

Social Psychology (PSY 456) - Summer 2015

Straub Hall Rm 253, MTWR 12:00-1:50pm

Instructors:

Devin Howington
deh@uoregon.edu

Straub 468

Stephanie Kramer
srk@uoregon.edu

Straub 461

Office Hours: by appointment

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. Use your research and presentation skills to delve deeper into a topic and share your expertise with your classmates.
6. 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 we will be incorporating findings from more recent research. That said, the topics we cover will typically mirror those in the text. We 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 often be a film, in-class demonstration or activity to help illustrate the social psychological topics we will be studying.

Participation

We aspire to have an engaging learning environment, which means we will try our best to reach out and keep everyone interested in a variety of ways. However, we need your help to facilitate this environment with your attention and your active participation. We hope that you all will be willing to interact with us and the other students in ways that are both respectful and effective for a productive learning environment. In service of these goals, you will have many opportunities to participate. Brief, in-class writing assignments will be assigned **daily**. You will receive points for completion and these will be used to jumpstart class discussions. Prompts for these writing assignments may be presented at any point during class and **you must be present to complete them (no make-ups!)**. Examples of prompts might be to summarize the reading assigned for the day's class, or to jot down what you learned from the previous day's lecture. **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, didn't understand the concept, or made us read 2 pages of filler), 2 (put in a good faith effort and said something reasonable about the prompt).

Quizzes

There will be 4 quizzes in this course: 1 every Thursday. Frequent assessments help students stay on top of the material, study more regularly and retain more information. The quizzes will be comprised of multiple-choice questions, and will cover only material since the previous quiz (non-cumulative). As we delve into the material, we will shed some light on the types of questions that we will ask on the quizzes. There will be no make-ups for the quizzes. Instead, we will drop the lowest quiz, but we caution you not to take that as a free pass to miss one, as the quizzes are designed to measure the depth of your knowledge on the subject (so they are not easy quizzes)..

Presentation

During the final days of the course, students will give presentations in small groups. Each of you will choose up to three topics/chapters that most interest you to determine group assignments. Using the textbook and group discussion as a starting point, you will present an introduction to your topic, and each group member will be responsible for presenting one relevant peer-reviewed article to expand on what we have covered in class.

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

Cheating/plagiarism

Please do not engage in any behavior that you think might be considered Academic Misconduct. We are both generally easy-going, but we take academic integrity very seriously. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Also, **we have to make a mandatory report to**

Academic Misconduct for every suspected instance. It's our 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 participation essays, your presentation, and your quizzes is all expected to be your own. If you borrow someone else's writing or ideas for essays or presentations, cite them appropriately. If you are not sure whether or how you should acknowledge someone else for their contribution to your work, ask us!

Students with special needs

We want to create an inclusive learning environment for all 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 one or both of us 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

Quizzes (lowest dropped)	50%
Participation	15%
Presentation	35%

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

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

Lecturer	Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Devin/Stephanie	M	22-Jun	Intro to the Class/Research Methods	Skim Ch.s 1-2	
Stephanie	T	23-Jun	Social Cognition	Ch. 3	
Devin	W	24-Jun	The Sociability of Humans	Online Reading	
Stephanie	R	25-Jun	The Self/Social Identity	Ch. 5	Quiz
Devin	M	29-Jun	Self Justification	Ch. 6	
Stephanie	T	30-Jun	Attitudes	Ch. 7	
Devin	W	1-Jul	Persuasion	Ch. 8	
Devin	R	2-Jul	Person Perception	Ch. 4	Quiz
Stephanie	M	6-Jul	Group Processes	Ch. 9	
Devin	T	7-Jul	Intergroup Relations	Online Reading	
Stephanie	W	8-Jul	Prejudice and Stereotyping	Ch. 13	
Devin	R	9-Jul	Bad Behavior	Ch. 12	Quiz
Stephanie	M	13-Jul	Altruism	Ch. 11	
Stephanie	T	14-Jul	Happiness & Close Relationships	Ch. 10	
Stephanie/Devin	W	15-Jul	Group Presentations		Presentation
Devin/Stephanie	R	16-Jul	Group Presentations		Quiz/Presentation