

Psychology 240 A  
Social Psychology  
Spring 2006

Ms. Amy Holtzman Vazquies  
Email: [akholtzman@rcn.com](mailto:akholtzman@rcn.com)

Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays before and after class. If these times are not convenient, please feel free to email me to set up an appointment.

Class Time: Wednesday and Fridays, 7:30am -8:40am  
Class Room: To be announced

Course Overview:

This course is designed to introduce students to the concept of social influence. The focus of the course will be to study how and why our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are shaped by the social environment. Topics presented will explore social thinking, social influence and social relations. The content of the course lends itself well to interactive demonstrations, lectures and discussions.

Course Objectives:

- To learn theories and concepts of Social Psychology.
- To develop increased awareness of self and the world around you through application of concepts.
- To recognize and evaluate presence of social influence in your daily life.
- To improve communication skills through class activities, discussions, demonstrations and papers.

Examinations:

There will be three exams given during the term. All exams will be non-cumulative. The first two exams will be given during class time. The third exam will be given during final exam week. Questions will test your knowledge of both lecture and textbook material. Exams will be given only on the days scheduled. The only excuse for missing an exam is documented illness or death in the family. Any inexcusable absence from an exam will be recorded as a zero.

### Application Papers:

There are two Application Papers required for this course. By analyzing and applying theories of Social Psychology, you will have an opportunity to fully understand concepts and to think like a psychologist. The Application Paper topics are listed at the end of your syllabus. Each paper will be discussed in small groups to highlight the impact of social influence. You are expected to be prepared for classroom discussions on the designated dates. Each paper should be 3-5 word-processed, double-spaced pages. The first paper is due on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The second paper is due on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Please note that late papers will be dropped ½ a letter grade for each day after paper is due.

### Attendance and Class Participation:

**Attendance for all classes is expected.** You are responsible for the material and activities presented in class, as the lecture material is meant to supplement your readings. You are expected to read assigned texts prior to each session, as your participation in classroom discussion is encouraged. Missed classes will lower your grade in the course.

### Evaluation:

Your grade for this course will be comprised of exams, Application Papers and your class participation. The breakdown is as follows:

Exams	60% (3 @ 20%)
Application Papers	30% (2 @ 15%)
Participation	10%

### Policy on Plagiarism:

The Psychology Department has set policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism is the intentional misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own. This includes various situations such as quoting directly from a published work without properly acknowledging the author, having someone write a paper for you, "borrowing" from fraternity or sorority files, buying a paper from a professional service, etc. The policy in the department is that students must keep all note cards and rough drafts on a paper until the grade is assigned. The course instructor may request these materials at any time. Evidence of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the College Policy on academic honesty, copies of which are available at the departmental secretary's desk.

### Required Texts:

Myers, D.G. (2005). Social Psychology. (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) Boston, MA: McGraw Hill Publishers.

Any additional readings will be on reserve in the library or handed out during the class.

### Class Schedule

(Please note the schedule is subject to change. Any change will be noted in an addendum to the syllabus and explained by the instructor)

January 18<sup>th</sup> Introduction to Course

January 20<sup>th</sup> Introduction to Social Psychology  
Chapter 1

January 25<sup>th</sup> Research Methods  
Chapter 1

January 27<sup>th</sup> Understanding Self  
Chapter 2

February 1<sup>st</sup> Understanding Self  
Chapter 2

February 3<sup>rd</sup> Paper #1 Discussion  
Be sure to have viewed your movie and be prepared to discuss with your group.

February 8<sup>th</sup> Social Perception  
Chapter 3

February 10<sup>th</sup> Behavior and Attitudes  
Video: Zimbardo experiment  
\*\* Paper # 1 Due\*\*

February 15<sup>th</sup> Behavior and Attitudes  
Chapter 4

February 17<sup>th</sup> Exam I

February 22<sup>nd</sup> Genes, Culture and Gender  
Chapter 5

February 24<sup>th</sup> Genes, Culture and Gender  
Women, Men and Gender: Ongoing Debates

March 1<sup>st</sup> Conformity  
Chapter 6

March 3<sup>rd</sup> Conformity  
Video: Stanley Milgram's Obedience to Authority

March 8<sup>th</sup> Spring Break!

March 10<sup>th</sup> Spring Break!

March 15<sup>th</sup> Persuasion  
Activity: Bring in a magazine

March 17<sup>th</sup> Persuasion  
Chapter 7

March 22<sup>nd</sup> Exam II

March 24<sup>th</sup> Group Influence  
Activity

March 29<sup>th</sup> Group Influence  
Chapter 8

March 31<sup>st</sup> Paper # 2 Discussion  
Be sure to have observed your group and be prepared with observations.

April 5<sup>th</sup> Prejudice  
Video: A Class Divided

April 7<sup>th</sup> Prejudice  
Chapter 9

Activity: Bring in a magazine.  
\*\*Paper #2 Due\*\*

- April 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting People and Making Friends  
Chapter 11 pg. 423-452
- April 14<sup>th</sup> Easter Recess
- April 19<sup>th</sup> Love and Intimate Relationships  
Bring in a Love Song on CD  
Chapter 11 pg. 452-473
- April 21<sup>st</sup> Helping  
Altruism Debate
- April 26<sup>th</sup> Helping  
Chapter 12
- April 28<sup>th</sup> Closure: After the Fact Psychologizing

**Finals Week**

**\*\* Final Exam TBA\*\***

**Application Paper #1**  
**Discussion on February 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Due on February 10<sup>th</sup>**

Select one of the following movies and reflect on the concepts discussed in Chapter 2: Understanding Self. Be sure to highlight theories and explain their connection to the movie.

The Breakfast Club • The Joy Luck Club • Zelig • Working Girl

*Prior to writing your paper, be prepared to discuss your ideas/findings/interpretations/perceptions with a small group on the designated date. Along with your paper, you will be expected to write a brief reflection noting how the group impacted your ideas/findings/interpretation/perceptions. This is especially relevant as we are studying the influence of others on our behaviors.*

-----

----

**Application Paper #2**  
**Discussion on March 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**Due on April 7<sup>th</sup>**

Find and observe a group working on a project. This could be a group of people producing something or repairing something, a group making a decision or solving a problem. Examples could be: attending a community meeting (city council, school board); student government meetings, dorm meetings, fraternity or sorority meetings. The group should be observed for a half an hour. After observing the group, address the following questions:

- a. What is the structure of the group? Who is in it, who seems to be the leader or leaders? Is there someone who is the task leader and someone who is the emotional leader? What role does the leader play and is he or she effective?
- b. Identify any signs of social facilitation or social loafing. Describe whether the group seems to use group member's resources and abilities effectively. Are there any signs of group think?
- c. Describe the communication patterns within the group—does everyone talk to everyone else, or are there particular people who communicate the most or are communicated to the most? Does the group ever explicitly talk about the nature of their problem-solving process (i.e. deciding how they are going to delegate things?)
- d. Evaluate the groups performance—notice what they get accomplished and note anything they could have done to be more effective.
- e. Do you think this group is like to show groupthink effects? Explain why, and explain what could be done to decrease the likelihood of groupthink operating.

*Prior to writing your paper, be prepared to discuss your ideas/findings/interpretations/perceptions with a small group on the designated date. Along with your paper, you will be expected to write a brief reflection noting how the group impacted your ideas/findings/interpretation/perceptions. This is especially relevant as we are studying the influence of others on our behaviors.*