

PSYCH 240: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
Fall, 2006

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Office Hours: M & W 12:30 – 1:30PM; T & TH 10 -11AM (or by appointment)

CLASS MEETINGS: M & W 11:30 - 12:20; FRI 10:20 – 12:20 (PPHAC Room 116)

Course Overview:

This course is designed to serve as an introduction to the advancement of psychology as a science toward understanding human social behavior. More specifically we will explore how our thoughts, perceptions, emotions, attitudes, behaviors are influenced by others and our social environment and culture. Topics to be presented and discussed will include among others: attitude formation, conformity, persuasion, prejudice, aggression and interpersonal relationships. The class format will include lecture, discussion, and demonstration. The use of films as case studies will serve as a key tool for enhancing critical thinking and application skills. Upon completion of this course students should have an understanding of many psychological theories and principles related to our social nature, and their application in realistic world social settings.

The knowledge gained and critical thinking expended in this course should be helpful in giving the student much greater insight about the world around them, as well as their specific function in their immediate environment. Toward this end, a personal development initiative, Healthy U 101, will be implemented as part of the course. This insight, if continued to be developed and explored, should subsequently increase one's awareness of obstacles hindering their potential, opportunities and interventions for improvement, and ability to become a better person, friend, citizen. In short, with knowledge comes responsibility. In this case, students are challenged to become effective change agents in areas of personal and social improvement.

Required Texts:

Cialdini, R. B. (2001). *Influence: Science and practice*. (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon Publishers. (referred to in syllabus as C:)

Gilman, R. (2000). *Spinning into butter*. New York: Faber & Faber.

Kenrick, D. T., Neuberg, S. L., & Cialdini, R. B. (2005). *Social psychology: Unraveling the mystery* (3rd Ed.), Boston, MA: Pearson Books. (referred to as KNC in schedule)

McBride, J. (1996). *The color of water*. New York: Riverhead Books.

NOTE: The readings, schedule and assignments in this syllabus are subject to change; additional readings may be assigned.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To become knowledgeable about the field of Social Psychology, and the variety of theories and applications it has developed.

- 2) To experience through lecture, discussion, activities and reaction to case study films the applicability of these concepts, ideas and theories to our everyday lives, so as to come to an appreciation of the broad relevance of this discipline within our social world.

- 3) To become adept at thinking critically about such phenomena, especially employing the principles of scientific inquiry; and to gain greater effectiveness at expressing that critical thinking in discussion mode.

- 4) To become more effective and competent in your various roles (work, family, citizen, etc.) by learning how to become more aware of these phenomena, and apply improvement principles, particularly as they can impact personal development toward our potential.

- 5) To improve your communication skills (listening, written, & verbal) through various opportunities provided during the course.

Course Requirements: *(Please be sure to register for the course on Blackboard)*

Tests (2 @ 22% each)

The two tests will be a combination of take-home and in-class formats. This final exam will have a cumulative component. Also, please see make-up policy below.

Reaction Papers (33%)

Typically viewed on Fridays, we will view approximately 9 films in this course. Each film will serve as a case study illustrating social psychological dynamics. You will need to write an APPLICATION paper for SIX of these films and a CRITICAL THINKING reaction for TWO of the films. Thus, you will complete one type of paper for each film with one opportunity to “pass” on a film analysis.

APPLICATION PAPERS (2-3 pages each):

- a) Identify at least four (no more than 6) concepts, principles or theories that are illustrated in the film. Be VERY specific as to how you see the film portraying what you claim.
- b) Identify one specific research study the film (as observational data) supports or does not support based on how the character or characters behave, react or feel. Be sure to cite the specific study in APA format.

CRITICAL THINKING PAPERS (3 – 5 pages each):

Written like a Critical Essay and NOT as a Film Review, possible approaches include:

- a) Do a ***social psychological analysis of one of the characters***. What influences them? How do they influence others? How are they creators of their situation – how are they created by their situation / environment? What does the film say about their “roles” and how are those roles defined by their choices, their cultural context, or their self perceptions? What human STRENGTHS or human WEAKNESSES do they represent to themselves, to others, to society? Does the story emphasize change, endurance, compassion, or redemption and what are the implications for humans as social animals?

- b) Discuss the themes, general plot, scene sequence, or other attributes [see c. below] of the film and how they ***shed light (confirming OR new) on a social psychological phenomenon*** (e.g., aggression, influence, attractions, leadership, altruism, prejudice, etc.) relative to the text, readings and discussion. Do the character’s actions create a story of meaningfulness (or a constellation of meanings) about this phenomenon? What aspects about this social psychological phenomenon does the film urge you to value or criticize (especially connections with other disciplines) and why?

- c) Discuss the ***social psychological experience of VIEWING the film***. How does the movie make you FEEL at the end and why? Apply personal connections in your own development or focus on the more immediate impact of the film. FOR EXAMPLE: How do aspects of the film like narrative point of view, sound/music, direction, camera angles, camera position and movement, and editing (withheld or perceptually-manipulated information conveyed to the viewer) create a PARTICULAR PERCEPTION OR BELIEF in you? Do the same for the mise-en-scene (“what is put into the scene”) which includes lighting, set designs and location, quality of acting, and specific objects or props strategically used. How do these things influence your belief system or self perception?

Personal Wellness Project [Healthy U 101] (10%)

In the face of enormous hurdles, social pressures, and unhealthy environments within the college culture, this project will promote the application of influence, motivation and other social psychological phenomena geared toward promoting a healthier lifestyle and well-being through understanding and behavior change.

Active Learning (13%):

This grade is comprised of four components:

PARTICIPATION:

Insight and learning come from an active and interactive process. When we arrive to class it is our responsibility to do our share in interacting by sharing our thoughts, ideas, and insights about these two types of assignments in a mature, constructive manner. PLEASE do not be selfish with your thoughts, and conversely, be highly respectful and supportive of other individual's thoughts and ideas.

ENGAGING IN THE MATERIAL

In contrast to passive learning, engaging in the material involves (beyond participation) questioning the readings and lecture material, 'wrestling' with the ideas and concepts presented, and processing them at a deep level mainly by reflecting on their application to you and your world around

you. In short, care passionately about the material, your learning, and your fulfillment of the course objectives as well as your own. Periodic reading assessments will help me to track this as well.

ASSIGNMENTS

In order to make the material come to life, and make the theoretical concepts and empirical findings more meaningful, you will be required to apply the issues raised in the text and lectures. The criteria for doing well on these assignments will be based on your ability to think critically (i.e., justify your answers, use of examples, etc.), integrate material from the course, and communicate your ideas in a clear concise manner. Details for each assignment will be distributed and discussed in class.

HUMAN SUBJECT PARTICIPATION

To enrich your appreciation of science and methodology toward greater enlightenment about psychology, you will need to participate in TWO research projects. These projects will be approved by the HSIRB Ethical Review Board. However, if you are unable to participate or prefer not to, an alternative assignment will be provided (critique / reaction to an empirical article - details available upon request).

Course Structure & Policies:

- 1) ACCOMMODATIONS - Should you require special accommodations for a disability, please arrange an appointment with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Documentation of a disability will be required for special accommodations to be arranged in conjunction with the Learning Services Office. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for support of learning disabilities and/or ADHD, should contact Mrs. Laurie Roth, Director of Learning Services, 1307 Main Street (ext. 1510). Students who wish to request accommodations for support of other disabilities, should contact Dr. Ron Kline, Director of the Counseling Center, 1307 Main Street (ext. 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the appropriate disability support provider on campus.
- 2) MAKE-UP EXAMS - In order to avoid receiving a zero on a missed exam you must provide notification and verification. Notify me beforehand, or as soon as possible. Notification more than three days after the exam is not acceptable. Also, exams can only be made up if exams are missed for valid reasons. If you miss an exam please provide the appropriate documentation (Drs.' note, court order, family note upon death of a family member, etc.). Due to the awkwardness, in some cases I will not ask for such documentation; however, realize that if such documentation is not presented, the highest score that can be achieved on a test is a 70. I reserve the right to use essay format for make-up exams, and to reschedule these exams for 7:00AM on a day agreed upon by the student and instructor.
- 3) ATTENDANCE - Class attendance is expected. Class lectures and demonstrations will supplement text material. Excessive absences (beyond three classes – valid or not) will impact directly on your final grade with a deduction of two points per missed class. If you miss a class, the expectation is that you will get the notes from a classmate and then contact me if you should have any questions or need clarification.

4) LATE ASSIGNMENTS - Assignments may be handed in up to the next class after it was due (one points deducted from the grade each day late). Assignments may not be handed in after five days late (penalty ends there as well). Please, do not ask me to deviate from this policy. If you must miss class drop off the assignment earlier, send it with a classmate, or fax it to me (861-1577). In other words, there should be no valid excuse for a late assignment. I encourage you not to procrastinate such that last minute emergencies (e.g. computer down, ribbon broke, etc.) interfere with getting assignments in on time. Also, be sure to back up your computer disks and use your X: drive!

5) CHEATING and PLAGIARISM will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the intentional misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own. This includes such instances as quoting directly from a published work without giving the author credit (i.e. proper citation), using or "borrowing" another student's work, buying a paper from a professional service, etc. The policy of the department is that the student must keep all note cards and rough drafts on a paper until given a grade for that course. Evidence of plagiarism and cheating will be dealt with in accordance with the college policy on academic honesty. Copies are available from the departmental secretary.

6) SUMMARY of Grading System:

TEST ONE (Midterm)	20%
TEST TWO (Final Exam)	20%
REACTION PAPERS	30%
INFLUENCE PROJECT	12%
PERSONAL WELLNESS PROJECT (Healthy U 101)	10%
ACTIVE LEARNING/ ASSIGNMENTS & DISCUSSION:	12%

7) The following GRADING SCALE will be used in the course:

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

Relevant Quotes:

I believe that we have to content ourselves with our imperfect knowledge and understanding; and treat values and moral obligations as a purely human problem - the most important of all human problems.
-- Albert Einstein

Know thyself, for once we know ourselves, we may learn how to care for ourselves; but otherwise we never shall
--- Socrates

I felt like there was this big black hole. And I just started falling into it. No matter what I tried to do - I couldn't get out. And it just kept getting bigger and bigger . . . and then you become the hole.

Timothy Hutton in Ordinary People

If only we wanted to be happy, it would be easy; but we want to be happier than other people which is difficult since we think them happier than they are.

-- Montesquieu

Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one's thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world.

-- Goethe

What seems to make us special is a complex, intricate and ongoing interaction between our genes and our environment . . . we have much more to learn about the nature of the interaction.

--Time magazine Special Report

I don't believe in circumstances. The people who go on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want.

-- George Bernard Shaw

When I'm watching my TV, and a man comes on and tells me how white my shirt should be, and I can't be a man 'cause I don't smoke the same cigarettes as he . . . I can't get no satisfaction.

-- Mic Jagger, I Can't Get No Satisfaction

Despite all my rage - I am still just a rat in a cage.

--Smashing Pumpkins.

What is new in our time is the increased power of the authorities to enforce their prejudices.

-- Bertrand Russell

Can't we all just get along???

--Rodney King

What's been misplaced in American life is the crucial distinction between having sex and making love. With a generous assist from Hollywood, stigma has been stripped from commitment to nothing larger than oneself.

--Harry Stein

At different states in our lives, the signs of love may vary: dependence, attraction, contentment, worry, loyalty, grief, but at the heart, the source is always the same. Human beings have the rare capacity to connect with each other, against all odds.

--Anonymous

Bias and prejudice are attitudes to be kept in hand, not attitudes to be avoided.

-- Charles Curtis, A Commonplace Book

We are each burdened with prejudice; against the poor or the rich, the smart or the slow, the gaunt or the obese. It is natural to develop prejudices. It is noble to rise above them. ~Author Unknown

Preconceived notions are the locks on the door to wisdom. ~Merry Browne

The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority. ~Ralph W. Sockman

Will it make it easier for you now - you got someone to blame . . . we're one but we're not the same, we hurt each other than we do it again . . . we're one but we're not the same, we gotta carry each other, carry each other - one.

---Bono of U2, One

Fools say that I do not know. Silence like a cancer grows. Hear my words that I might teach you. Take my arms that I might reach you.

-- Paul Simon & Art Garfunkle, The Sounds of Silence

To sin by silence when they should protest, makes cowards of men.

--Abraham Lincoln

War is an ugly thing but not the ugliest of things; the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feelings which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.

-- John Stuart Mill

Course Schedule: Readings and Due Dates

Monday 8/28	Introduction & Overview	
Wednesday 8/30	Social Psychology: Introduction Continued	KNC Chpt. 1
Friday 9/1 (10:15 start – just this Friday)	Healthy U 101: A plan for using social psychological principles for health and wellness	
Monday 9/4	Labor Day: No Classes	
Wednesday 9/6	The Person and the Situation	KNC Chpt. 2 Influence Chpt. 1
Friday 9/8	Social Cognition and Presenting the Self	KNC Chpt. 3 & 4
Monday 9/11 Wednesday 9/13 Friday 9/15	Attitudes and Persuasion	KNC Chpt. 5
Monday 9/18 Wednesday 9/20	Social Influence	KNC Chpt. 6

Friday 9/22

Monday 9/25 Influence (continued) Cialdini Text
Wednesday 9/27
Friday 9/29

Monday 10/2 Affiliation, Friendship, Love & Romance KNC Chpt. 7 & 8
Wednesday 10/4
Friday 10/6

Monday 10/9 Fall Recess

Wednesday 10/11 Review Material from first half of the course
Friday 10/13 MIDTERM EXAM

Monday 10/16 Prosocial Behavior KNC Chpt. 9
Wednesday 10/18
Friday 10/20

Monday 10/23 Aggression KNC Chpt. 10
Wednesday 10/25
Friday 10/27

Monday 10/30 Prejudice, Stereotyping, & Discrimination KNC Chpt. 11
Wednesday 11/1
Friday 11/3

Monday 11/6 Groups KNC Chpt. 12
Wednesday 11/8
Friday 11/10 Have Read “Spinning Into Butter”

Monday 11/13 Discussion on “Spinning Into Butter”
Wednesday 11/15 (cont’d)
Friday 11/17 Have Read “The Color of Water”

Monday 11/20 Discussion on “The Color of Water”

Wednesday 11/22 Thanksgiving Break
Friday 11/24 Thanksgiving Break

Monday 11/27 Social Dilemmas: Cooperation vs. Conflict KNC Chpt. 13
Wednesday 11/29
Friday 12/1

Monday 12/4 Integrating Social Psychology KNC Chpt. 14
Wednesday 12/6
Friday 12/8

Monday 12/11 Review and Wrap Up

Final Exam to be scheduled by the Registrar.