perception	Chapter 4	
May	5	Midterm		
	7	Groups: Group Cognition	Chapter 9	
	12	Groups: Intergroup relations	Online Reading**	CTA (due Tuesday @12pm)
	14	Prejudice and Stereotyping	Chapter 13	
	19	Bad Behavior 1	Chapter 12	
	21	Bad Behavior 2		1st Draft (due Thursday @12pm)
	26	Helping & Altruism	Chapter 11	CTA (due Tuesday @12pm)
	28	Health Psychology	SPA 2	Peer Reviews (due Thursday @12pm)
June	2	Happiness and Close Relationships	Chapter 10	
	4	Ecological Psychology- Applying Soc. Psych.	Online Reading**	
	5	Final Paper Due Friday @5:00pm		
	(Monday) 8	Final 8:00am, Pacific 16		
	(Tuesday) 9	CTA due Tuesday @12:00pm		

**These readings will be one original article, which will be posted on Canvas in advance of that class.