

Social Psychology (Psyc 336-01)

Spring 2009

The course meets **Thursdays from 6:00-9:20** on the Midway Campus (Rm. 104)

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Course Web Page: **<http://psyc336.stasson.org>**

Competence Statement:

Understand, analyze, and apply the concepts of social psychology. Know the breadth of areas addressed by social psychology and understand the scientific basis of social psychological theories. Understand, be aware of, and respect the diversity of human experience and how it impacts social behavior. Use the principles of social psychology and awareness of diversity to understand the relations among individual, group, societal, and cross-cultural behaviors.

Course Objectives and Goals:

- Understand and be able to apply social psychological theories and concepts. Demonstrate understanding and ability in oral reports, class discussions, and written assignments.
- Understand the scientific nature of social psychology and be able to use scientific principles to investigate a social psychological phenomenon. Demonstrate understanding in reviews of course readings, research experiences, and a research proposal, and oral reports.
- Understand, be aware of, and respect the diversity of human experience and how it impacts social behavior. Demonstrate understanding in oral reports, class discussions, and written assignments.

Nature of the Course

This course involves the study of social behavior and group dynamics, so a portion of the course will consist of group projects and exercises. Students will be required to work collectively, as well as individually, and are expected to attend all classes and participate in discussions. For some assignments, a portion of your grade may be determined by how well your group performs (of course, most of your final course grade will depend on your own personal performance).

In general, the classroom portion of the course will be divided among the following: instructor-led presentations (lectures), student-led presentations, discussions, and collective work. Your attendance is important because your participation is part of the course. Activities

that you most likely will complete outside of class include: observations of social behavior, interviews, reading, preparing in-class presentations, and written assignments. The exact types of assignments are outlined in the “evaluation” section of the syllabus and other handouts.

Course Materials:

Two books are required.

Taylor, S. E., Peplau, L. A., & Sears, D. O. (2006). Social Psychology (12th edition). Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Pearson Prentice-Hall. (Abbreviated TPS)

Ruscher, J. B. & Hammer, E. Y. (Eds.) (2004). Current Directions in Social Psychology (4th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Pearson Prentice-Hall, Inc. (RH)

There is a web site that goes along with the textbook (TPS). The web site has practice quizzes, Internet links, and so on. I may refer you to the site from time to time, or you might find it interesting or helpful. The address is <http://www.prenhall.com/taylor> (Then select Social Psych 12th Ed.)

Additional readings may be assigned. These would be available through one of several ways: the Library’s e-reserves system, on the Course Web Page, or passed out in class.

Evaluation:

There will be a number of different types of assignments: (1) Exams; (2) Research Experience Projects (always written, sometimes presented orally to class); and (3) Class Participation, which includes attendance (because you cannot participate unless you are present), in-class assignments, and quality of participation.

There will be three Exams worth a total of 300 points (each exam is worth 100 points). Information on exam formats will be provided in class, and the format of the three exams may differ.

Research Experience Projects will be worth a total 70 points. Several options exist, and students may combine different types of projects to meet this requirement. Further instructions and guidelines for these research experiences appear on a separate handout (attached).

Class Participation and assignments will be worth a total of 30 points. It is expected that students read the textbook assignments prior to class and come prepared to discuss the textbook material. From time to time there may also be quizzes or games based on textbook knowledge, which will be graded. Students are expected to respond to critical thinking and application questions posed by the instructor and their peers. In addition, students will be asked to review outside readings from time to time. These reviews will be presented to the class, and brief written summaries should also be turned into the instructor. Each review will be assigned a week in advance, and must be turned in on the dues date for full credit. Students with poor attendance,

those who do not complete their chapter reviews, and/or those who do not demonstrate that they were prepared for class will only earn the proportion of points they deserve for their effort.

The TOTAL number of points that can be earned is 400. Your course grade will be determined by the number of points you earn according to the scale below:

- “A” grade: at least 368 points (92%)
- “A-“ grade: at least 360 points (90%)
- “B+” grade: at least 350 points (88%)
- “B” grade: at least 320 points (80%)
- “C+” grade: at least 310 points (78%)
- “C” grade: at least 280 points (70%)
- “D” grade: at least 240 points (60%)
- “F” grade: less than 240 points

Schedule, Readings, and Assignments

Date	Unit/Topic	Readings	Notes/Special Assignments
Jan. 15	Theory and Methodology	TPS-1	Introductions & Orientation
Jan. 22	Social Cognition and Perception	TPS-2,3 RH-41, RH-48, RH-55	Begin research article reviews
Jan. 29	The Self	TPS-4 RH-3, RH-10, RH-18, RH-24	
Feb. 5	Attitudes	TPS-5 Web-1, Web-2, Web-3	Pick up Assignments
Feb. 12	Exam I (covers TPS 1-5; and other readings assigned)		Work on Research Experience Project

Date	Unit/Topic	Readings	Notes/Special Assignments
Feb. 19	Prejudice	TPS-6 RH-124, RH-132, RH-140, RH-146, RH-153	Report on Research Experience Proj.
Feb. 26	Social Influence	TPS-7 Web-4, Web-5, Web-6	Report on Research Experience Proj.
Mar. 5	Attraction and Relationships	TPS-8-9 RH-34, RH-64, RH-70, RH-83	
Mar. 12	NO CLASS – Enjoy Spring Break!!!		
Mar. 19	Groups	TPS-10 Web-7, Web-8	Report on Research Experience Proj.
Mar. 26	Exam II (covers TPS 6-10; and other readings assigned)		
Apr. 2	Gender	TPS-11 RH-76, Web-9	Report on Research Experience Proj.
Apr. 9	Helping Behavior	TPS-12 RH-94, RH-100, Web-10, Web-11	
Apr. 16	Aggression	TPS-13 RH-107, RH-113, Web-12	
Apr. 23	Health and Law	TPS-14, 15 RH-164, RH-171, RH-178, RH-184	Last chance to present Research Exp.
Apr. 30	Exam III (covers TPS 11-15; and other readings assigned)		

NOTES: TPS-1 = Chapter 1 in Taylor, Peplau, & Sears;
RH-24 = the article that begins on page 24 in Ruscher & Hammer
Web-1 = article/reading #1 listed on course web site. Some such readings may be skipped or others added. For updates, check the web site
<http://psyc336.stasson.org>

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Research Chapter/Article Reviews

Overview. During most class periods, students will prepare brief summaries of chapters from outside readings. These readings are generally research articles or reviews/essays by social psychologists. While everyone in class should read each paper, certain students will be assigned to present each article/reading in class. When you are assigned an article, you must read the book chapter, then read the assigned article, and then reflect on how the article is related to, or expands upon, the material in the textbook. You should prepare a brief written summary of your thoughts (see below) and then present your ideas in class on the assigned day. In order to get full credit you must turn in the written work at the same time you make your presentation - late papers will earn 65-70% (or less). All students will prepare a presentation for the second week of class (our practice or “warm-up” assignment), then it is expected that students will have about two such assignments later in the semester (depending on class size). Remember to always end with a major point or conclusion!

Details. How you review your article depends on the type of reading. In all cases identify the topic and how it is related to topics in the text. What interesting viewpoints does the reading offer, how does it build upon or expand the information in the textbook? You could highlight what you feel are the top two questions/answers in the interview, and explain why you think these are important points. A **research article** is one which reports the results of an empirical research project. The typical research article starts with a general overview of the research topic/area, then gets more specific in explaining the hypothesis for the study, methodology used, and important results. The article concludes with a more general discussion of what was learned from the study, the shortcomings of the research, and its implications for future theory and research. Typically, you want to only briefly summarize each part, in particular don't get too hung up trying to explain all details (especially details in the methods and statistics). Don't lose sight of the BIG PICTURE.

Two students will be assigned to review most readings. Each student should read the entire article, write a summary, and also come up with 2-3 discussion questions that could be used as the basis for class discussion. However, each student will be assigned a particular role for class presentation. One will be the “Reviewer” and will be asked to provide a verbal review/summary of the reading. The other will be the Discussant and will be asked to pose discussion questions to which the other class members will respond. While this task may seem a little intimidating because it is “new” to you, remember that everyone else has read the paper as well. Thus, remember that the Reviewer's goal will be to highlight 2-3 major ideas from the reading and outline them clearly. The Discussant wants to have 2-3 important areas for discussion. In both cases, connect the reading to the textbook, and/or current events.

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Research Experience Projects

As stated in the syllabus, you must complete research experience projects that are worth up to 70 points (students canNOT get more than 70 points). Below, you will see the experiences from which you may select your projects. The points listed for each exercise represent the value of a **satisfactory project that is turned in on time**. Projects that are late will NOT receive full credit (late projects will typically be worth 65-70% of the designated point value, or less).

Internet exercises (12 points for each exercise completed): Go to the web site provided, go through the exercise, and write a summary of what you learned from the experience. You (along with others who did the exercise) will also discuss your experience in class (briefly and very informally), so you will need to do it by the **start of class on the deadline date** for the exercise.

Internet exercise #1: The IAT (goes with chapters 5-6) measures “automatic” attitudes, go to <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/iat/> **deadline is Feb. 19th**. Do one or both tests (the choices are race and gender) **before reading chapter 6**, describe your experience and connect it to the textbook material (e.g., p. 197)

Internet exercise #2: Examine the website for the Stanford Prison Experiment at <http://www.prisonexp.org> by going through the “slide show.” Answer 5 of the discussion questions to get credit for this exercise (no need to do all questions) **deadline is Feb. 26th**

Internet exercise #3: The Prisoner’s dilemma goes with chapter 10, **read pp. 321-325 first** then do the exercise at <http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/playground/pd.html> . Write a short paper tying your experience to the text material - **deadline is March 19th**

Field Research Project (worth 20 points). The project involves completing a research project tied to a topic in the course. There is one project available: The Social Influence Project (**Due Apr. 2nd**). This is explained on a separate handout.

Research Participation (Each experience is worth different numbers of points). The first research participation experience involves completing a questionnaire and is worth 10 points. Other research participation possibilities may or may not pop up during the term. Those who have completed the first questionnaire will be notified about other options. Contact the Instructor if you wish to complete the first experience.

Media Research (10 points for each project). There are two media research projects, “Gender Stereotypes” and “Social Influence Tactics in Advertizing.” These projects are described below. Each is due by the end of the course (**April 30**).

Gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are prevalent in the media. Focus on magazines (articles or advertisements) and find examples of stereotypical male and female gender roles/pictures. Cut out your examples (1 male and 1 female), and write a short summary explaining why each is a good example of a gender stereotype.

Social Influence Tactics in Advertizing. Robert Cialdini has identified a number of social

psychological principles used by people attempting to influence others (see the reading called WEB-4 posted on the course website). Find examples of three of these principles in current advertising. You can look in magazines, on Billboards, on television, the Internet, or any other places you can find advertisements. Summarize one example for each of three different principles. Include copies of the advertisement if possible (please don't turn in a Billboard or even a videotape).

Biography of a Social Psychologist (5 points). There are many books and/or web sites that provide brief biographies of social psychologists who have played a role in the development of social psychology are: Stanley Milgram, Kurt Lewin, Bibb Latane', David Buss, and Albert Bandura. Choose ONE notable person in social psychology. Write a brief summary of the person's life and work, and describe a section of the textbook (Taylor, Peplau, and Sears) in which the person's work is summarized or been influential. You may do up to 2 different biographies, if you wish. This project is due by the end of the course (**April 30**).

Social Psychology in Films and Books (5 points each). If you encounter a film or book which illustrates a social psychological theory or concept, you may write a brief paper explaining the concept and how it was applied. You may do up to two films or books. Many films and books provide examples or illustrations of social psychological concepts. For example, I recently watched (again!) "Remember the Titans"(a Disney movie starring Denzel Washington as a high school football coach in the 1960's) and noted many, many examples of social psychological concepts. For example, a number of methods for reducing prejudice outlined in chapter 6 were used by the coach, there was an illustration of how behavior in one context might not carry over to another due to different environmental factors and social forces (black and white teammates got along well on the field, but found it much more difficult to do so within larger society), and of course a film about football also illustrates various aspects of groups (team) performance. If you wish to do this project describe: (1) the book or film (name plus short overview); (2) name and define the social psychological concept (also provide textbook page reference); and (3) explain how the concept was illustrated in the book or film (assume that I have **NOT** read the book or seen the film). Due by **Apr. 30**

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Field Research Project: Social Influence Project

This project involves the study of social influence or a social norm. Specifically, you should go into the field and try to establish a norm, violate a norm (do NOT do anything illegal, unethical, or that might anger others), or examine a social influence technique described in the textbook (e.g., foot-in-the-door or low-ball technique).

Establish a Norm. This choice would be done best by a group of people. Decide on a certain act or behavior that you would want to get others to mimic or copy. The typical example is to get people to look up, like there is something strange in the sky or on the roof of a building. In this example, several people (you and/or your helpers, at least a total of 3 people) would set the norm by all looking up at a spot in the sky or at the top of a building while one or more other people pass by. An observer would code the number of other people present and whether they also look up (and for how long), just pass on by, or even ask questions or make comments. In other words, you or another person would need make careful observations of how others react, and what percentage of the people are influenced by the norm. Now, this “looking up in the sky” norm is only an example, you should pick something else if you choose this option.

Violate a Norm. This choice could be done alone or by a group. Actually, it might be interesting to see if other people’s reactions change depending on the number of people who violate the norm (e.g., 1 person violating norm vs. 3 people violating norm). **PLEASE DO NOT** do anything that would upset others, or be interpreted as illegal or unethical!! If you have questions or concerns, ask the instructor. A typical example would be to face other people in the elevator. Instead of the usual norm that strangers in the elevator all face the door and avoid eye contact, face the other person (or persons) and make eye contact. After you get off the elevator, record the other person’s reaction. If you choose this option, please think of a different norm.

Social Influence Technique. Think of a behavior you would like to get someone to do, then use of the techniques from the textbook to get people to comply (do what you want). Don’t try to get people to do anything illegal, unethical, or distasteful. For example, you might want to get people to sign a petition to protect the squirrels in the Lake Phalen area. You could ask some people to sign the petition (the control group) but use the door-in-the-face technique on others. You could do this by first asking a person if he or she would make a \$50 donation to the save the squirrels foundation (I would not expect much agreement), and then ask “well, could you at least sign this petition to” You would want to record the number of who sign the petition in each condition/situation. Again, this is just an example, you would need to come up with your own request and influence technique.

Your Task in this Assignment! Write a paper in which you

- (1) Do one of the alternatives above, explain how it fits in with course material. Be creative!!
- (2) Carefully describe your methodology and explain what you had expected people to do.
- (3) Report on the results of your study. (Include your records/recording sheets with your paper)
Explain the results within the context of the course and relevant theory. If something unexpected occurred, try to explain why it happened.