

Psychology 170

Introduction to Social Psychology

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

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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 hopefully also have some fun!

Required reading: Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2010). *Social Psychology* (7th ed.) Boston: Prentice Hall. **Please note that copies of the text are available on reserve at the library.**

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

Grading (You must complete all of the requirements in order to pass the course):

Exam1: 15% (120 points)

Exam 2: 15% (120 points)

Exam 3: 15% (120 points)

Pop Quizzes: 12.5% (100 points)

Article Review & Scrapbook Project: 18.75% (150 points)

Group Project & Presentations: 18.75% (150 points)

Subject pool participation/alternative assignment 5% (40 points)

TOTAL POINTS: 800

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

A+ = 98% and above (or: 784 points and above)

A = 93% and above (or: 744 points and above)

A - = 90% - 92.9% (or: 720 points and above)

B+ = 86% - 89.9% (or: 688 points and above)

B = 83% - 85.9% (or: 664 points and above)

B- = 80% - 82.9% (or: 640 points and above)

C+ = 76% - 79.9% (or: 608 points and above)

C = 73% - 75.9% (or: 584 points and above)

C - = 70% - 72.9% (or: 560 points and above)

D+ = 67% - 69.9% (or: 536 points and above)

D = 63% - 66.9% (or: 504 points and above)

D - = 60% - 62.9% (or: 480 points and above)

Below 60% = F (or: fewer than 480 points)

Course requirements

How can you best 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. Still, your understanding of each lecture will be best if you have done the reading before the lecture. Everything covered in both the text and in class may show up on exams and pop quizzes.

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 domains¹. Therefore, I have designed the assignments for this course to allow you to learn and apply the material in different ways: multiple choice tests and quizzes assess your broad content knowledge; individual writing assignments assess the degree to which you can apply concepts in concrete ways and make connections across concepts; and asking you to work together in groups provides you with the opportunity to apply abstract theories and concepts from the course to real-world issues, while working cooperatively with others. Most scientific innovation occurs collaboratively, despite the stereotype of the lone researcher in her or his ivory tower; and learning to work well with others is a vital life skill. Please remember to do a little bit of work towards each project throughout the term, and pay attention to the due dates in the schedule below.

Attendance: You should attend every class. I understand that extenuating circumstances arise, but please let me know before class if you cannot attend. Illnesses, death in the family, or other traumatic events unfortunately are a part of life. A make-up exam will be given if you contact me within 24 hours and provide documentation. Pop quizzes (see below) may not be made-up, but your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped (including zeros for missed quizzes).

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.

Exams: There will be 3 exams throughout the term (see schedule below for dates). Each of the three exams will consist of 60 multiple choice questions covering the chapters for that section (each test is worth 120 points total).

Pop Quizzes: There will be 12 pop quizzes throughout the term. There are unannounced, 5-item tests, worth 10 points each. At the end of the term, your two lowest scores on these quizzes will be dropped. If you miss class, you will **not** be able to make-up a missed quiz (this will count towards one of the two scores that will be dropped).

¹ 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.

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. 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, and due-dates are listed on the schedule below.

Group Project: You will participate in a group project throughout the term. You will receive a handout with a description of this project, and all associated due-dates are listed on the schedule below. This project is a hands-on practical assignment that requires your group to apply social psychological principals and methods to a real-world social problem of your choosing. The last week of classes you all will present your project to your classmates.

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 Maggie, 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 CICADA. Maggie 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 9, 2011, 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 (though please note that all assignments must be completed in order to pass the course). 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, sexual orientation, 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. If you suspect you have a disability, or want to know more about Clark's policy on disabilities, please see: <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/ada/>

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism:

All work on exams, and individual projects and papers must be your own, completed individually and for this course alone. Quizzes and exams are closed book/closed notes.

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. Maggie 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>

<http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/integrity.cfm#Section%20I:%20%20Academic%20Dishonesty>

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

Date	Reading Assignment	Project Timelines
Week 1: Introduction		
August 30		
Sept 1	Textbook: Chapter 1	
Week 2: Methods in Social Psychology		
Sept 6	Textbook: Chapter 2	Pick group for final project
Sept 8	AR: How to read a research article in social psychology	
Week 3: Social Cognition		
Sept 13	Textbook: Chapter 3	
Sept 15	OVERVIEW OF LIBRARY RESOURCES: Meet in Goddard Library Instruction Space (Room 218)	
Week 4: Social Perception		
Sept 20	Textbook: Chapter 4	
Sept 22		
Week 5: The Self		
Sept 27	Textbook: Chapter 5	
Sept 29		
Week 6: The Need to Justify Our Actions		
Oct 4	EXAM #1 (Chapters 1-5)	
Oct 6	Textbook: Chapter 6	
Week 7: Attitudes & Attitude Change		
Oct 11	FALLBREAK: NO CLASSES	
Oct 13	Textbook: Chapter 7	PART I GROUP PROJECT DUE
Week 8: Conformity		
Oct 18	Textbook: Chapter 8	
Oct 20		
Week 9: Group Processes		
Oct 25	EXAM #2 (Chapters 6-8)	
Oct 27	Textbook: Chapter 9	ARTICLE REVIEW DUE

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Week 10: Interpersonal Attraction		
Nov 1	Textbook: Chapter 10	
Nov 3		
Week 11: Prosocial Behavior		
Nov 8	Textbook: Chapter 11	
Nov 10		
Week 12: Aggression		
Nov 15	Textbook: Chapter 12	
Nov 17		
Week 13: Prejudice		
Nov 22	Textbook: Chapter 13	
Nov 24	THANKSGIVING BREAK- NO CLASS	
Week 14: Topic/Reading TBA (APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY)		
Nov 29	Exam # 3 (Chapters 9-13)	
Dec 1		
Week 15: Group Project Presentations: Part II		
Dec 6	Group 1-3 present	
Dec 8	Group 4-6 present	SCRAPBOOK DUE
Week 16: FINAL		
Dec 13	READING DAY- NO CLASS	
Dec 15		PART III GROUP PROJECT DUE BY NOON