

Psy 221A: Introductory Social Psychology

Professor:	Allen McConnell	<u>Class meets in PSYC 125</u>
E-mail:	mconnar@muohio.edu	Tuesdays and Thursdays
Office:	213 Psychology Building	Meeting time: 11:15 - 12:30 p.m.
Phone:	529-2407	
Hours:	TBA	
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Psy 221 on the Web: <http://www.users.muohio.edu/mconnar/psy221.html>
(please note, this URL is *not* on Blackboard)

Required texts

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2007). *Social psychology* (6th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Course overview

This course is designed to expose students to the discipline known as social psychology. Social psychology is the scientific study of how people come to understand individuals, groups, and themselves as social entities. Social psychological processes influence how we perceive, judge, remember, and behave toward people. These processes shape, and are shaped by, our social expectations, social roles, social goals, and social interactions.

Although it may seem that social psychologists merely study “the obvious” (e.g., attractive people are more liked than unattractive people), the field has made a significant impact both theoretically (e.g., theories about the formation of stereotypes and prejudice) and practically (e.g., outline how organizations can make better decisions). Sometimes the research is based on observable phenomena and everyday intuition, but even in these cases, an understanding of the processes and limitations of folklore is very important. But sometimes, social psychologists find that laypeople’s intuitions are wrong (e.g., you are more likely to get help with fewer, rather than more, people around you). In such cases, the contributions of social psychology are especially striking.

This course has many goals...

- First and foremost, you should learn about research findings and theories of social psychology.
- Also, you should understand the methods that social psychologists use in their research and their rationale.
- In addition, appreciating these techniques will underscore the value of the scientific method and scientific reasoning in understanding our world.
- Finally, you should be able to apply the lessons of social psychology to everyday life. Social psychology is *always* operating in the real world. Why are some people more popular than others? How do corporations developing advertising campaigns to sell their products? Why is a person more likely to sabotage their best friend, relative to a complete stranger, in certain situations? Do subliminal cues affect our behavior? Do people really treat others differently because of their age, sex, or race? How will presidential candidates use persuasion to earn your vote? At the end of the course, students should be able to recognize these processes as they unfold in the world around them and understand why they happen and know their implications.

Grades

Source	Points
Four in-term exams (250 points each)	1000 points
Final exam (250 points)	250 points
Total Points (best 4 of the 5 above exams)	1000 points

Final grades will be determined by your total points accumulated during the semester applied to this scale:

Points	Percent	Grade
925 - 1000	93% - 100%	A
895 - 924	90% - 92%	A-
865 - 894	87% - 89%	B+
825 - 864	83% - 86%	B
795 - 824	80% - 82%	B-
765 - 794	77% - 79%	C+
725 - 764	73% - 76%	C
695 - 724	70% - 72%	C-
665 - 694	67% - 69%	D+
625 - 664	63% - 66%	D
595 - 624	60% - 62%	D-
0 - 594	0% - 59%	F

The instructor reserves the right to adjust the grading scale. If modifications occur, changes will only make it easier for you to get a better grade (i.e., the scale will never be adjusted against you). However, it would be unwise to anticipate that an adjustment will occur. Final grades will be based on the final number of points earned as applied to the above grading scale, no exceptions. There is no end-of-semester negotiation period where students plea and barter for a better grade in the class. If you are dissatisfied with your performance in the class, discuss your situation with the instructor early in the term — don't wait until it's too late.

Exams

Grades are determined by four in-term exams administered during the term and one final exam. Each in-term exam only covers material presented since the previous exam (i.e., they are not cumulative), whereas the final exam is cumulative. Each exam, typically, will be comprised of 40 multiple-choice questions (each item worth 5 points) and two essay questions (each item is worth 25 points). Thus, each exam is worth 250 points, and final grades are based on the best four exams (Exams 1-4 and the Final Exam). Students who are satisfied with their grade after Exam 4 do not need to take the final (i.e., the final will be their “dropped exam”).

In general (though these percentages are rough averages that will vary from exam to exam), question content will reflect 35% unique lecture material, 40% lecture-book overlap, and 25% unique book material. Questions will cover basic definitions, research findings, theory, and applications of social psychology to everyday life. Thus, for any given topic covered in the course, you should be able to (1) define what the topic is, (2) describe an experiment conducted to understand the topic, (3) discuss what the topic says about social psychology theories and how it relates to them, and (4) describe a real-world phenomenon that illustrates the topic.

Preparing for exams

Performing well on exams requires that you read book assignments as scheduled in the syllabus, take notes on what you read, attend class and take good notes, ask questions in class about things you do not understand (either from lectures or the book), get help during office hours if you are not satisfied with your performance in the course, and go over exams with the TA if you need feedback about why you are not doing well.

Being successful in this class, college, and (hopefully) life isn't about cramming facts into your head and spitting them out on demand. Instead, it is about developing skills to be an active learner who can acquire, digest, organize, elaborate, critique, and reflect on course material. Therefore, there aren't review sessions or providing class notes in this course. It's the students' responsibility to engage and master the course material. This is best accomplished by active involvement with the material (reading, taking your own notes, thinking about how to apply the material to "the real world"). However, the instructor and the TA are more than happy to spend time with students on a one-to-one basis to help them develop those skills – not only to "get a good grade" in class, but to help students develop skills essential for success in college and in life.

Therefore you should pay attention to key terms (indicated in the book margins, highlighted at the end of each chapter in the summary, or discussed in lecture), and be able to define each term, describe a scientific experiment discussed in class or in the text that demonstrated that concept, relate that topic to a social psychology theory, and identify situations in everyday life where this phenomenon is revealed (see above).

Class policies

Academic integrity: Any act of academic misconduct (including, but not limited to, lying, cheating, plagiarism) will not be tolerated and will be punished to the fullest extent in accordance with Miami University policy on academic integrity (see Procedures for Addressing Cases of Academic Dishonesty, Part I, Chapter 5, 2009 Manual for Academic Deans, Chairs, and Program Administrators). Any evidence of academic misconduct by a group of students will be considered academic misconduct by all parties involved.

Assignments: Assignment due dates are posted in the syllabus. The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus at any time as warranted. However, the instructor will make such revisions at least one week ahead of a particular due date if it entails making assignments due at an earlier (rather than a later) date. Any alterations will be announced in class. Although such arrangements will be communicated in advance, it is the student's responsibility to attend to these announcements. Students who do not attend class assume the responsibility for missing alterations to the course.

Special considerations: In situations where special and documented circumstances require that a student not take an exam during a scheduled time (e.g., arrangements for students with learning disabilities, an official university obligation during class time, religious observances), special arrangements can be made to accommodate such needs. However, students must make these arrangements with the instructor at the beginning of the semester and provide official documentation regarding these circumstances.

Classroom conduct: While in the classroom, people are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and civil manner. It is quite all right (and downright encouraged) for people to express their opinions and beliefs. It is quite another thing, however, to be disrespectful or rude to students or to the instructor. It is fine to disagree with others, and it is okay to express non-PC (politically correct) or non-mainstream views. However, bigotry and disrespect is unacceptable. In class, listen to others, participate, and be involved. If you want to read the paper, Facebook, surf the web, talk to friends, or sleep — stay at home. Students who are disruptive in class will be asked to leave. In the same vein, turn off your cell phone ringers and leave your electronic toys in your bookbag.

Course notes, exams, and sundry legal disclaimers: Attending class, obtaining the textbook, and taking notes are each student's responsibility. Neither the instructor nor the TA will lend out notes or books under any circumstances. If you plan on missing a class, ask classmates to borrow their notes (if you don't know how to persuade others to do your bidding, read Chapters 7-8 right now).

The content of this course is the intellectual property of the instructor and is covered by copyright law. The exams and handouts in this class are copyrighted. Any sale, reproduction, or retransmission of course-related materials (including exams or exam questions) is a violation of U.S. Copyright Law, and any parties (students or commercial enterprises) involved in such illegal activities are subject to both criminal and civil prosecution. Students are allowed to provide or lend notes to fellow students, provided they do not financially profit from doing so. The commercialization of class notes, however, is strictly prohibited.

Exams and make-ups: There are no make-ups if you miss an exam for an unexcused reason. An unexcused absence is considered to be an absence where a student (1) did not obtain prior permission from the instructor concerning the absence or (2) did not provide documented evidence justifying the absence. Valid documented evidence can be one of three things: (1) a signed note from a health care professional stating that you were sick and unable to attend class, (2) a letter from a funeral home or clergy on their letterhead indicating that you attended a memorial service, or (3) a letter from Dean Schilling supporting your absence. There are no exceptions to this policy. If you miss an exam, contact the instructor as soon as possible to let him know about the situation (and use multiple methods, including e-mail and phoning).

If you miss an exam for an excused reason, you will take a make-up exam at a time to be scheduled by you and the teaching assistant. This exam will be an all-essay exam and will be graded by the instructor or by the teaching assistant. The multiple-choice form of the exam is only administered once, at the prescribed class time. You cannot be excused from Exam 4 or from the Final Exam. If you miss either of these exams, you will receive a zero for it (and keep in mind that your lowest exam score is dropped).

All exams are closed book and closed notes. Students must bring identification cards and be prepared to present them to exam proctors upon request to verify their identity. Students must bring their own pencils (soft lead, #2) for the answer sheets. Students who wear hats, wear sunglasses, use personal electronic devices (e.g., iPods, smart phones, laptops), use devices capable of receiving and transmitting information, or operate mobile phones or other communications devices will not be permitted to take the exam. Students must stay in the auditorium during the exam. Students who leave the auditorium must submit their exam as completed; they will not be permitted to re-enter and continue with the exam. Students who anticipate using the restroom or needing a soda should do so before starting the test. Yes, these are all silly rules, but they are listed because of silly stunts tried in the past.

Incompletes: Except for cases of documented medical or family emergencies, incompletes will not be given. There is no need for you to do badly in this class: the instructor and TA will be available for meetings during office hours or by appointment, we'll answer your e-mail questions promptly, the points that you earn will come in small chunks rather than a couple monstrous exams, and you can drop the lowest exam grade you receive. Deadlines for dropping classes and withdrawals are provided in the General Bulletin and the Academic Calendar information published by the Office of the Registrar. These resources provide Miami's official details regarding deadlines and university policies.

Semester schedule

Assignments are due on the day listed. Reading assignments are from the Aronson et al. textbook. Unless otherwise indicated by a range of page numbers in parentheses, the entire chapter is assigned.

			Topic	Assignment
Week 1	Tu	8/25	Orientation to the course	
	Th	8/27	Introduction to social psychology	Chapter 1
Week 2	Tu	9/1	Social psychology methods	Chapter 2
	Th	9/3	Social cognition	Chapter 3 (57-72, 77-87)
Week 3	Tu	9/8	Nonconscious social life	
	Th	9/10	Judgment and decision making	Chapter 3 (73-77)
Week 4	Tu	9/15	Forming impressions	Chapter 4 (91-104)
	Th	9/17	Attribution	Chapter 4 (104-122)
Week 5	Tu	9/22	Exam 1	
	Th	9/24	The social self	Chapter 5
Week 6	Tu	9/29	The motivated self	Chapter 6
	Th	10/1	Attitudes	Chapter 7 (189-197)
Week 7	Tu	10/6	Persuasion	Chapter 7 (197-208, 211-233)
	Th	10/8	Social influence	Chapter 7 (208-211), Chapter 8 (227-260)
Week 8	Tu	10/13	No class — Study Day	
	Th	10/15	Exam 2	
Week 9	Tu	10/20	Obedience and resistance	Chapter 8 (260-268)
	Th	10/22	Perceiving groups	Chapter 13 (413-429)
Week 10	Tu	10/27	Stereotype use and change	Chapter 13 (429-455)
	Th	10/29	Interpersonal attraction	Chapter 10
Week 11	Tu	11/3	Love, sex, and breakups	
	Th	11/5	Helping others	Chapter 11
Week 12	Tu	11/10	Hurting others	Chapter 12
	Th	11/12	Exam 3	
Week 13	Tu	11/17	Basic group phenomena	Chapter 9
	Th	11/19	Groups in action	
Week 14	Tu	11/24	Applications of social psychology	
	Th	11/26	No class — Thanksgiving Break	
Week 15	Tu	12/1	The environment	Chapter 14
	Th	12/3	The social psychology of health	Chapter 15
Week 16	Tu	12/8	The law and social psychology	Chapter 16
	Th	12/10	Exam 4	
Finals Week	Tu	12/15	Final Exam (12:30 - 2:30 p.m.)... the Final Exam is only administered on Tuesday, December 15, from 12:30-2:30 p.m., in 125 PSYC	