

PSYCHOLOGY 385: ADVANCED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Instructor: Larry White, professor of psychology
Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 – 3:50 in Science Center 250
Office Hours: M-W-F 10:00 – 11:00 and Tu-Th 11:00 – 12:00 in Science Center 236
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Course Objectives

Social psychology is the scientific study of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals in social situations. This advanced seminar is intended for juniors and seniors who have some background in social or cultural psychology and wish to gain a deeper understanding of major issues in the field. We will read and discuss classic and contemporary theory and research in social psychology, with special attention given to how ideas develop. You will also design and put into action a strategy that aims to eradicate a specific problem or enhance the quality of life on campus.

This seminar is a capstone experience that asks you to build upon what you have learned as a psychology major and as a student at a top-notch liberal arts college. I expect you to perform at a high level in four domains: (1) understanding and discussing complex ideas within social and cultural psychology, (2) evaluating evidence and the validity of claims, (3) building on what you have learned about research methods and statistics to design and evaluate an intervention project, and (4) making well-reasoned moral judgments about what is good, right, and just.

Books

The first three books are required; the fourth is recommended. All four books are available at Turtle Creek Bookstore.

- A. Aronson, E. (2010). *Not by chance alone: My life as a social psychologist*. New York: Basic Books.
- B. Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2008). *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*. New York: Penguin Books.
- C. Cooper, J. (2007). *Cognitive dissonance: Fifty years of a classic theory*. London: Sage Publications.
- D. Schwartz, B. M., Landrum, R. E., & Gurung, R. A. R. (2012). *An easyguide to APA Style*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Journal Articles

These articles, most of which are citation classics, are written BY research psychologists FOR research psychologists. I do not expect you to understand 100% of what you read. I simply ask that you do your best. This means you'll sometimes need to use a dictionary or search on-line for definitions of technical terms and professional jargon. You'll need to spend time with each

chapter and article. Highlight key points, write notes in the margin, pose questions while you read, and make connections with other things we've read. If you read in this way, you'll understand the material better and remember it for a longer period of time. You'll also be better prepared for our conversations in class and for the exams.

1. Stam, H., Radtke, H. L., & Lubek, I. (2000). Strains in experimental social psychology: A textual analysis of the development of experimentation in social psychology. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 36(4), 365-382.
2. Operario, D. & Fiske, S. T. (1999). Social cognition permeates social psychology: Motivated mental processes guide the study of human social behavior. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 2, 63-78.
3. Benjamin, L. T., & Simpson, J. A. (2009). The power of the situation: The impact of Milgram's obedience studies on personality and social psychology. *American Psychologist*, 64(1), 12-19.
4. Bandura, A. (1978). The self system in reciprocal determinism. *American Psychologist*, 33(4), 344-358.
5. Darley, J., & Fazio, R. (1980). Expectancy confirmation processes arising in the social interaction sequence. *American Psychologist*, 35(10), 867-881.
6. Latané, B. (1981). The psychology of social impact. *American Psychologist*, 36(4), 343-356.
7. Wood, W., Lundgren, S., Ouellette, J., Busceme, S., & Blackstone, T. (1994). Minority influence: A meta-analytic review of social influence processes. *Psychological Bulletin*, 115(3), 323-345.
8. Triandis, H. C. (1989). The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts. *Psychological Review*, 96, 506-520.
9. Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497-529.
10. Bond, R., & Smith, P. B. (1996). Culture and conformity: A meta-analysis of studies using Asch's (1952b, 1956) line judgment task. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119(1), 111-137.
11. Wegner, D. M., & Wheatley, T. P. (1999). Apparent mental causation: Sources of the experience of will. *American Psychologist*, 54(7), 480-492.
12. Huddy, L. (2001). From social to political identity: A critical examination of social identity theory. *Political Psychology*, 22(1), 127-156.
13. Kahneman, D. (2003). A perspective on judgment and choice: Mapping bounded rationality. *American Psychologist*, 58(9), 697-720.
14. Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (2005). The influence of attitudes on behavior. In D. Albarracín, B. T. Johnson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *The handbook of attitudes* (pp. 173-221). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
15. Cialdini, R., Reno, R., & Kallgren, C. (1990). A focus theory of normative conduct: Recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(6), 1015-1026.
16. The Daily SEO Blog. (2010, June). An illustrated guide to the science of persuasion & influence (Cialdini's six principles of influence). At <http://www.seomoz.org/blog/an-illustrated-guide-to-the-science-of-persuasion-influence>.
17. Ruback, R. B., & Innes, C. A. (1988). The relevance and irrelevance of psychological research: The example of prison crowding. *American Psychologist*, 43(9), 683-693.
18. Bushman, B. J., & Anderson, C. A. (2001). Media violence and the American public: Scientific facts versus media misinformation. *American Psychologist*, 56(6/7), 477-489.
19. Compiled from twitter.com. (2011). Cognitive dissonance: A history in tweets *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6, 98-101.

20. Varnum, M., Grossmann, I., Kitayama, S., & Nisbett, R. (2010). The origin of cultural differences in cognition: The social orientation hypothesis. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 19(1), 9-13.
21. Henrich, J., Heine, S., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2/3), 1-23.
22. Baumeister, R. (2007). Is there anything good about men? Invited address at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association.
23. Cesario, J., & Higgins, E. T. (2008). Making message recipients "feel right": How nonverbal cues can increase persuasion. *Psychological Science*, 19(5), 415-420.
24. Goldstone, R. L., Roberts, M. E., & Gureckis, T. M. (2008) Emergent processes in group behavior. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17(1), 10-15.
25. Stapel, D. A., & Lindenberg, S. (2011). Coping with chaos: How disordered contexts promote stereotyping and discrimination. *Science*, 332, 251- 253.
26. Stephens, N. M., Markus, H. R., & Townsend, S. S. M. (2007). Choice as an act of meaning: The case of social class. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93(5), 814-830.
27. Eibach, R. P., & Mock, S. E. (2011). Idealizing parenthood to rationalize parental investments. *Psychological Science*, 22(2), 203-208.

Part 1: A (Selective) History of Social Psychology

Tuesday, Aug. 30	Introduction to the course.
Thursday, Sept. 1	Discuss Aronson's autobiography, Introduction and Chapters 1-4.
Tuesday, Sept. 6	Discuss Aronson's autobiography, Chapters 5-7. Talk about intervention projects.
Thursday, Sept. 8	Discuss Aronson's autobiography, Chapters 8-10. Talk (again) about intervention projects.
Tuesday, Sept. 13	Discuss articles 1-3.

Part 2: Important Ideas, Concepts, and Theories

Thursday, Sept. 15	Discuss article 4. Talk about interrupted time-series design.
Tuesday, Sept. 20	Discuss articles 5-6. Talk about nonreactive measures.
Thursday, Sept. 22	Discuss article 7.
Tuesday, Sept. 27	Discuss articles 8-9.
Thursday, Sept. 29	Formal presentations of project proposals.
Tuesday, Oct. 4	Discuss articles 10-11. Project proposal due in class.

- Thursday, Oct. 6 Discuss articles 12-13. Receive questions for midterm exam.
- Tuesday, Oct. 11 Discuss article 14.
- Thursday, Oct. 13 **Midterm exam.**

Part 3: Applications of Social Psychology

- Tuesday, Oct. 25 Discuss Introduction and Part I of *Nudges*: Humans and econs. Receive grading rubric for research report.
- Thursday, Oct. 27 Discuss Parts II and III of *Nudges*: Money and health.
- Tuesday, Nov. 1 Discuss Parts IV, V, and Postscript of *Nudges*: Freedom and objections.
- Thursday, Nov. 3 Discuss articles 15-16.
- Tuesday, Nov. 8 Discuss articles 17-18. Receive poster evaluation sheet.

Part 4: An In-Depth Case Study – The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance

- Thursday, Nov.10 Discuss Cooper's *Cognitive Dissonance*, Chapters 1-3.
- Tuesday, Nov. 15 Discuss *Cognitive Dissonance*, Chapters 4-6.
- Thursday, Nov. 17 Discuss *Cognitive Dissonance*, Chapters 7-8 & Afterword. Also discuss Article 19.
- Tuesday, Nov. 22 **"Social Psychology in Action" poster session.**
- Thursday, Nov. 24 No class. Thanksgiving!

Part 5: New and Provocative Ideas in Social Psychology

- Tuesday, Nov. 29 Discuss articles 20-21.
- Thursday, Dec. 1 Discuss article 22.
- Tuesday, Dec. 6 Visit with Liz Majka (Ph.D. student at University of Chicago). **Research report due in class.**

Part 6: A Sampling of Contemporary Topics and Approaches

Thursday, Dec. 8 Discuss articles 23-25. Receive questions for final exam.

Tuesday, Dec. 13 Discuss articles 26-27.

If you are unable to attend class or complete an assignment because of an upcoming event (e.g., a religious holiday), please talk with me as soon as possible so we can make alternate arrangements.

If you have a disability and would like to discuss the possibility of accommodations, visit the Learning Enrichment and Disability Services (LEDS) Office or call ext. 2572 or e-mail learning@beloit.edu. If you need accommodations in my class, you must give me an Accommodation Verification letter from the LEDS Office and then we can talk about how to meet your needs.

Assignments and Evaluations

Based on my experience as a college teacher and feedback from former students, I propose the following assignments and responsibilities.

Discussions of Assigned Readings: I will present a few mini-lectures, but most of our time together in this seminar will be devoted to discussions of common readings. To have a fruitful conversation, it's important that everyone be fully prepared. If each of us is present, prepared, and engaged, our seminar will be an intellectually enriching and gratifying experience for all of us. To provide you with the proper incentive, I propose the following:

- You can earn a maximum of 10 points for each of 23 class meetings. The number of points you earn will depend on the degree to which you demonstrate mastery of the material and make thoughtful contributions to our discussions. I'll give you feedback during midterm break about your performance in class discussions.
- At the beginning of each class meeting, I'll draw 2-3 names from a hat. If your name is drawn, it will be your responsibility to (a) summarize succinctly one of the readings assigned for that week and (b) jump start our conversation by posing a thought-provoking question. If your name is drawn and you fulfill your duties, you'll earn at least 9 points for that class meeting. If your name is drawn and you're unprepared, you'll earn only 5 points. If your name is not drawn, you'll earn between 6 and 10 points, depending on your contributions to that afternoon's seminar.
- If you miss a class, you'll earn no points for that class meeting.
- At the end of the semester, you'll be able to drop your lowest participation score. This effectively means you can miss one class or be unprepared on one occasion without jeopardizing your course grade. You can earn a maximum of 220 points for your contributions to class discussions.

Let's strive to maximize productive discussion and minimize unproductive discussion. It's easy to distinguish between the two. In a productive discussion, everyone is prepared, everyone participates, people think before speaking, comments build on earlier comments, and differences of opinion are respected. In an unproductive discussion, a few individuals monopolize the discussion and people who are unprepared speak anyway.

An Intervention Project: You and a partner will design and implement a socially-useful *behavior change project* and evaluate its success (i.e., effectiveness). Here are some examples of potential goals for an on-campus intervention: decreased littering, more smiling on campus, fewer instances of wasteful printing in the library, fewer arguments in intramural games, decreased water usage in the residence halls, and fewer instances of excessive drinking.

You and your partner will collaborate to write a 2-page project proposal (worth 30 points) in which you tell me (a) what your intervention is, (b) why you think it will work, and (c) how you will know if it works. This paper is due at the beginning of class on **Tuesday, October 4**.

You and your partner will tell the rest of us about your proposed intervention project in a 7-8 minute presentation (worth 20 points) on **Thursday, September 29**. (The presentation will be organized around the same three points as the paper. It is scheduled in advance of the written proposal so you can incorporate feedback from the class into your proposal.)

You and your partner will create a research poster that describes the highlights of your intervention project (worth 40 points) for a "Social Psychology in Action" poster session that will be open to the public. The poster session will take place during class on **Tuesday, November 22**. Your poster will be evaluated in terms of criteria listed in an evaluation sheet that I will distribute separately.

At the conclusion of your intervention project, you will write an APA-style research report (worth 100 points) that describes your project and its results. (Your partner will write his or her own report.) As you know, APA-style research reports include a title page, abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion, references, and table and figures. This report is due at the beginning of class on **Tuesday, December 6**. Late papers will be docked 10 points for each day or part of a day. Your paper will be evaluated in terms of criteria listed in a grading rubric that I will distribute separately.

This challenging project will occupy a lot of your time and energy this semester. Your classmates and I will help you brainstorm ideas, devise an intervention, and design a way to evaluate the effectiveness of your intervention.

Midterm and Final Exams: These exams will give you an opportunity to organize and review what you have learned and to think carefully about important issues. The exams will be 5/3/2 essay exams (worth 60 points each). Here are three questions you can expect to see on either the midterm or the final exam.

- A. What lessons for the future of social psychology can be learned by a careful consideration of social psychology's history?
- B. Where do social psychological ideas come from? What can be done to increase the number and quality of ideas in social psychology?
- C. In your opinion, what are social psychology's most valuable contributions to psychology-at-large and to humankind? Defend your answer.

The midterm exam is scheduled for **Thursday, October 13, at 2:00 p.m.** The final exam is scheduled for **Friday, December 16, at 10:00 a.m.**

There are 530 possible points in this course. If you earn 90% or more of the points (i.e., 477+), you'll receive at least an A-. If you earn 80% or more (424+), you'll receive at least a B- and so forth.

To perform well in this course, you'll need to be a *deep* learner rather than a *surface* learner (someone who tries to remember as many details as possible) or a *strategic* learner (someone who is primarily concerned with making good grades). Deep learners think about conclusions and evidence when they read a book or listen to a lecture; they identify key concepts, mull over assumptions, and consider implications and applications.

The success of our seminar depends on YOU more than it depends on me. I thank you in advance for your positive contributions to our course.

Fall 2011