PSYC 2606 002 Social Psychology
Spring 2000
2:00 - 3:15 TR MUEN E0046

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Welcome to Social Psychology!

Social psychology is the study of human interaction. This course is intended to provide an overview of the basic knowledge, theories, and research methods in social psychology. You will learn the answers to these and other questions:

What causes gender differences in aggression? (aggression)
Why do I feel a “chemistry” with some strangers, but I am not attracted to my good friend? (attraction)
How can I get more money out of my parents? (persuasion)
Why do I like/dislike some people based on appearance alone? (social cognition)
What is the best way to end strikes between unions and management? (conflict)
If I expect a certain behavior out of someone, will I get it? (self-fulfilling prophecy)
Why does my boss think I am stupid after I made only one mistake? (first impressions, prejudice, social cognition)
What internal beliefs influence how I interpret events around me? (self, social cognition)
Why do some advertisements work better on me than others? (persuasion)
Is prejudice against minorities declining in the US? (prejudice)
Is it a good idea to have a panel of judges or just one judge in our criminal justice system? (group decision making)
Does the full moon affect behavior? (environmental psychology)
How come some athletes perform badly during the big game (like the Superbowl)? (social facilitation)

The course format will be lecture- and discussion-oriented, with some class demonstrations and exercises designed to facilitate learning. Students are encouraged to ask questions both during and after class.
OTHER INFORMATION

Attendance is not required and will not DIRECTLY affect course grades. However, lecture material will be covered on exams, so students are encouraged to develop regular attendance habits.

In order to assist each individual to perform to his/her potential, it is important for a student to inform the professor of any conditions which may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements/practices. Please discuss options with the professor in the first two weeks of class.

GRADES: There will be 3 unit exams each consisting of multiple choice. Each exam will cover only material covered since the previous exam. Each exam will be worth 100 points. In addition, a second set of assignments (see below) is worth 100 points. Three exams (3x100) plus assignments (100) make a grand total of 400 possible points. Makeup exams will only be given in extreme cases, and will occur during finals week (exceptions are students on official university business who should arrange to take the exam early). Make-up exams will be essay in format. Final grades will be determined by overall percentage (out of 400 possible points).

ASSIGNMENTS

You may choose from the following assignments, but you must choose an option by the third week of class.

OPTION 1: SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is an educational tool that provides students with the opportunity to integrate community service with their traditional coursework. In this option, students gain practical hands-on experience in a non-academic setting. Students will volunteer for 6 hours at a participating organization, and will then write a summary of their experiences.

After you have completed your volunteer time (at least 6 hours required), write up (typed double-spaced) your experiences. The entire write-up should be 3-5 typed pages. Also include a name and phone number and/or email address for your contact person (someone who can verify that you did volunteer for 6 hours). NOTE: YOU WILL RECEIVE NO CREDIT IF YOU LEAVE OUT THE CONTACT PERSON INFO.

Include:
- what you did (details, where was it),
- what you learned (generally about yourself and others, and specifically*),
- what surprised you about your experience,
- how you feel about the experience in retrospect and how you felt during the experience, and any other thoughts about the experience.

*In the section where you apply your experience to social psychology, use SPECIFIC terms that we used in class or in the book. APPLY those terms to things that you saw in your experiences. Cover a topic in social psychology comprehensively (ex. If you are talking about prejudice, talk about components, theories, and reducing. Use specific terms like "illusion of outgroup homogeneity" and "realistic conflict."). If you cover more than one topic, be comprehensive with one, and less comprehensive with others (so that you have one pretty complete topic area).

If you choose to do the service learning, your due dates are:
Description of volunteer work, contact person and phone number - Due: Thursday, Feb. 10
Summary of experience paper PLUS final contact person and phone number Due: Tuesday, Apr. 25.
OPTION 2: FIELD ASSIGNMENTS (CHOOSE 3)

Social Psychology Field Assignments are worth 33 points each (no assignments will be accepted after their due dates). Please turn in an acceptable display. News articles should be taped or otherwise affixed to paper; A wad of articles will not be accepted.

1. Collect 5 articles in newspapers or magazines that contain examples of 5 different types of bias in social perception or attribution. Highlight or circle the example of bias, explain why it is an example of bias (with complete sentences) and label it with the appropriate psychological term. (hint: check letters to the editor; possible sources of bias include fundamental attribution error, self-serving bias, cognitive confirmatory bias, and illusory correlation) Due: Thursday, Feb. 10

2. Collect 5 advertisements from newspapers or magazines that illustrate 5 different attitude change techniques. Label each according to technique(s), and explain (in complete sentences) why it is an example of that kind of technique(s). Include which route of persuasion is being used. Also discuss why you think the advertisement is or is not successful (based on what you have learned in this class). Due: Tuesday, Feb. 22.

3. Break a cultural norm and observe what happens. You should describe what you did, what you felt before, during, and after, and how other people reacted to you. NOTE: DO NOT do anything EVEN REMOTELY THREATENING to someone else. If you have a question, ASK ME BEFORE YOU DO IT! Due: Tuesday, March 7. NOTE: You may not do both #3 and #4.

4. Analyze the gender and minority content of all of the movies available in the newspaper on a given day (either evaluate the ads for the movies, or use a list of movie reviews from a newspaper). Report how many movies have male leads, female leads, African-American leads, etc. (You can use main characters if you prefer). What kinds of roles are they showing men in? women in? other minority groups? Make an overall assessment of how these different groups are portrayed (or are not portrayed) for the day you chose. Do you think that your findings are typical? Why or why not? Due: Tuesday, March 7. NOTE: You may not do both #3 and #4.

5. Try to persuade someone to do something by using the foot-in-the-door technique. Try to get someone else to do the same thing using the door-in-the-face technique. For each attempt:
   1) Identify the technique you used and describe the characteristics of the situation.
   2) Describe in detail your feelings during the situation.
   3) Determine whether you were successful and explain why or why not (using factors that we discussed in class)
   4) Describe others’ reactions to your requests

Suggestions: Park next to an expired meter and ask someone walking by to give you money for your meter.
You are pretending to make a long-distance call and you need change to continue the call. Get someone nearby to give you some money for your call.
Take a camera to a shopping center and ask randomly selected individuals if they will do you a favor by letting you take their picture as they do something unusual (e.g., make a funny face, jump in the air). AGAIN, DO NOT THREATEN ANYONE!
Due: Tuesday, March 16.

6. Collect articles of 3 different types of aggression (e.g., murder, riot, war). Describe why it is aggression (use the definition given in class), what type of aggression it is, the potential causes of aggression in each and what you consider to be the best means of reducing aggression in each. Make an educated (or plausible) guess if the article does not discuss it. Due: Tuesday, Apr. 25.
TOPICS AND SCHEDULE:

Week beginning:

1/17    Chapter 1 (Intro)
1/24    Chapters 1, 2 (Intro, Self in the Social World)
1/31    Chapters 3, 4 (Social Beliefs & Judgments, Behavior and Attitudes)
2/07    Chapters 4, 7 (Explaining Behavior and Attitudes, Persuasion)
2/14    Chapter 7 (Persuasion)
        **Exam 1: Thursday, Feb. 17, (chaps. 1-4, 7 and lectures)**
2/21    Chapter 5 (Genes, Culture, and Gender)
2/28    Chapters 5, 6 (Genes, Culture, and Gender, Conformity)
3/06    Chapters 6, 8 (Conformity, Group Influence)
3/13    Chapters 8, 13 (Group Influence, Conflict and Peacemaking)
3/20    Chapter 13 (Conflict and Peacemaking)
        **Exam 2: Thursday, March 23, (chaps. 5, 6, 8, 13 and lectures)**
3/27    Spring Break (no classes)
4/03    Chapter 9 (Prejudice)
4/10    Chapters 9, 10 (Prejudice, Aggression)
4/17    Chapters 10, 11 (Aggression, Attraction)
4/24    Chapters 11, 12 (Attraction, Altruism)
5/01    Module B (Social psychology in court)
        Environmental psychology (notes in class)
12/16   Final Exam:   **Wed., May 10, 1:30-4 pm (chaps 9-12, Mod B, and lectures)**