

Social Psychology

PSY 237
Spring 2009

Instructor: Christina M. Brown	Class Time: Monday & Thursday 2:30-3:50
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Office Hours: Mon, Thurs 4-6pm or by appt	

Required Readings

Gilovich, T., Keltner, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (2006). *Social psychology*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

*The textbook is \$48 Amazon.com and can be found on Half.com for as cheap as \$23.

You will be assigned a number of empirical articles to read at different points during the semester. Class discussions will be based on these readings. PDF files of the readings can be obtained from the Moodle website.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to social psychology, which is the study of human interaction. More specifically, social psychologists study the causes and consequences of human behavior, attitudes, and thoughts about oneself and others. Social psychology is concerned with how the *social environment* (not the physical environment) influences people's thoughts and behaviors about themselves and other people. Personality psychology studies differences between individuals, while social psychology explores the commonalities people share.

Some of the topics we will cover are conformity, obedience, attitudes, relationships, attraction, helping behavior, aggression, persuasion, stereotypes, and the self, to name a few. As you can see, social psychology is the study of "normal" individuals and the typical interactions between them. You will be encouraged to relate the concepts and theories we discuss in class to events and situations in your own life... And you'll find this is quite easy to do.

At times, people complain that the theories we study in social psychology are no better than common sense. Not so! You will find there are many situations in which people behave counter to what we would expect (e.g., Milgram's study of obedience is a classic example), and our intuitions can be drastically misleading. As a consequence, it is important to use well-designed experiments to test the theories put forth by social psychologists. Thus, this class will have a large focus on the research conducted to test these theories, and throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to think critically about and engage in social psychological research.

Course Objectives

- To understand how people influence one another
- To apply social psychological concepts to your own life
- To appreciate the value and necessity of empirical research
- To develop an understanding of basic research methods in social psychology
- To be able to identify social psychological principles when they occur, outside of class
- To learn how to read, conduct, and write about social psychological research

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Due	Text	Article
Thu 1/15	Syllabus review; introduction to Social Psychology		pp. 3-36	
Mon 1/19	Research Methods		pp. 37-41	
Thu 1/22	Groups		Ch. 2	
Mon 1/26	Groups	Response 1	Ch. 2	Warburton et al. (2006)
Thu 1/29	Causal Attribution	Exp paper 1	Ch. 10	
Mon 2/2	Causal Attribution		Ch. 10	
Thu 2/5	EXAM 1			
Mon 2/9	Social Judgment	Response 2	Ch. 10	Wilson (2002, ch. 2)
Thu 2/12	Social Judgment		Ch. 10	
Mon 2/16	Attraction	Response 3	Ch. 3	Cowley (1996)
Thu 2/19	Early semester break			
Mon 2/23	Attraction		Ch. 3	
Thu 2/26	Relationships	Response 4	Ch. 4	Bleske & Shackelford (2001)
Mon 3/2	The Social Self		Ch. 5	
Thu 3/5	The Social Self		Ch. 5	
Mon 3/9	Attitudes and Persuasion	Exp paper 2	Ch. 7	
Thu 3/12	EXAM 2			
Mon 3/16	Spring break			
Thu 3/19	Spring break			
Mon 3/23	Attitudes and Behavior		Ch. 8	
Thu 3/26	Social Influence		Ch. 6	
Mon 3/30	Social Influence	Exp paper 3	Ch. 6	
Thu 4/2	Stereotyping, Prejudice, & Discrimination		Ch. 11	
Mon 4/6	Stereotyping, Prejudice, & Discrimination	Response 5	Ch. 11	Correll et al. (2002)
Thu 4/9	Aggression		pp. 513-534	
Mon 4/13	Altruism		pp. 535-549	
Thu 4/16	Emotion		Ch. 12	
Mon 4/20	Emotion	Response 6	Ch. 12	Bodenhausen et al. (1994)
Thu 4/23	<i>NO CLASS: WPA conference</i>			
Mon 4/27	Review	Exp paper 4		
Thu 4/30	TBA			
Thu 5/7	10:30 am - Final exam			

METHODS OF EVALUATION

EXAMS

There will be three exams. Each exam will cover the material presented after the previous exam (in other words, the "final" exam will not be comprehensive). Each exam will contain 40 multiple-choice questions worth two points each. Exams will be closed-book/note. Questions will be taken from both lectures and readings, with an emphasis on overlapping material. Not all of the material from the lecture is covered in the textbook, so attendance and attention in class is important.

DISCUSSION

Participation grades will be based on in-class assignments (brief activities completed in class). Some of these assignments will involve brief reflections about a specific concept or phenomena, small group discussions, and other brief activities. There will be an in-class assignment for each class, so attendance is important. If you miss a class, you will not be able to make up the assignment from that day (you will receive 0 points for that assignment). Each assignment is worth 2 points.

RESPONSE PAPERS

A number of readings, some of which are empirical, will be assigned throughout the term. Read the articles carefully and come to class prepared to discuss them. You will write a response paper for each reading (the specific questions that you will answer in your paper will be provided ahead of time). Your papers should be uploaded to Moodle *before* the start of class (i.e., by 2:30pm the day it is due). If you submit your paper after the deadline, you will lose 2 points from that paper for each day it is late (beginning with the day it was due).

The purpose of the response papers is to get you thinking about the reading before we discuss it in class. You should be prepared to discuss each reading, which should not be a problem if you've read them attentively. The exams will also contain some questions about these readings.

EXPERIMENT PAPERS

Psychology is a scientific field and, as such, it is essential to understand how psychological research is conducted. To this end, students will conduct four "experiments" and write a paper about them in APA style (the format that is used for empirical articles in social psychology).

ASSIGNMENTS

RESPONSE PAPERS

In addition to the textbook, reading assignments for this course include 6 articles that you can access through Moodle. These articles are an important part of the class: They provide a more in-depth analysis of a particular topic, they illustrate how social psychologists conduct research, and they encourage you to think critically about social psychology (e.g., implications for society, the relations between various concepts, the strengths and weaknesses of certain methodologies and specific experiments, the causes and consequences of particular social behaviors, etc.).

For each article, you are to:

- (1) Read the article (carefully and attentively) *before the class in which we will discuss the article*.
- (2) Respond to the questions assigned for that particular article. (I will distribute the questions a week before the response paper is due.) Response papers must be turned in *before* the start of class (2:30pm). Please upload your papers to Moodle, although you may turn in a hard copy at the beginning of class if you cannot access your e-mail for some reason.
- (3) Participate in the class discussion of the article.

EXPERIMENT PAPERS

Given the importance of empirical research in social psychology, you will conduct four mini-experiments and write a paper about each experiment. The instructions for the experiment papers will be distributed in a separate handout. You will work alone for the first experiment paper. For the rest of the papers, you will conduct the experiment with another student (pairs will be assigned by me) and write the paper together. You each will receive the same grade for the paper. However, to prevent "social loafing," for these team papers you will be asked to indicate how much each student contributed. For example, if one of you wrote the introduction of the paper and the other wrote the discussion, you will indicate that. Both students must sign this paper to show that both of you have seen and agree with the recorded distribution of work. If a student contributes less than his or her fair share of the work, that student will receive a lower grade on the assignment. If your partner for a particular experiment refuses to meet with you and contribute to the project, please let me know ASAP so you can be assigned to work with someone else.

CLASS POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

You will not be graded on your attendance, but there will be material on the exams that is only covered in the lectures. In addition, each class will include a brief in-class assignment worth 2 points, and you cannot make up these points if you do not attend class. Please attend every class unless there is an emergency. However, if you plan on sleeping, texting, etc. during class, it is better if you don't show up because your behavior will be disruptive to students who are trying to learn.

CHEATING & PLAGIARISM

Don't cheat. Don't plagiarize. It's not worth it. Your academic career could be ruined. Earlham College's policy on academic misconduct is available here:
<http://www.earlham.edu/handbook/student/content/academic/integrity.html>

LATE POLICY

For every day a paper is late, 2 points will be deducted from your grade on that assignment. Assignments are due before the start of class, not the end of the day. If you turn it in after the start of class on the day it's due, 2 points will be deducted from your score. Two points will be deducted for each additional day the paper is late. In the case of such extenuating circumstances as death or severe injury, you must display proof of the event for the deadline to be extended.

EXAM MAKE-UP POLICY

No make-up exams will be allowed *after* the exam has been given unless you have an extenuating circumstance, which is limited to severe emergencies: death, life-threatening illness, and serious accidents. You must provide proof of the emergency. In the event of a foreseeable schedule conflict (which you must have a good reason for; e.g., you cannot reschedule the exam to attend a concert in Chicago), you must meet with me at least five days before the exam to reschedule. (We must determine a specific day and time for you to make up the exam *prior* to the exam.) In the case of other emergencies that arise immediately before the exam, please contact me (by e-mail or phone) or the psychology department as soon as possible *before* the exam. If you miss an exam without contacting me ahead of time in accordance with the above policy, you will receive a 0 on that exam.

CLASS CONDUCT

We will have frequent class-wide discussions in which students are encouraged to express their own opinions and views. Respecting other students' opinions and values—no matter how much they differ from one's own—is essential to creating a comfortable environment that fosters intellectual discussion. I respect each of your opinions, and I ask that you do the same for other students. Debate is an excellent way to facilitate critical thinking, but respect for others must be maintained in all discussions.

In addition to respecting the opinions and values of others, it is also important that students show respect by not disrupting the learning of others. Examples of such disruptions are arriving late, talking with other students during lecture and when another student "has the floor" during discussions, letting a cell phone ring, and using a laptop for activities other than note-taking (which can distract other students by drawing their attention to your computer screen). For this reason, I ask that you make every effort to arrive on time and do not chat with other students during lecture and discussion. Furthermore, turn off your cell phone or any electronic device that emits sound. If you use a laptop to take notes, please refrain from engaging in computer activities unrelated to the course as this can be distracting to other students.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities should speak to me during office hours (or by appointment) to set up disability-related needs or accommodations. Such accommodations will be made in conjunction with the Center for Academic Enrichment (CAE). Please see Earlham College's policy and services for people with disabilities: <http://www.earlham.edu/handbook/student/content/diversity/services.html>

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any time during the semester. If this occurs, a hardcopy of the changes to the syllabus will be distributed.

GRADING

Each assignment is worth a certain number of points. Your grade in the class will be based on the total number of points you accumulate. To calculate your grade, sum the points you have earned on all assignments and divide that by the total number of points available (469). The resulting percentage will determine your letter grade based on the following distribution:

A+ 97 - 100%	C 73 - 76%
A 93 - 96%	C- 70 - 72%
A- 90 - 92%	D+ 67 - 69%
B+ 87 - 89%	D 63 - 66%
B 83 - 86%	D- 60 - 62%
B- 80 - 82%	F 0 - 59%
C+ 77 - 79%	

Assignment	Total points possible	Your score
Exam I	80	
Exam II	80	
Exam III	80	
Response paper #1	15	
Response paper #2	15	
Response paper #3	15	
Response paper #4	15	
Response paper #5	15	
Response paper #6	15	
Experiment paper #1	20	
Experiment paper #2	25	
Experiment paper #3	25	
Experiment paper #4	25	
Participation	44	
TOTAL	469	

You can use the table above to keep track of your grade in the class. To calculate your current grade at any point in the semester, sum your current points and divide that by the total number of points possible up to that point (i.e., all completed assignments).