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Psychology 340 – Social Psychology

Money, Materialism, Well-being, and Happiness.

Most people accept the folk wisdom found in the phrase “money won’t buy you happiness,” and yet many continue to pursue higher incomes and more material acquisitions, from iPhones to expensive cars, nonetheless. Research in social psychology and positive psychology demonstrate quite clearly that beyond certain points, more money and more stuff do not lead to greater happiness, well-being, contentment, or satisfaction. But there is some good news: Recent research reveals that *how you spend* your money can lead to positive feelings. In this class, we will begin with an overview of social psychology and the spend most of the semester exploring the downside of materialism as well as the particular ways that money can (and cannot) lead to happiness, either for ourselves or others. The class will also design and conduct a study on some aspect of money, materialism, spending, and well-being. We will choose the research topic and then design and execute the research together.

Class meets on M and W (8:55am – 10:05am) in PPHAC 232

Required books:

- Dunn, D. S. (2012). *Research methods for social psychology* (2nd ed). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. ISBN-13: 978-1118406052
- Dunn, E. W., & Norton, M. (2014). *Happy money: The science of happier spending*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. ISBN-13: 978-1451665079
- Kasser, T. (2003). *The high price of materialism*. Cambridge, MA: Bradford. ISBN-13: 978-0262611978

Optional/Recommended

- Dunn, D. S. (2010). *A short guide to writing about psychology*. New York, NY: Pearson. ISBN-13: 978-0205752812

Learning Goals and Outcomes for this Course

Research Methods in Psychology

Describe the basic characteristics of the science of psychology.

Explain different research methods used by psychologists.

Evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions derived from psychological research

Design and conduct basic studies to address psychological questions using appropriate research methods.

Follow the APA Ethics Code in the treatment of human participants in the design, data collection, interpretation, and reporting of psychological research.

Generalize research conclusions appropriately based on the parameters of particular research methods.

Course Requirements

Attendance and participation. Our class is a small seminar. Your active, engaged, and on-going participation is essential to the success of the class. To that end, I will be taking role daily. An undue number of absences will lower your final course grade.

Examinations. There are two exams, an in-class midterm on **Monday, March 2nd** and a take-home final exam (available in class on **Wednesday, April 22** and due no later than **Monday, May 4th at 1:30pm**). Both exams will be comprised of essay questions relating to class readings and discussions. We will discuss the format of each test in detail during class. A missed exam will be recorded as a zero (0) grade. Make-up exams will be given at my discretion, and valid evidence for the absence will be required (e.g., emergency, documented medical excuse).

Research team project(s). The class will constitute a research team, one that will conduct one or more research projects on the topic on money, materialism, well-being, and happiness. As a class, we will design a social psychological research project(s) aimed at exploring topics from our readings and class discussions. Working as a team, our class will search the relevant literature via PsycINFO, develop a hypothesis and research design, create independent and dependent variables, seek permission from the Human Subjects Committee to conduct the experiment, recruit participants, and collect and analyze the resulting data.

Individual research paper. Each student will write his or her own APA-style research paper summarizing the theory, methods, and research findings obtained via the experiment or other investigation we collectively design. Each student will use the shared

materials created and collected by the class to write his or her own APA style empirical paper summarizing what was done, found, and interpreting its meaning in light of social psychological theory. I will read and comment on rough drafts of your paper, the final version of which must be submitted for a grade in class on **Wednesday, April 22nd**.

Data analyses for research projects. Although we will discuss how to plan data analyses for your research projects, I will assume you are familiar with data entry and analyses using statistical software, generally SPSS. You should begin to think about, discuss, and plan the analysis of your data as soon as you develop a research design. SPSS is available online in the College's computer classrooms. If you have access to other statistical software, you may use it as long as you inform me in advance. Be sure that when you report the results of your analyses that you do so using APA style (for guidelines, see chapter 11 in D, chapters 6 and 8 in Dunn [2011], and/or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* [APA, 2010]). Be sure that you report the values of any test statistics, their accompanying degrees of freedom, significance levels, and so on.

The Writing Center. The Writing Center, located on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall, is there to support the efforts of all writers at Moravian College. The tutors there are students who are good, experienced writers and who are professionally trained to help you improve your writing. They will go over an essay draft with you and guide your understanding of how you might improve that draft. You could also drop by to pick up some of the free handouts on virtually every part of writing: getting started, writing a thesis, developing paragraphs, eliminating wordiness, using commas, and the like. The Writing Center is generally open Monday-Thursday afternoons and Sunday evenings during the semester. The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.

Accommodations for disabilities. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.

Plagiarism and cheating. Your work must be your own. The College has a detailed plagiarism policy. I assume you are already familiar with it. I am happy to discuss it with you if you have questions. I will follow it to the letter. Please visit: <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic2.htm> to view the policy.

Grading. Final grades will be weighted as follows:

Midterm exam (in class)	= 20%
Final exam (take home)	= 20%
Class participation	= 20%
Team work and effort	= 20%
APA style research paper	= 20%

I will use the following grading scale for course work:

<i>Letter</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Grade Range</i>
A	100	95-100
A-	92	90-94
B+	88	87-89
B	85	83-86
B-	81	80-82
C+	78	77-79
C	75	73-76
C-	71	70-72
D+	68	67-69
D	65	63-66
D-	61	60-62
F	0	0-59

Office hours. My office hours at Moravian for spring 2015 are:

Monday	10:15-11:15am
Wednesday	2-3pm
Friday	8:30-10:30am

When necessary appointments for other times may be scheduled.

Note about the syllabus. Readings should be completed before class on the dates noted herein. I reserve the right to alter the syllabus should the need arise.

Course Schedule

*** Available via PsycINFO

Week One – Organizational Meeting and Introducing Social Psychology

M Jan 19 – Organizational Meeting

W Jan 21 – Social Psychology I: Main Theories and Perspectives

Week Two – Social Psychology and Research Methods

M Jan 26 – Social Psychology II: Main Theories and Perspectives

Final Day for Course Changes

W Jan 28 – Research Review

Read Chapter 1 in Dunn

Week Three – Materialism and Happy Money

M Feb 2 – Mixed Messages and Personal Well-Being

Read Chapters 1 and 2 in Kasser

W Feb 4 – Happy Money

Read Prologue and Chapter 1 in Dunn & Norton

Week Four – Materialism and Happy Money

M Feb 9 – Psychological Needs and Insecurity

Read Chapters 3 and 4 in Kasser

W Feb 11 – Make It a Treat

Read Chapter 2 in Dunn & Norton

Week Five – Materialism and More Methods

M Feb 16 – Fragile Self-Worth and Poor Relationships

Read Chapters 5 and 6 in Kasser

W Feb 18 – Brainstorming Topics and Research Ethics

Read Chapters 2 and 3 in Dunn

Week Six – Experimental Design

M Feb 23 – Basic experimental design

Read Chapter 4 in Dunn

W Feb 25 – Alternative Methods

Read Chapter 5 in Dunn

Week Seven – **Midterm Exam and Happy Money**

M Mar 2 *Midterm Exam*

W Mar 4 – The Chains of Materialism and Family, Community, and the Earth

Read Chapters 7 and 8

F Mar 6 *Midterm point of the semester*

Spring break Sat March 7 – Su March 15

Week Eight – **Happy Money**

M Mar 16 – Buy Time

Read Chapter 3 in Dunn & Norton

W Mar 18 – Pay Now, Consume Later

Read Chapter 4 in Dunn & Norton

Week Nine – **More Methods**

M Mar 23 – Developing Questionnaires & Surveys and Independent Variables

Read Chapters 6 and 7 in Dunn

W Mar 25 – Dependent Variables and Validity

Read Chapters 8 and 9 in Dunn

Week Ten – Materialism and Happy Money

M Mar 30 – No Class Meeting

Read Chapter 9 and Epilogue in Kasser

W Apr 1 – Invest in Others

Read Chapter 5 in Dunn & Norton

Easter Break – Friday, April 3rd – Sunday, April 5th

Week Eleven – Happy Money, Prosocial Contributions, and Having Too Little

M Apr 6

Read Epilogue in Dunn & Norton

W Apr 8 –

Read these articles:

Olivola, C., & Shafir, E. (2013). The martyrdom effect: When pain and effort increase prosocial contributions. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 26, 91-105.

Shah, A. J., Mullainathan, S., & Shafir, E. (2012). Some consequences of having too little. *Science*, 338, 682-685.

Week Twelve – Work on Project/Paper

M Apr 13 – No Class Meeting

W Apr 15 – No Class Meeting

Week Thirteen – Practical Research Matters

M Apr 20 – Doing Research

Read Chapter 10 in Dunn

W Apr 22 – Data Analysis – PAPER DUE IN CLASS

Read Chapter 11 in Dunn

*The Take Home Final Exam will be passed out this week.

Week Fourteen – Conclusions

M Apr 27

W Apr 29 Conclusions/Last Class

Classes end Sat May 2

Final Examinations: May 3 - May 8, Sunday – Friday

Due date for the Take Home Final Exam- no later than Monday, May 4th at 1:30pm