PSYCH. 350, SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

**Spring, 2016**

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Office Hours

Tuesday 2:00-4:00

Thursday 3:00-4:00

\*Or by appointment

Course Description and Content

Social psychology is primarily concerned with how other people affect the behavior of a single individual. Some examples of topics of interest to a social psychologist include the social factors that influence our attitudes, our choices of friends, mates and of consumer products, our tendencies to be aggressive or helpful, and our perceptions about the world around us. This course will focus on several specific behavioral topic areas such as the ones suggested above, and will have the dual goals of both describing the behavior and circumstances in which they occur, and of also critically examining the most relevant theoretical explanations for why these behaviors occur. Thus, a major emphasis of the course will be to seek to understand why our social environment influences us in the way that it does. In order to accomplish this last goal the research methodology of social psychology will be examined in some detail. **Therefore, basic statistics and research design are prerequisites for this course, and students with insufficient background in these areas suffer a major disadvantage. You need PSYC 250 & 251 to be in this class.**

Grading

Tests. Three tests will be given during the semester and the average of these three tests will constitute 60% of the final grade in the course. The third test will be given during the regular final exam time. Exams will consist of approximately thirty multiple-choice questions and one essay. At least one week before each test students will be given approximately three essay questions, **one of which will appear each test.** That’s right, you’re getting possible essays ahead of time. Be prepared please ☺

Term paper. Another 20% of the final grade will consist of a term paper. ***You cannot pass the course without turning in a complete paper, regardless of your final average.*** This paper should be 8-15 pages in length, and can take the form of either an empirical prospectus in which you propose a research design to address a specific question of interest to social psychologists, or a review paper that summarizes the social psychological literature in a given area. Papers will be partially evaluated in terms of quality of writing style. An empirical prospectus should be written in APA style, and should include a short literature review of the area, and a specific, detailed description of a research design. Students who are psychology majors considering graduate school are especially encouraged to undertake the prospectus paper. A review paper should include a more comprehensive survey of the scientific literature, and should end with a concise and accurate statement of what is known in the area, and of what questions still need to be addressed. A detailed description of the requirements for the paper is given in a separate handout.

**The lit review is due on April 5, 2016** (**due at the beginning of class that day**). Late papers will be penalized 10% per day. Place the paper in the drop box on MyCourses (under course materials). Please only hand in an electronic copy of the paper. Do not give me a printed copy of your paper.

The following naming convention must be used to name the paper: “last name followed immediately by first initial social psych paper spring16” (for example, Betty Smith would name her file: smithb social psych paper spring16).

***All electronic copies must be in .docx/.doc format Failure to send an electronic copy of the paper (in MS Word format will result in a grade of incomplete (I) for the class (I grades are automatically converted to an E if the course is not completed on a timely basis).***

The Romance Paper. During the unit on attraction we will be reading *Modern Romance: An Investigation* by Aziz Ansari (Tom from Parks and Rec). Let me just say up front that I thought the book was hilarious. It also happens to have fairly solid research about dating and attraction in the the 21st century. Your parents will be thrilled to hear you’ve been at college learning about Tinder. **10% of your grade will be a reaction paper about the book**. *Yes there’s one more paper*. It’s short and pretty straightforward**.** Check out the audiobook sample on audible, it’s great.

Reading Reports. The remaining **10% of the final grade** will come from a series of reports on assigned primary source readings. You must answer the following questions about each assigned reading:

1. What was the primary purpose of this study?
2. What were the primary variables in this study, and were these independent/dependent or predictor/predicted variables?
3. Briefly describe the results of the study.
4. Can the authors make causal attributions about the results of the study? Why or why not?
5. What theory is confirmed or disconfirmed by these results?

Reports must be typed and will generally be one to two pages long (single-spaced). Tentative due dates for the reading reports are listed in the syllabus.

Make-up Tests

No make-ups will be given, except in cases of illness, family emergency, or university excused absences . If at all possible, it is best to notify me before you miss a test.

A note about Plagiarism

Plagiarism, presenting another person's work as your own, will result in a failing grade for the paper. In addition, students should understand that it is not acceptable to turn in a paper from another class (even if it's your own work) in this class. Such recycling of papers is plagiarism.

Textbooks

Myers, D. (2012). *Social psychology*. 11th ed. McGraw Hill. **If you need to get the 10th edition. That’s totally fine. Whatever works.**

Ansari, A. & Klienberg, E. (2015). *Modern romance: An investigation*. Penguin.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will be able to do the following to the degree that is appropriate for undergraduate students at a highly selective liberal arts college:

1. Appreciate the empirical nature of social psychology;
2. Critically evaluate the internal and external validity and ethics of research in the field;
3. Understand the basic methodological approaches in the field, including elements of research design and analysis;
4. Identify and understand major theoretical perspectives in the field;
5. Apply social-psychological theories and results to real-world problems;
6. Meet other objectives as they are spontaneously developed throughout the semester.

**Syllabus**

Week of Topic Meyer's Chapter

1/19 Introduction 1

Social World 2

1/26 Social Beliefs and Judgments 3

Behavior and Attitudes 4

2/2 Behavior and Attitudes 4

Behavior and Attitudes 4

2/9 **Test 1, February 9**

2/16 Genes, Culture and Gender 5

2/23 Genes, Culture and Gender 5

Conformity 6

3/1 Attraction 11

3/8 Dating *Modern Romance*

**Reading Reflection Due March 10**

3/15 **Seriously Bro? It’s Spring Break**

3/22 Prejudice 9

3/29 **Test 2, March 29**

Aggression 10

4/5 Aggression 10

**Paper Due on April 5**

4/19 Great Day 7

4/26 Persuasion 7

Groups 8

5/3 Altruism 12

Accommodations: SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should contact Dean Buggie-Hunt in the Office of Disability Services ([tbuggieh@geneseo.edu](mailto:tbuggieh@geneseo.edu) or 585-245-5112) and their faculty to discuss needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester.

Note: Test dates are somewhat tentative. The final exam will be during the regularly scheduled exam time mandated by the College: <http://www.geneseo.edu/dean_office/calendar_links>.

All The Stuff You Actually Care About

Grades

**A 93-100 C+ 77-79**

1. **90-92 C 73-76**

**B+ 87-89 C- 70-72**

**B 83-86 D 60-69**

**B- 80-82 E <60**

Exams will be graded on a hybrid curve model where the average of the four highest grades will be treated as 100% and the above scale is adjusted according to that average. For example

If the four highest grades in the class average to 93the breakdown of grades would be

**A 86-93 C+ 70-72**

1. **83-85 C 65-69**

**B+ 80-82 C- 62-64**

**B 76-79 D 52-61**

**B- 73-75 E <52**

Assignments, Exams Etc

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Exam I | 9-Feb |
| Romance Paper | 10-Mar |
| Exam II | 29-Mar |
| Lit Review | 5-Apr |
| Exam III | Exam Day |

**Late Assignments:**

10 points off per day late. Assignments are due at the beginning of class

**Articles for Reading Reports are on myCourses. This will be assigned as we go and you’ll have at least one week to complete each of these.**

**Frequently Asked Questions?**

**Q: Extra Credit?**

**A:** Only if you’re passing the class. Come talk to me at least one month before the last class and we’ll work something out. Any assignment I give you will require considerable effort, but will be worth **2 points on your final grade. You need at least a grade of B on the assignment to get the credit.**

**Q: When do I have to have the readings done by?**

**A:** You need to have the readings done BEFORE the class that they’re listed next to. For example, *Modern Romance* needs to be read by March 8

**Q: Do I need to read the book?**

**A:** Anything that I test you on will be covered in class. But the book supplements your knowledge of the material and it’s important to read it etc. and so fourth. But, you only read the first sentence, so why am I even writing the rest of this? Good talk.

**Q: What’s the format of the exam?**

**A:** 30 multiple choice and one essay

**Q: MY PRINTER DOESN’T WORK**

**A:** Just e-mail it, dude.

**Q: See anything good on Netflix lately?**

**A:** I just started Grey’s Anatomy (don’t judge me). Oh and Making a Murderer is SO GOOD, but also infuriating.

**Q: Do you upload slides to myCourses?**

**A:** Yes. AFTER the lecture