

**Psychology 170**  
**Introduction to Social Psychology**  
**Tu/Th 9:00AM – 10:15AM, JC220**

---

**Instructor:** Nicola Curtin, Ph.D.

**Office:** 352 Jonas Clark Hall

**Office hours:** By appointment. I would love to see you during student office hours, please schedule a time to come by.

**E-mail:** [NCurtin@clarku.edu](mailto:NCurtin@clarku.edu)

**Preferred pronouns:** she/her/they

Teaching Assistant: Adriana Medina

Office: 201-A Jonas Clark Hall

Office hours: Tu/Th 12PM-1PM, or by appointment.

E-mail: [a.medina@clarku.edu](mailto:a.medina@clarku.edu)

**Preferred pronouns:** she/her

---

*We are all social animals. We all realize that much of what we do stems from our interactions with other people, but we often fail to appreciate the power of these interactions over our behavior and thought. If you consider it, you will be hard put to find anything you do or think that is completely independent of your social relationships. What about your values, or your ideas of what is right and wrong? What about your preferences or your daily decisions? The list could go on and on. Social psychology is the study of human interaction and the way it affects behavior. To put it more formally, social psychology is the scientific study of the many ways in which interactions, interdependence, and influence among persons affect the individual's behavior and thought.*

- Dr. John Schopler (1930-2001)

**Course Overview and Goals:** Welcome to Social Psychology! As Dr. Schopler observed, many of the ways we think, feel, and behave are shaped by the people and situations around us. Sometimes these influences may seem obvious, but at other times, they are invisible or even surprising to us. Social psychology is the scientific study of how our thoughts, feelings, and behavior are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other people. We will study social cognition and perception, information processing, the self, attitudes and persuasion, social influence and group behavior, romantic relationships, stereotyping and prejudice, aggressive behavior, helping behavior, and applied social psychology.

The primary goal of this course is to introduce you to some of the perspectives, methods, research, and empirical findings of social psychology. Throughout the course, you will also be encouraged to think about how research in social psychology can shed light on your own lives and the social situations you encounter, as well as events going on around the world.

By the end of the term you should be able to:

1. Identify the major research methods used in social psychology
2. Discuss general theories and findings related to how we think about the social world, including:
  - How we understand and make sense of other people and ourselves
  - Factors that influence attitudes and attitude change

## Psychology 170 Syllabus, FT15

- Why people conform
- General processes that govern group behavior
- Factors that determine interpersonal attraction
- Why people help and hurt each other

If this sounds like a lot to cover, it is! Therefore, it is important that you both do all of the assigned readings *before* coming to class on the day they are listed in the schedule below, as well as attend class and participate actively. Together we'll work hard, but also have fun!

### **Required reading:**

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., Akert, R. M., & Sommers, S. R. (2013). *Social Psychology* (9th ed.) Boston: Pearson. **Please note that it's fine to get an older version of the text, but know that you are responsible for any content that is different.**

Benforado, A. (2015). *Unfair: The new science of criminal injustice*

Additional readings (marked **AR** in the schedule below) will be available on Moodle.

**Grading:** NOTE: You must complete all of the requirements in order to pass the course.

Experiential exercises: 22.5% (3 write-ups @ 15 points each = 75 points)

Being Human Write-up: 7.5 % (15 points)

“Book Club Group” Project: 15% (30 points)

Summary Draft: 25% (50 points)

Summary Revision: 5 % (10 points)

Scrapbook Project: 20% (40 points)

Subject pool participation/alternative assignment: 5% (10 points)

### **TOTAL POINTS: 200**

Your final (letter) grade will be determined along the following scale:

**A = 93% and above (or: 186 points and above)**

**A - = 90% - 92.9% (or: 180 points and above)**

**B+ = 86% - 89.9% (or: 172 points and above)**

**B = 83% - 85.9% (or: 166 points and above)**

**B- = 80% - 82.9% (or: 160 points and above)**

**C+ = 76% - 79.9% (or: 152 points and above)**

**C = 73% - 75.9% (or: 146 points and above)**

**C - = 70% - 72.9% (or: 140 points and above)**

**D+ = 67% - 69.9% (or: 134 points and above)**

**D = 63% - 66.9% (or: 126 points and above)**

**D - = 60% - 62.9% (or: 120 points and above)**

**Below 60% = F (or: fewer than 120 points)**

### Course Requirements

How can you succeed in this course? Engage in active reading of the assigned text and be an active learner in class. This means being engaged with the readings and lectures: do you understand the key concepts? Can you apply them to your own life, or events around you? Could you explain them to a friend who knew nothing about social psychology? What connections can you make between concepts across the course? The purpose of our time together in class is to amplify, explain, and demonstrate the material presented in the text. We will do this through a mixture of lectures, presentations, and class discussions. There will be some overlap between the text and the lectures, but there will be material that is unique to each. You should attend each lecture having done the reading beforehand. I expect to see you incorporate material from both the book and the lectures into your homework assignments.

**Please be aware that the workload associated with this course is rigorous!** People have many different learning styles and different learning strengths, but most of us tend to learn material best when we approach ideas and concepts from multiple perspectives, or apply them across multiple domains<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, I have designed the assignments for this course to allow you to learn and apply the material in different ways: completing experiential exercises to connect your experiences to the research we discuss in class, attending talks (The Being Human Series) and connecting the ideas in them to course concepts, reading *Unfair* will be super-fun (☺) and show you how social science research can help improve our world, finally the article review and scrapbook project provides you with the opportunity to apply abstract theories and concepts from the course to real-world issues, and to practice reading and summarizing scientific journal articles. Please remember to do a little bit of work towards each assignment throughout the term, and pay attention to the due dates in the schedule below.

**Attendance:** You should attend every class and every discussion section. **You receive one unexcused absence from discussion section and one from lecture. More than one unexcused absence from either discussion section or lecture will lower your grade at least 5% (and perhaps more significantly). Excused absences are generally those approved by me in writing (email is fine) and in advance of the session.** I understand that extenuating circumstances arise, but please let me know before class if you cannot attend. **You are responsible for all the information covered in class (including announcements) whether or not you are in attendance.**

**Participation:** Please come prepared to engage fully and respectfully, having read, and reflected upon, the reading. Participation includes active listening, thoughtful contributions to discussion, and some short, in-class, assignments.

**Course Content Note:** At times this semester we will be discussing issues and events that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you ever feel the need to step outside during one of these discussions, either for a short time or for the rest of the class session, you may always do so without academic penalty. (You will, however, be responsible

---

<sup>1</sup> Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(2), 193-212.

for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually.) If you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to this material, either with the class or with me afterwards, I welcome such discussion as an appropriate part of our coursework.<sup>2</sup>

**Why this Course is Writing Intensive:** Being able to express yourself clearly and succinctly in writing is a critical skill in academic and non-academic worlds. This course heavily emphasizes the development of writing skills. Know that you will be writing throughout the semester.

**Experiential Exercises:** As you will see on the schedule below, I will be asking you to complete several exercises throughout the semester. The purpose of these exercises is to help you think more deeply about a particular topic, and relate to social psychology in a more direct way. You will complete a short write-up in relation to each exercise and will be graded on the depth of your thinking and level of engagement in these exercises, as well as your application of material from the text and lectures.

**Being Human Write-up:** This semester the Higgins School of Humanities is hosting a series of conversations, discussions and presentations on “Being Human.” The schedule of events is posted on Moodle (and events are listed below). You will attend **ONE** of these evening events throughout the semester, and write a reflection on it, incorporating concepts from the readings and discussions that we will have in this class. See calendar of events on Moodle and events are noted below with **HE**. The reflection need only be 1-2 pages. The reflection can be written at *any time throughout the semester, but is due by December 2<sup>nd</sup> to Adriana.*

**Social Psychology Article Review and ‘Scrapbook’:** Two strengths of social psychology are the application of rigorous and creative scientific inquiry and testing, and its applicability to our everyday lives. In order to illustrate these strengths more clearly, you will create a “social psychology scrapbook.” This term-long project will be broken down into two different parts. First, you will need to find one empirical article on a topic from the course that interests you. You will read the article, and prepare a written summary of it. You will hand in a completed draft of the summary mid-semester. Second, you will put together a scrapbook of 4 items (ads, news articles, website content, etc.) that illustrate concepts from the course (two of these items must relate to the article you review and two must be about two other—different—topics). For each item, you need to write a page-long description of the item and how it relates to the course. A hand-out will be provided with further details, know that you need to hand-in a copy of the article abstract (just the abstract, not the entire article) 9/16, a draft of the summary will be due 11/4, and the final article summaries and scrapbook will be due 12/10/15.

**“Book Club” and Group Project:** Social psychology exists beyond the pages of your textbook! It teaches us about real-world issues and problems. Therefore, we will read a non-fiction book together that uses social psychological principles to understand a pressing

---

<sup>2</sup> Language taken from Angus Johnson: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/05/29/essay-why-professor-adding-trigger-warning-his-syllabus>

contemporary issue. We are in the midst of an important national conversation on the criminal justice system, policing, and the differential application of the law along lines of race and class. *Unfair: The New Science of Criminal Injustice* that will explore these issues. You will read the book, work with a group to develop facilitation questions about sections of the book, submit these questions for our discussion, and we will discuss the book as a class. Again, a handout with a longer description will be provided.

**Subject-pool Participation:** We will be discussing hundreds of studies throughout the term. These studies have increased our understanding of people and social processes, and would not be possible without the participation of generous volunteers. Research participation is a vital part of knowledge creation! Further, participating in research allows one a unique perspective on the process itself. Therefore, 5% of your grade for the class will be to participate in 2 subject pool studies (more information about the subject pool will be made available on CICADA). If you would prefer not to participate in a study, you may hand-in two short papers (one page each). You may also select to do one study and one summary. **Please note that you will need to provide proof of your study participation, and/or hand in the one-page assignments to Adriana, not to me.** Proof of participation consists of either a signed and dated participation slip that you will receive from the researcher running the study, or a consent form and debriefing form (the latter only if applicable) from the study. **You will either receive full credit, or no credit for this assignment.** If you select to do the short-paper, you must briefly and accurately summarize the findings from two articles which will be posted on MOODLE. Adriana will read these papers to ensure that you have met the spirit of the assignment; those that have not will be asked to re-do them. **These are due no later than December 5, 2013, but may be handed in at any point throughout the term.**

### Course Policies

**Assignment Submission:** Late assignments will be penalized 10% every 24 hours they are late (the minute it is late = the first 24 hours), unless there are special circumstances that I have previously approved. Assignments more than 5 days late (without prior consent) automatically get 0 points. I cannot accept resubmissions. If you are uncertain about your idea or a rough draft of a project, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss your ideas.

**Classroom Civility:** As we will discuss over and over: social situations and the people around us matter! Your behavior in class affects me, you, and your fellow classmates (and vice versa). Therefore, please:

1. Put your cell phone on silent or turn it off.
2. Do not surf the internet or text during class (Laptops will be banned from class if this becomes an issue).
3. Respect each other's comments even if you disagree with each other's opinions; challenge the idea and the evidence presented to support it, not the person.
4. Please keep your questions and comments appropriate in both their timing and content.
5. Remember: we all have conscious *and unconscious* beliefs, biases, and values. These shape how we react to and interpret the readings, course content, and each other. Please voice your ideas, reactions, and opinions, and be respectful of others'

differences (race/ethnicity, religion, gender, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, political perspective, etc.).

**Individual Circumstances:** Please contact me by email within the first two weeks of class if you have any circumstances that might affect your attendance, participation, and/or comfort in class. These may include (but are not limited to) having a certified/documented disability, involvement in upcoming religious observances, involvement in school-related sports or extra-curricular activities.

Clark University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you have or think you have a disability and require academic accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/ada/>), which is located in room 430 on the fourth floor of the Goddard Library. If you have questions about the process, please contact The Director of Accessibility Services, Emily Tarconish, at [etarconish@clarku.edu](mailto:etarconish@clarku.edu) or (508)798-4368. If you are registered with SAS, and qualify for accommodations that you would like to utilize in this course, please request those accommodations through SAS in a timely manner.

**Academic Honesty & Plagiarism:** All work on projects and papers must be your own, completed individually and for this course alone. Plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, words, statements, or work as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. If you are ever unsure, please ask. Plagiarism is sometimes confusing, even for seasoned scientists, so don't be embarrassed to ask. Adriana and I are resources who are happy to provide clarification if you don't know, so always ask first. If you violate this policy your name will be forwarded to the Office of Academic Affairs, and appropriate sanctions will apply. **If you find yourself even considering cheating, see it as a sign that you need assistance learning the course material and come see me.** For information on academic integrity at Clark, please visit: <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/integrity.cfm>

**Finally:** I look forward to working with you this semester! Never hesitate to ask questions, or come by my office hours for help. We have all needed help in something at some point in our lives. If you find yourself not understanding the assigned readings, lectures and assignments, you can drop by during my office hours, or we can arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. Please don't feel like you need to have a "problem" to come by. Like most academics, I'm incurably nerdy and more than happy to talk about research ideas, theoretical questions, future plans, big/small ideas, etc.

**Schedule of Classes and Readings (Please note this is subject to change)**

- I have suggested dates for reading *Unfair*, but you can read at your own schedule, noting that you will need to have read it to complete the group project. The reading schedule for the textbook is NOT suggested, please be sure to read in advance of class.
- **w** indicates that a written (or physical) product is due
- Higgins' Events (for the Being Human write-up) are marked as **HE**. All events take place in the evening **@ 7pm | Higgins Lounge, Dana Commons**. You must attend one.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Assignment/Events</u>
8/25	Introduction	Syllabus	Complete Student Info Form
8/26	Discussion		
8/27	Introduction	Ch. 2	Student Info Form Due <b>w</b>
9/1	Social Cognition	Ch. 3 Unfair: Part I	Start looking at the topics covered in the class and pick one for your article review and scrapbook.
9/2	Discussion		<b>AR:</b> How to read a research article in social psychology
9/3	Social Cognition		
9/8	Social Perception	Ch. 4	
9/9	Discussion		<b>Discussion will meet in the library (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) today, for an orientation.</b> <b>HE</b> Being Human-A community conversation
9/10	Social Perception	Unfair: 4 & 5	Find an article for your summary (due next week)
9/15	The Self	Ch. 5	
9/16	Discussion		(1) Hand in a copy of the title and abstract of your article (see handout) <b>w</b> (2) Pick a group to work with on "Book Club"
9/17	The Self	Unfair: 6	Ex 1: Discovering the Self
9/22	Why we Justify Our Actions	Ch. 6	
9/23	Discussion		Ex 1 write-up due <b>w</b>
9/24	Why we Justify Our Actions	Unfair: 7 & 8	<b>HE</b> Becoming Human
9/29	Attitudes & Attitude Change	Ch. 7	
9/30	Discussion		

Psychology 170 Syllabus, FT15

10/1	Attitudes & Attitude Change	*Unfair: 9 & 10	
10/6	Conformity	Ch. 8	<b>HE</b> Empathy, Science, and the Pursuit of Peace
10/7	Discussion		
10/8	Conformity	*Unfair: 11-12 (you're done!)	
10/13	<b>Fall Break – No Class</b>		
10/14	Discussion		
10/15	<b>Lecture: TBD</b>		
10/20	Group Processes	Ch. 9	
10/21	Discussion		
10/22	Group Processes		Ex. 2: Social Identity exercise <b>HE</b> An Extension of Self
10/27	Prosocial Behavior	Ch. 11	<b>HE</b> In Conversation with Janet Mock
10/28	Discussion		Ex. 2 write-up due <b>w</b> <b>HE</b> Not Quite Human
10/29	Prosocial Behavior		
11/3	Aggression	Ch. 12	
11/4	Discussion		<b>Completed</b> draft of article summary due <b>w</b>
11/5	Aggression		<b>HE</b> To Be Human is to Be in Dialogue
11/10	Prejudice	Ch. 13	<b>HE</b> Death and the Spectacle of the Anatomized Woman
11/11	Discussion		<b>GROUP PROJECT:</b> Submit Group Summaries and facilitation questions for Unfair <b>w</b>
11/12	Prejudice		Ex 3: Take an IAT
11/17	Book Club- Discussion of Unfair		
11/18	Discussion		Ex. 3 Write-up due <b>w</b>
11/19	Book Club- Discussion of Unfair		
11/24	Interpersonal	Ch. 10	

Psychology 170 Syllabus, FT15

	Attraction		
11/25	<b>Thanksgiving Recess- No Discussion</b>		
11/26	<b>Thanksgiving Recess- No Class</b> Nov 30 <sup>th</sup> is the last day for undergraduate students to withdraw from a class with a grade of "W"		
12/1	Interpersonal Attraction		
12/2	Discussion		Last day to hand in "Being Human" (see <b>HE</b> on this list for events) write-up <b>w</b>
12/3	TBD		Last day to hand in subject pool participation credit or alternative assignments <b>w</b>
Article Summaries and Scrapbook due <b>December 10<sup>th</sup></b> <b>HARDCOPY ONLY</b> Outside Dr. Curtin's Office (JC352)			

**Summary of Assignment Due Dates**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignment/Event</u>
8/27	Student Info Form Due <b>w</b>
9/9	<b>HE</b> Being Human-A community conversation
9/16	(1) Bring a copy of the title and abstract of your article to discussion section (see handout) <b>w</b> (2) Pick a group to work with on “Book Club”
9/23	Ex 1 write-up due <b>w</b>
10/28	Ex. 2 write-up due <b>w</b> <b>HE</b> Not Quite Human
11/4	<u>Completed</u> draft of article summary due <b>w</b>
11/11	<b>GROUP PROJECT:</b> Submit Group Summaries and facilitation questions for Unfair <b>w</b>
11/18	Ex. 3 Write-up due <b>w</b>
12/2	Last day to hand in “Being Human” (see <b>HE</b> on this list for events) write-up
12/3	Last day to hand in subject pool participation credit or alternative assignments <b>w</b>
12/10	Article Summaries and Scrapbook due <b>HARDCOPY ONLY</b> Outside Dr. Curtin’s Office (JC352)