SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Sociology 222

Professor Clovis White
Office: 301-A King Bldg
Telephone: 775-8374
Office hours: T-Th 10am – 12pm
Or by appointment
Email: cwhite@oberlin.edu

Spring Semester 2011
Meets: MWF 2:30-3:20 PM
Room: King 343

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Social psychology is an area of study within sociology which examines the relationship between the individual and society. Emphasis is placed the scientific study of the social behavior and experiences stemming from individual's participation in social groups, interaction with others, and the effects of the cultural environment and social structures on the individual. Topics in social psychology include theories in social psychology, socialization, self and identity, attitudes and attitude change, social perception, language, social communication and group processes.

COURSE GOALS:

There are five basic goals that this course seeks to achieve.

Goal 1: Developing a Social Psychological perspective: The course seeks to broaden our understanding of the dynamics associated with social behavior. In doing so, you will be challenged to develop a “social psychological perspective” to explain and analyze social relations and behavior. This perspective will primarily be but not restricted to a sociological approach (as opposed to a psychological approach) to social psychology.

Goal 2: Understanding and Utilizing Theoretical Approaches and Research: The goal here is for you to explore, gain an understanding and appreciation for the various social psychological theories (explanations) and their critiques developed around human behavior and their applications in social research.

Goal 3: Explore social psychology in practice and application: Just as you must explore explanations for social behavior, you will be asked to engage in various exercises and conduct social psychological research via a topic of your interest.

Goal 4: Developing Information Literacy: You will develop knowledge of the available resources important to the examination of social behavior.

Goal 5: Developing Skills to Write Critically: In this course you will be encouraged to think and write critically on social psychological research.
COURSE STRUCTURE AND CLASS FORMAT

The course is divided into four major sections:

- **Introduction**: which focuses on the major concepts, theoretical frameworks and research methodologies in social psychology.
- **Socialization and the Self**: focus here is on the development of the individual and construction of their selves.
- **Social Interaction**: here we look at the nature of social interaction and the forces at work influencing those interactions
- **Society and Social Behavior**: more specific look at the impact of social structure on social behavior.

To cover the material associated with this course structure, class sessions will consist of a lecture and discussion on topics related to sections assigned from the text and related readings. In general, we shall begin a new unit each week. As I mentioned earlier, you will benefit most from lectures and discussions if you do the readings early in the week and in the order that they are assigned unless you are told otherwise. On a given day of discussion you may be divided up into several small discussion groups. Other times discussion will involve the entire class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**CLASS ATTENDANCE**: Attendance and participation in class discussions on a regular basis is expected. Attendance will be taken every class. You are allowed two unexcused absences. More absences will lower participation grade.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION/GROUP DISCUSSIONS**: Generally, at times a portion or all of a class session will be devoted to discussion examining issues or topics related to the unit under study. Some discussions will be based on the readings assigned or may include some issue that has occurred recently. A few of these discussions will involve the viewing of a film/video/DVD related to the topic under consideration. Such discussions are geared toward developing critical thinking and knowledge building. Class attendance and participation is worth 15% of your final grade.

**COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS**: There will be assigned readings from the books listed below and books/photocopies on BlackBoard. Readings for a specific topic/section/week are listed in the lecture/topic section of the syllabus (see pp. 6-9). Generally, you will benefit most from lectures and discussions if you do the readings early in the week and in the order that they are assigned unless you are told otherwise.
Required books for the course:


* Note this text is on reserve in Mudd.

Please notice that not every textbook chapter covered on the exams will be discussed fully in lecture, so be sure to schedule in time for reading and studying the chapters on exams that are not covered in lecture.

**EXERCISES:** Each student will be responsible for completing a series of exercises (4) during the semester. Each of these exercises will involve the application of library research within the social psychological realm. These exercises are designed to inform and/or address the goals of this class, primarily developing research skills, information literacy, and analytical and critical skills in the study of social behavior and working on a topic of interest to you. General content of the exercises will be as follows:

- Exploring research questions
- Exploring topics and reviews of social psychological literature.
- Evaluation (critiquing) of social psychological research

Details instructions for these exercises will be distributed in the near future. For each of these exercises, students will be asked to write a 2-5 page paper. All the exercises must be completed. This is 20% of your final grade.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT:** The purpose of this project is to involve you in the critical examination of life circumstances or social issues that you feel “passionately” about and which has social psychological significance. Essentially, you will construct a research paper in a manner similar to social psychology research. This will involve applying the general skills and lessons learned from your exercises (examination of social science research journal article, research question development, annotated bibliography and hypothesis development) and incorporating them into a formalized research paper. Based upon your experiences, the readings and any other resources at your disposal you will be asked to explore the following:
Devise a research question(s). Propose or formulate a question or questions that you specifically wish to examine (e.g., what is the role of racial attitudes in intergroup conflict? Is there once cause associated with racial conflict or is there other important contributors?)

(2) Explore and review what the social psychological literature has to say about this topic. This requires a review of the relevant past research on the topic (e.g., there are those who say prejudice contributes significantly and those who argue that conflict is a mere consequence of competition for resources. Describe the evidence that does and/or does not support each of these positions).

(3) Based on the review of the literature, develop a hypothesis and generate a methodological plan to collect data on this issue (e.g., If you were asked to collect data on this topic how would you go about it? Are you going to conduct telephone interviews, send out a survey, and if so what types of variables would you tap into? Would you do an experiment or use secondary data sources? Would you use documents or observe behavior?).

(4) Finally, summarize your findings and develop conclusions on the nature of the problem you explored and propose where future research should take us in looking at this phenomenon.

The paper should be 10 to 15 pages in length and double-spaced. The paper should contain at least 10 sources. The paper is DUE TUESDAY, MAY 17TH. Late papers will be graded accordingly (i.e., a letter grade will be deducted for everyday the paper is late). Papers must have appropriate citing within text and on the reference page (For more details see handout to be distributed the Quick Style Guide for Writing Sociology Papers on pages 10-12). The paper is worth 15% of your final grade.

EXAMS: There will be two in class essay examinations. Each exam will consist of short answer questions and essay questions requiring the integration of materials covered in the readings, lectures, and discussions. The exams are NOT open book. The second exam is NOT cumulative and will be held during the examination period. Each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade. Dates for the exams are tentatively as follows:

MIDTERM EXAM: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23rd.

FINAL EXAM: SATURDAY, MAY 21st, 7-9 P.M.

HONOR CODE: On all exams and exercises, you are expected to follow the guidelines as established by the Oberlin College Honor System.

(http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html)

As such, you are required to follow the letter of that code and write and sign at the end of each academic exercise submitted for credit the following: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this exam/assignment”. The default of this statement is that you are required to do your
own work without the help from others not explicitly authorized by me (You may, however, use campus resources, such as the library, composition instructors, or writing tutors)

**GRADING SUMMARY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Exams (25% each)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Exercises (5% @)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper/Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation/Attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REQUESTS**

1. PLEASE TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES WHILE IN CLASS.
2. PLEASE DO NOT EAT IN CLASS. It is very distracting. (besides some of us may be hungry as well!). Drinking a beverage is fine.
3. PLEASE GET TO CLASS ON TIME. Your late entrance can be disruptive not only to me but also others in the class.
4. Please do not put in a request for extra credit because none will be given.

**SPECIAL NEEDS/ASSISTANCE**

If you require special accommodations in this class, please see me at your earliest convenience so that we can address these needs in a timely manner. You will need to present a letter from the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (Peters Hall G27) documenting the accommodations needed. Please contact Ms. Jane Boomer at x5588 or visit [http://oncampus.oberlin.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=null&url=/webapps/blackboard/execute/courseMain?course_id=_24550_1&.](http://oncampus.oberlin.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=null&url=/webapps/blackboard/execute/courseMain?course_id=_24550_1&) 

**OPEN DOOR POLICY:** I encourage all of you to see me outside of class, during office hours or by appointment, especially as it relates to assignments and any questions or comments you may have about course content or related issues. Do not hesitate to ask for help!
LECTURES, TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

(BB = reading is on Blackboard)

INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1 FEBRUARY 7, 9, 11: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: WHAT IS SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY; WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN? CULTURE AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Text Readings:
4. Michael Lovaglia, Knowing People, Chapt. 1, pp. 1-20 (BB)

WEEK 2 FEBRUARY 14, 16, 18: PERSPECTIVES AND THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Text Readings:
3. S. Cahill, Inside Social Life, “Islands of Meaning” Chapt. 3 5th ed; Chapt. 4, 6th ed), & 28 “Society in Action” (Chapt. 28, 5th and 6th ed.)

EXERCISE 1: READING A JOURNAL ARTICLE DUE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH
SOCIALIZATION AND THE SELF

WEEK 3  FEBRUARY 21, 23, 25  SOCIALIZATION: HOW IS IT THAT WE BECOME FUNCTIONAL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY? : EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIALIZATION

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers Chapter 2 (7th ed.) or Chapter 3, (6th ed.)
   Or on BB
3. Anna Michener, Becoming Anna, all

EXERCISE 2: RESEARCH QUESTION DEVELOPMENT DUE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25th

WEEK 4  FEBRUARY 28, MARCH 2, 4:  CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF AND IDENTITY: HOW WE SEE OURSELVES/Library Literacy

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers, Chapter 3 (7th ed.) or Chapter 4 (6th ed.)
2. S. Cahill, “If as Sentiment & Reflection” & “The Self as Social Structure” (Chaps. 4-5 in 5th ed and Chaps. 15-16 in 6th ed.)
3. Lovaglia, Chapt. 3., pp. 55-70. (BB)

SOCIAL INTERACTION

WEEK 5  MARCH 7, 9, 11  SOCIAL INTERACTION, SOCIAL PERCEPTION AND ATTRIBUTION: HOW WE SEE OTHERS.

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers, Chapter 4 (7th) or Chapter 5 (6th).
5. Lovaglia, Chapt 2, pp. 21-54 (BB)

EXERCISE 3: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 11th
WEEK 6  MARCH 14, 16, 18:  ATTITUDES AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers., Chapter 5 (7th) or Chapter 6 (6th)
3. Video/Film: To Be Announced

WEEK 7  MARCH 21, 23 (EXAM), 25 (NO CLASS): ATTITUDES AND ATTITUDE CHANGE CONT’D AND EXAM

Text Reading:

MIDTERM EXAM: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23th

WEEK 8  MARCH 26-APRIL 3  NO CLASSES-SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9  APRIL 4, 6, 8:  ATTITUDES: STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION:

Text Readings:
3. Lovaglia, Chapt. 8, pp. 211-253 (BB)
4. S. Cahill, “The Black Male in Public” (Chapt. 30 in 5th ed. Or on BB)
5. Video/Film: To Be Announced

WEEK 10  APRIL 11, 13, 15:  SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND PERSUASION

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers., Chapter 7 (7th) or Chapters 8 (6th)
3. Alan Elms, “Obedience in Retrospect” (BB)
4. Lovaglia, Chapt. 5-6, pp. 109-176 (BB)
5. Robert Levine, The Power of Persuasion (all)
WEEK 11  APRIL 18, 20, 22:  SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers, Chapter 6 (7th) or Chapter 7 (6th)
2. S. Cahill, “The Development of Language & Thought”, (Chapts. 8 in 5th ed. And on BB
3. Video/Film: To Be Announced

EXERCISE 4: LITERATURE REVIEW & METHODS DUE: FRIDAY, APRIL 22RD

WEEK 12  APRIL 25, 27, 29:  GROUP COHESIVENESS, CONFORMITY, STRUCTURE AND INTERACTION/GROUP PERFORMANCE

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers, Chapters 10 & 11 (7th) or Chapters 13 & 14 (6th).
3. Craig Haney et al., "A study of prisoners and guards in a simulated prison", pp. 42-60 (BB)
4. Video/Film To be announced

WEEK 13  MAY 2, 4, 6:  INTERGROUP CONFLICT

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers, Chapter 12 (7th) or Chapter 15 (6th)
2. Video/Film: To Be Announced

WEEK 14  MAY 9, 11, 13:  SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND PERSONALITY/ COURSE WRAP-UP

Text Readings:
1. DeLamater and Myers, Chapter 13 (7th) or Chapter 17 (6th)
2. S. Cahill, “Preadolescent Cliques” and “The Contrasting Agendas of Black and White Sororities” (Chapt., 24 & 25 in 5th ed or on BB)
WEEK 15  MAY 14-17:  READING PERIOD

FINAL WRITTEN PAPER DUE TUESDAY, MAY 17th

MAY 18-22  FINAL EXAM PERIOD

FINAL EXAM: SATURDAY, MAY 21 AT 7-9 PM IN KING TBA