Social Psychology Fall 2022

(Section A, Posner A35)

**Instructor: Dr. Vicki S. Helgeson Teaching Assistants/email**

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Course Description:

This course will serve as an introduction to the field of social psychology—and make the case for why it is relevant to all our lives. Social psychology is the study of how the situation—the people around us, our experiences, our identities, our cultures, our immediate situations, the groups to which we belong—affects basic psychological functions, such as attitudes, decision making, communication, emotions, stress, performance, and health.

Throughout the course, you will become familiar with the history of social psychology, explore the questions studied by social psychologists, and develop an understanding of basic research in social psychology as well as how it affects important real-world domains, such as eyewitness testimony, conflict negotiation, and the impact of stress on health.

Text: *Social Psychology* (10th Edition) (2019); by Elliot Aronson, Timothy D. Wilson, Samuel R. Sommers. Please note that there will be additional readings posted to canvas.

Canvas: There is a Canvas Board associated with this course (canvas.cmu.edu). All announcements and assignments will be posted to canvas. Exams will be administered through canvas, and written exercises will be uploaded to canvas.

Course goals:

* Students will learn, compare/contrast, and apply the foundational theories, concepts, themes, and history of social psychology to make sense of the complicated array of human behavior they observe in their own lives in the real world.
* Students will become familiar with landmark studies in social psychology as well as the research questions asked by contemporary social psychologists.
* Students will understand the scientific methods used by social psychologists to address these questions and apply evidence from social psychological science to evaluate and explain how humans work.
* Students will describe and distinguish how different social psychological processes are at play in many different domains of everyday life.  Students will be able to explain why they feel, think, and behave as they do in terms of the social contexts.
* Students will analyze their own experiences, the current situation, and world events in terms of varied social psychological theories—taking into account how social psychological theories have changed over time to better explain human behavior.
* Students will learn how social psychological theories have expanded to address human behavior across a wide variety of cultural contexts.
* Instill a sense of curiosity, critical thinking, and enthusiasm for the field of social psychology

These goals are accomplished via short-answer exams and essays on personal experiences in social psychology.

Respect in the classroom**:**

It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful to the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of students in the classroom. It is also my intention to engage the class in a discussion that is respectful of students’ diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Please feel free to let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. I am also happy to talk to you about any concerns that you have about the classroom atmosphere. If you feel uncomfortable discussing this with me or one of the TAs, you may voice your concerns to the Chair of the Department of Psychology Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Dr. Kody Manke at kmanke@andrew.cmu.edu. This person is available to hear your concerns related to respect for diversity for any psychology class you are taking.

Assessment Strategies:

Final grades will be based on:

* 4 exams, each consists of about 20 short-answer qs 75 pts each **300 pts**
* 3 written exercises that require relating what you have

learned about social psychology to the real world 50 pts each **150 pts**

* 10 pop quizzes; only 8 count toward grade 5 pts each **40 pts**

Course grading: Final grades are based on the percentage of points earned from exams, written exercises, and quizzes: 90% and above = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% =D; below 60% = R

**RESEARCH REQUIREMENT**

There is a research requirement for all students enrolled in this course who have not completed the requirement for two other PSYCHOLOGY classes in the past at CMU. Failure to complete the research requirement will result in an incomplete in this course. Failure to make up the incomplete the next semester will result in the loss of one letter grade.

**EXAMS**

* You will have 4 exams throughout the course, with each exam covering 4-5 topics.
* Each exam will consist of about 20 short-answer questions, each of which is worth between 2 and 8 points.
* Exam questions will focus on critical thinking and avoid memorization of facts; emphasis will be on applying a concept to a problem or extracting the concept from the problem.
* You will have 60 minutes to take the exam IN CLASS on a laptop

**(*if you are not able to bring a laptop to class to take the exam, please let me know ASAP)***

* You will not use your book, lecture notes, or the internet to answer exam questions.
* The only acceptable excuse for a missed exam is personal illness (with documentation from health services/physician/clinic) or family illness.
* If you have a concern about how an exam question was graded, you must raise the concern with the grader and have it addressed before the next exam.

**QUIZZES**

* There will be 8 one-item quiz questions administered during class throughout the course to motivate class attendance and attention. Class attendance and discussion are important to the overall learning experience.
* Quizzes will not be difficult.
* Each quiz will be worth 5 points: 5 points for correct answer; 3 points for incorrect answer with attendance; 0 points for failing to turn in quiz.
* There will be 10 quizzes; you only have to respond to 8 of them.
* Because you have 2 quizzes you can miss, there are no excused absences for missed quizzes. Missing two quizzes should account for sickness and anything else that comes up requiring you to miss class. If there are extenuating circumstances, please contact me to discuss.

**WRITTEN EXERCISES**

* Each exercise involves relating something you have seen or heard to social psychology.
* Each exercise should be completed in 1-2 pages (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman font).
* You should use your own words; **quotations are not acceptable**. The emphasis is on you being able to convey that you understand the material by putting it in your own words.
* You will turn in a BEST EFFORT copy of the exercise for IN CLASS peer review. After revision, you will submit the FINAL exercise.
* There will be a rubric provided for each exercise as well as a rubric for peer review.
* Exercises must be turned in on time. You will not be able to submit the exercise via canvas late. If you turn in your exercise late, you must email it directly to me (in .docx format). 10% of your grade will be deducted for each 24-hour period late the exercise is emailed to me.

**Exercise 1:**

Describe a personal experience of ONE (and only one!) social psychology concept about which you have learned. Describe the experience and describe **in detail how it relates to the social psychology concept.** It is best to begin the essay by stating: “This is a personal experience of X,” rather than having us guess what the social psychology concept is. *Note: if your story is about cognitive dissonance theory, it must be your own cognitive dissonance – it doesn’t make sense to talk about what you “think” someone else is experiencing internally.*

**Exercise 2**:

Hidden Brain is an NPR podcast about social science research. Select from our list of *10 Hidden Brain* podcasts by Shankar Vedantam and write 1-2 pages about the podcast, including the topic, definitions of the concept being discussed, and what you learned about the research findings. These podcasts are about topics relevant to social psychology and include interviews with psychologists. They last between 30-60 minutes. **Be specific**.

**Exercise 3:**

View one of the following films and describe how it relates to social psychology. Give a brief overview of the plot (one paragraph) and then describe **several specific points in the film that illustrate social psychological ideas**. I have given you hints in parentheses of broad topics, but these are only hints—please feel free to include other issues. Referring to the topics in parentheses is not sufficient –your comments about the film must be about specific topics within those domains (e.g., ingroup-outgroup bias within prejudice).

“12 Angry Men” (psychology and law; social cognition)

“Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” (prejudice, schemas)

“To Kill A Mockingbird” (prejudice, schemas, social cognition)

“Silver Linings Playbook” (stigma, stereotypes)

“The Butler” (stereotypes, prejudice)

“12 Years a Slave” (aggression, stereotypes, prejudice)

“Her” (relationships)

“Inside Out” (emotions)

“Selma” (prejudice, discrimination, stereotypes)

“Get out” (prejudice, discrimination, schemas, social cognition)

“CODA” (stereotypes, interpersonal attraction, social roles/norms)

“Drive My Car” (stereotypes, interpersonal attraction, stress and coping)

“Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom” (stereotypes, discrimination, aggression)

“A Star is Born” (interpersonal attraction, social comparison, stress and coping)

A rubric will be provided for each of these exercises. A rubric also will be provided for the peer review.

**NOTES**

**Accommodations**: The Office of Disability Resources offers accommodations to students who face physical and/or mental challenges. Please let me know about any accommodations as soon as possible, but especially before the first exam or the first exercise is due. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided and appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).

**Class attendance:** You are responsible for all material presented in class, including announcements made. **If you miss class, you should read the course material and review the lecture outline posted on canvas and then ask a friend to borrow their written notes. After reviewing the lecture outline and your friend’s notes, you should schedule a time to meet with me or one of the TAs to answer specific questions.** We will not repeat the entire lecture. If you contract COVID-19, please email me ASAP, and we will discuss how you can access the material.

**Missed exams:** The only acceptable excuse for a missed exam is personal or family illness. In the instance that one of these rare events occurs, verification must be provided and the instructor must be notified prior to the exam. If your absence from an exam is unexcused, you will receive a 0 for the exam.

**Plagiarism**: I expect your work to be your own. Please see the Student Handbook for University definitions and policies regarding cheating and plagiarism. You do not need to worry about quoting another person because quotes are not allowed on papers, pop quizzes, or exams. Use your own words.

**Recording**: You should not record any classroom activity without written consent from me. If you are facing an issue that would greatly benefit from a recording, please contact the Office of Disability Services to request this accommodation.

I EXPECT YOU TO:

1**. attend class** and **arrive on time.** You are responsible for all material presented and discussed in class (including announcements made).

2. pay attention in class and take notes.

3. read the assigned material **before class**. This is especially important for assigned articles. They will be discussed —not reviewed—in class. There is a very high likelihood that there will be pop quizzes when an article has been assigned before it is discussed in class.

4. **REFRAIN from using a laptop, cell phone, or other electronic device** during class. By providing copies of the lecture outlines, you do not need to write down everything that is said in class. There is space on the lecture outlines for you to take additional notes.

*Research has shown that taking handwritten notes is more effective in enhancing learning and memory than typing on an electronic device.*

[Mueller, Pam A., and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. "The pen is mightier than the keyboard advantages of longhand over laptop note taking." *Psychological science* (2014): 0956797614524581.]

5. contact me or one of the TAs if you need help.

6. contact me in the event of an illness or family emergency that prevents you from taking an exam or turning in a paper **before it is due.** (If this is not possible, please contact ASAP after the due date to discuss.)

YOU CAN EXPECT ME TO:

1. start and end class on time.

2. post an outline of the class lecture to canvas prior to the start of class and bring a hard copy of the lecture outline to class.

3. give exams that reflect the material reviewed in class and in the text.

4. grade and return exams and papers within one week.

5. provide feedback on exams and papers.

6. respond to email within 24 hours unless I am out of town.

7. provide a safe and respectful environment for learning.

***On a more personal note:***

*I know that college can be a stressful time -- changes in relationships with family and friends; academic expectations from family, friends, and yourself; challenging classes, homework, assignments; figuring out your future life plans. COVID has – and continues to have – its own set of challenges. Here are a couple of thoughts:*

1. *Try to take care of yourself – eat well, get some exercise, get sleep, and find some healthy recreational choices. Schoolwork is more manageable when you have a healthy mind and body as resources.*
2. *Do not be afraid to ask for help – from a friend, a professor, a counselor, or myself. Students often believe that asking for help is a sign of weakness, but it is a sign of strength that you can come to the realization that not all problems are solvable on your own. Feel free to contact Counseling and Psychological Services for assistance (CaPS; 412-268-2922; website* [*http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/*](http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/)*) or to ask me for other resources. To increase access to and demand for mental health services, CMU is partnering with TimelyCare—you can access the website (timelycare.com/cmu) or get the app for 24/7 access to virtual care.*
3. *If you are worried about being able to buy food or have enough food to eat, please contact the CMU Food Pantry coordinator at* [*cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu*](mailto:cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu) *or 412-268-8704.*
4. *CMU has a website for overall health resources:* <https://www.cmu.edu/wellbeing/> I encourage you to check it out.

**CLASS SCHEDULE, ASSIGNMENTS (due on that date), AND DUE DATES**

Mon 8/29 Course overview and Introduction ch1

Wed 8/31 Methods and Research Requirement ch2

Mon 9/5 LABOR DAY NO CLASS

Wed 9/7 Methods continued, Ethics ch 8 obedience (pp. 248-258)

*Start Attitudes*

Mon 9/12 Attitudes ch 7 (pp. 182-188); ch 6

Wed 9/14 Attitudes change ch 7; *Horne et al. (2015)*

*Countering antivaccination*

Mon 9/19 Social Cognition ch 3 *Burger & Burns (1988)*

*Illusion of unique invulner*

Wed 9/21 **60-MINUTE EXAM 1**

*Start Attribution Theory*

Mon 9/26 Attribution Theory ch 4

Wed 9/28 The Self ch 5

**Best Effort Ex #1 emailed to peers by class start**

Mon 10/3 **In class peer review of Ex #1 (20 min)**

Social Comparison

Wed 10/5 Social Roles, Gender Roles *Rosenhan (1973) Being sane*

*in insane places*

Fri 10/7 **Final Ex #1 due to canvas by 12:00 NOON**

Mon 10/10 Conformity Ch 8

Wed 10/12 **60-MINUTE EXAM 2**

*Have a great break!*

FALL BREAK 10/17-10/21

Mon 10/24 Aggression Ch 12

Wed 10/26 Conflict + Negotiation Social Action 1 (pp. 447-453)

Mon 10/31 Group Behavior ch 9

**Best Effort Ex #2 emailed to peers by class start**

Wed 11/2 **In-class peer review Ex #2 (20 minutes)**

Groupthink andFILM: Abilene Paradox

Fri 11/4 **Final Ex #2 Due to Canvas by 12:00 noon**

*Note Nov 4 no classes*

Mon 11/7 Psychology and Law Social Action 3

Wed 11/9 **60-MINUTE EXAM 3**

*Implicit attitude discussion & assignment*

Mon 11/14 Prejudice ch 13, *Kendi article*

**Best Effort Ex #3 emailed to peers by class start**

Wed 11/16 **In-class peer review Ex #3 (20 minutes)**

Stereotype Threat *Steele (1999) Stereo threat*

Fri 11/18 **Final Ex #3 Due to Canvas by 12:00 noon**

Mon 11/21 Interpersonal attraction ch 10

*Thanksgiving break*

Mon 11/28 Prosocial Behavior ch 11

Wed 11/30 Health Psychology Social Action 2

Mon 12/5 Adjustment to Chronic Disease *Taylor (1983) Cognitive*

*adaptation*

Wed 12/7 **60-minute Exam 4**

NO FINAL EXAM—Have a great winter break! ☺