

Social Psychology Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Vicki S. Helgeson

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Office Hours: TBA

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Teaching Assistants/email/office hours:

Fiona Dubrosa fpd@

W 5-6:00

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W 12-1:00

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Th 12-1:00

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F 3:30-4:30

Purpose: The main goal of this course is to help students become aware of the impact the environment or the situation has on one's own and others' thoughts, behavior, and feelings. The course is roughly divided into three sections (an exam covering each), corresponding to these three domains: thoughts, behavior, and feelings.

Text: *Social Psychology* (9th Edition) (2016); by Elliot Aronson, Timothy D. Wilson, Robin M. Akert, Sam Sommers. Please note that there will be additional readings posted to canvas.

Course goals:

- Instill a sense of curiosity, critical thinking, and enthusiasm for the field of social psychology
- Familiarity with theory and research in social psychology and related disciplines
- Understanding of how social psychology is represented in our daily lives and how it can be applied to solve real world problems
- Familiarity with diverse experimental, laboratory, and field paradigms in social psychology
- Understanding of the ethical issues surrounding research in social psychology

These goals are accomplished via short-answer exams and essays on personal experiences in social psychology.

Course grading:

Final grades are based on the percentage of points earned: 90% and above = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% =D; below 60% = R

Grades are based on exams, written exercises, and quizzes.

EXAMS

6 X 50 points = 300 points

- You will have 6 exams throughout the course, with each exam covering around 4 topics.
- Each exam will consist of 12 short-answer questions, each of which is worth between 2 and 8 points.
- Exam questions will focus on critical thinking and avoid memorization of facts; emphasis will be on applying a concept to a problem or extracting the concept from the problem.
- You will have 40 minutes to take the exam.
- You should not use your book, lecture notes, or the internet to answer exam questions. You will begin the exam by writing a statement of honesty.
- You will have 24 hours to take the exam.
- The only acceptable excuse for a missed exam is illness (with documentation from health services/physician/clinic).
- If you do not complete the exam within 24 hours and do not have an excused absence, you will be given an additional 24 hours with a cost of 10% of your grade. (10% of your grade will be deducted for each additional 24-hour period awarded.)
- If you have a concern about how an exam question was graded, you must raise the concern and have it addressed before the next exam.

QUIZZES

15 X 3 points = 45 points

- There will be a one-item quiz question following MOST course lectures.
- You will have 24 hours after the lecture to answer the question.
- You will be given 10 minutes to answer the question.
- Each quiz is worth 3 points
- There will be approximately 18 quizzes over the semester, but you only have to complete 15 of them. In other words, you have 3 quizzes you can miss.
- Because you have 3 quizzes you can miss, there are no excuses for missed quizzes. Quizzes are to reward class attendance (or immediate viewing of class recording) and attention. Missing three quizzes should account for sickness and anything else that comes up. If there are extenuating circumstances, please contact me to discuss.

WRITTEN EXERCISES

3 X 50 points = 150 points

- Each exercise is worth 50 points.
- Each exercise involves relating something you have seen or heard to social psychology.
- Each exercise should be completed in 1-2 pages (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman font).
- You should use your own words; quotations are not acceptable. The emphasis is on you being able to convey that you understand the material by putting it in your own words.

- You will turn in a final copy of the exercise for IN CLASS peer review*. After revision, you will submit the IMPROVED final exercise.
- Exercises must be turned in on time. You will not be able to submit the exercise via canvas late.
- Late exercises are to be emailed directly to me (in .docx format). 10% of your grade will be deducted for each 24-hour period late the exercise is emailed to me.

**For those of you who are in a time zone that does not permit you to join class synchronously, you will be placed with a group of people who are in a similar time zone to do the peer review. Instructions will be distributed.*

Exercise 1:

Describe a personal experience of ONE (and only one!) social psychology concept about which you have learned. Describe the experience and describe **in detail how it relates to the social psychology concept**. It is best to begin the essay by stating: "This is a personal experience of X," rather than having us guess what the social psychology concept is. Also, it is best to describe one concept/theory in depth rather than multiple concepts. *Note: if your story is about cognitive dissonance theory, it must be your own CG – it doesn't make sense to talk about what you "think" someone else is experiencing internally.*

Exercise 2:

Find a podcast from Hidden Brain by Shankar Vedantam on a social psychology topic. Hidden Brain is an NPR podcast about social science research. Many of the podcasts are about social psychology, and often include interviews with social psychologists. They usually last about 30 minutes. Write 1-2 pages about the podcast, including the topic, definitions of the concept being discussed, and what you learned about the research findings. **Be specific.**

Exercise 3:

You have two choices:

- Find a news article that describes an event that relates to social psychology. First, briefly summarize the event (one paragraph). Then, explain **how it relates to social psychology**. Attach a link to the article. Adhere to the same guidelines as option #1.
- View one of the following films and describe how it relates to social psychology. Give a brief overview of the plot (one paragraph) and then describe **several specific points in the film that illustrate social psychological ideas**. I have given you hints in parentheses of broad topics, but please feel free to include other issues. If you refer to those topics, your comments about the film must be about specific topics within those domains (e.g., ingroup-outgroup bias within prejudice).

“12 Angry Men” (psychology and law; social cognition)
“Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” (prejudice, schemas)
“To Kill A Mockingbird” (prejudice, schemas, social cognition)
“The Help” (prejudice, schemas, social cognition)
“Silver Linings Playbook” (stigma, stereotypes)
“The Butler” (stereotypes, prejudice)
“12 Years a Slave” (aggression, stereotypes, prejudice)
“Her” (relationships)
“Inside Out” (emotions)
“Selma” (prejudice)

RESEARCH REQUIREMENT

There is a research requirement for all students enrolled in this course who have not completed the requirement for two other PSYCHOLOGY classes in the past at CMU. Failure to complete the research requirement will result in an incomplete in this course. Failure to make up the incomplete the next semester will result in the loss of one letter grade.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

You will each be assigned one of the four TAs in this course. We will match you with a TA based on your availability and their office hours. This is the person you should contact throughout the course with questions about the material and about grading. Of course, you are always free to contact me.

NOTES

Respect in the classroom: It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful to the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of students in the classroom. You may feel free to let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. If you feel uncomfortable discussing this with me or one of the TAs, you may voice your concerns to the Chair of the Department of Psychology Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Jessica Cantlon (jcantlon@andrew.cmu.edu). Dr. Cantlon is available to hear your concerns related to respect for diversity for any psychology class you are taking.

Plagiarism: I expect your work to be your own. Please see the Student Handbook for University definitions and policies regarding cheating and plagiarism. You do not need to worry about quoting another person because quotes are not allowed on papers, pop quizzes, or exams. Use your own words.

Accommodations: The Equal Opportunity Services Office offers accommodations to students who face physical and/or mental challenges. Please let me know about any accommodations as soon as possible, but especially before the first exam or the first exercise is due. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided and appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu.

Class attendance: You are responsible for all material presented in class, including announcements made. If you miss class, there will be a recording made available on canvas. If you are not in class and have a question after viewing the recording, you should contact the TA to which you have been assigned. Of course, if you have further questions, you should feel free to reach out to me.

Class discussion: It is hard to have a discussion with 80 students, but we are going to try! To avoid zoom burnout, to keep you engaged in class, and to prepare you for the exams, I will be using break-out sessions during all lectures to discuss ideas, results of experiments, and to apply concepts discussed in class.

Zoom video: We know that being able to see one another facilitates communication, enhances engagement in class discussions, and ultimately facilitates learning. Therefore, I hope you will have your camera on during the entire class time. At a minimum, please try to have your camera on during break-out sessions. When there are only a few of you, it will make it much easier and enjoyable to talk to each other if you can have your video on for these short sessions. **This is especially critical during the paper peer review.**

ON A MORE PERSONAL NOTE:

I know that college can be a stressful time -- changes in relationships with family and friends; academic expectations from family, friends, and yourself; challenging classes, homework, assignments; figuring out your future life plans. Taking courses remote and social distancing pose their own set of challenges. Here are a couple of thoughts:

- 1. Try to take care of yourself – eat well, get some exercise, get sleep, and find some healthy recreational choices. Schoolwork is more manageable when you have a healthy mind and body as resources.*
- 2. Do not be afraid to ask for help – from a friend, a professor, a counselor, or myself. Students often believe that asking for help is a sign of weakness, but it is a sign of strength that you can come to the realization that not all problems are solvable on your own. Feel free to contact Counseling and Psychological Services for assistance (CaPS; 412-268-2922; website <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>) or to ask me for other resources.*

CLASS SCHEDULE, ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES

Mon	8/31	Course overview and Introduction	ch1
Wed	9/2	Methods and Research Requirement	ch2
Mon	9/7	LABOR DAY NO CLASS	
Wed	9/9	More methods, Ethics	ch 8 (pp. 256-265) <i>Elms (1995) Obedience article</i>
Mon	9/14	Attitudes (cognitive dissonance)	ch 7 (pp. 188-198); ch 6
Wed	9/16	Attitudes continued 40-minute EXAM 1 to be completed within 24 hours (due Thurs midnight)	
Mon	9/21	Attitude change <i>(distribute fun quiz in prep for Wed class)</i>	ch 7; <i>Horne et al. (2015) Countering antivaccination</i>
Wed	9/23	Social cognition	ch 3
Fri	9/25	Best Effort Paper 1 due for distribution to peers by 12:00 NOON	
Mon	9/28	Attribution theory	ch 4; <i>Burger & Burns (1988) Illusion of unique invulner</i>
Wed	9/30	In class peer review of Paper 1	
Fri	10/2	Final Paper 1 due by 12:00 NOON	
Mon	10/5	More on attribution theory 40-minute EXAM 2 to be completed within 24 hours (due Tues midnight)	
Wed	10/7	The Self	ch5
Mon	10/12	Social Comparison/Social Roles	<i>Rosenhan (1973) Being sane in insane places</i>
Wed	10/14	Gender Roles	TBA gender chapter <i>Brockman & Kalla (2016) transgender article</i>
Mon	10/19	Conformity 40-minute EXAM 3 to be completed within 24 hours (due Tues midnight)	ch 8

Wed	10/21	Group Behavior	ch 9
Mon	10/26	Group Decision Making	ch 9
		Best Effort Paper 2 due for distribution to peers at start of class	
Wed	10/28	In class peer review of Paper 2	
Fri	10/30	Final Paper 2 due by 12:00 NOON	
Mon	11/2	Psychology and Law (Fiona) <i>(assign aggression exercise)</i>	Social Action 3
Wed	11/4	Aggression	ch 12
		40-minute EXAM 4 to be completed within 24 hours (due Thurs midnight)	
Mon	11/9	Conflict	Social Action 1 (pp. 455-469)
Wed	11/11	Negotiation <i>(Implicit attitude assignment; Watch movie CRASH—discussed 11/18)</i>	
Mon	11/16	Prejudice	ch 13
Wed	11/18	More on prejudice/stereotype threat	<i>Steele (1999) Stereo threat</i> <i>Kendi TBA article</i>
		40-minute EXAM 5 to be completed within 24 hours (due Thurs midnight)	
Mon	11/23	Interpersonal attraction	ch 10
Wed	11/25	<i>no class</i>	<i>Thanksgiving break</i>
Mon	11/30	Prosocial Behavior	ch 11
		Best Effort Paper 3 due for distribution to peers at start of class	
Wed	12/2	In class peer review of Paper 3	
Fri	12/4	Final Paper 3 due by 12:00 NOON	
Mon	12/7	Health Psychology I	Social Action 2
Wed	12/9	Health Psychology II	<i>Taylor (1983) Cognitive adaptation</i>
		40-minute EXAM 1 to be completed within 24 hours (due Thurs midnight)	

NO FINAL EXAM—Have a great winter break! ☺