

PSYC 218: Social Psychology
Oberlin College
Spring 2013

Instructor

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Social psychology is the study of how we are influenced by other people: How are our individual thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions shaped by those around us? This course will provide you with a broad survey of research and theory in the field of social psychology, with particular emphasis on the application of social psychology to important issues of our time.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

I have designed this course so that at its successful completion you will:

- Recognize and understand the influence of the social situation on human behavior
- Understand how to empirically test theories about the situational causes of human behavior
- Understand how to apply social psychological knowledge to real world problems and everyday life

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Two exams, two personal experience reports, a data project and an applied project will make up your final grade. Class participation and occasional participation in on-line activities are also expected. A brief description of each assignment appears below; more complete guidelines for each assignment will be posted on the class website.

Exams: (25% each) There is a midterm and a non-cumulative final exam, made up of short answer and essay questions.

Personal Experience Reports: (5% each) Throughout the semester, be on the lookout for "Aha!" experiences — times when a concept or principle from class plays itself out in your life. Each write-up should include: a) a description of the experience and b) a description of the social psychological concept(s) your experience illustrates. These papers can be turned in any time before the last day of class (as your "Aha" experiences come to you), but at least one should be turned in **before spring break**. Personal experience reports should be handed in via the electronic portal in the assignments section of blackboard.

Field Assignment : (20%) This assignment will give you a chance to conduct your own mini experiment in social psychology. You will prepare a one-page summary document describing your findings in a Poster format (the way psychologists often share their results at conferences). Several options for the field assignment, as well as more complete instructions, will be posted in the Assignments section of the class web site.

Applied Project: (20%) This project will allow you to apply your newfound knowledge to a real-world situation of interest to you. Choose a topic you care about -- teen pregnancy, violence, etc.

Then develop some sort of product designed to create positive change on this issue. You might design an informational brochure, a poster, a web site, or a short video clip. In addition to your creation, you will also be expected to provide a brief (3 page) executive summary explaining what your product is trying to achieve psychologically, and which psychological principles informed your specific choices and overall strategies.

Late work: Occasionally, we all have catastrophes and fall apart. Should this happen to you this semester (and I hope it doesn't), you may have 24 extra hours to complete any ONE assignment. You may only do this once during the semester, however. **NO OTHER EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN**, unless you are kidnapped by aliens or dying in the hospital. Also, please note that college policy prevents course instructors from granting extensions on final exams without prior approval of the Dean of Studies. Beyond your one "get out of jail free" card, work that is received after the deadline will be graded down 3% per day.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Fiske, S. T. (2009). *Social Beings*.

Supplemental readings, available on ERES and through the library's online journal collection (see list at end of syllabus).

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Date	Day	Topic	Assignment
2/5	T	Course Intro	Gawande
2/7	Th	Methods	Ch 1 & 2
2/12	T	Social Cognition	Ch 4, Groopman
2/14	Th	Social Cognition	Rozin & Royzman, Bargh & Williams
2/19	T	The self	Ch 5, Wegner & Wheatley
2/21	Th	The self	Ch 5
2/26	T		NO CLASS
2/28	Th	Social Perception	Ch 3
3/5	T	Self Justification	Ch 6, pp. 252 – 258
3/7	Th	Attitudes	Ch 6, pp. 225 – 252
3/8	F		FIELD ASSIGNMENT DUE, 5 pm
3/12	T	Persuasion	Ch 6, pp. 258 – end; Clay, Dittman
3/14	Th	Conformity	Ch 13, 531 – 542, 552 – end, Kameda et al.

3/19	T	Obedience	Ch 13, 542 – 552, Osherow
3/21	Th		MIDTERM EXAM
3/22	F		FIRST AHA! PAPER DUE, 5 pm
*** SPRING BREAK ***			
4/2	T	Group Influence	Ch 12, Haslam & Reicher
4/4	Th	Leadership, conflict	Ch 12, Fisher & Ury, Plous & Zimbardo
4/9	T	Prejudice	Ch 11, Payne
4/11	Th	Prejudice	Ch 11, McIntosh, Pratkanis & Turner
4/16	T	Aggression	Ch 10 Carnagey, Anderson & Bartholow
4/18	Th	Aggression	Ch 10, Baumeister, Plous & Zimbardo
4/19	F		APPLIED PROJECT DUE, 5 pm
4/23	T	Altruism	Ch 9, Miller
4/25	Th	Altruism	Ch 9, Batson & Thompson
4/30	T	Attraction	Ch 7
5/2	Th	Close Relationships	Ch 7
5/7	T	Happiness	Schwartz, Csikszentmihali, Frank, Seligman
5/9	Th	Catch-up, Review	Review study guide, prepare questions
5/14	T		SECOND AHA! PAPER DUE, 5 pm
5/15	W		FINAL EXAM 2 PM

SUPPLEMENTAL READING

* = online + = eres

- + Gawande, A. (2009). Hellhole. *New Yorker*, 1/30/09.
- + Groopman, J. (2007) What's the trouble? How doctors think. *New Yorker*, 1/29/07.
- * Rozin, P. (2001) Negativity bias, negativity dominance, and contagion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5, 296-320.
- * Bargh, J. & Williams, E. (2006). The automaticity of social life. *Current Directions in Social Psychology*, 15, 1 – 4.
- * Wegner, D.M. & Wheatley, T. (1999) Apparent mental causation. *American Psychologist*, 54, 480-492.
- + Clay, R.A. (September 2000) Advertising to children: is it ethical? *APA Monitor*, 52-53.

- + Dittman, M. (2004) Protecting children from advertising. *Monitor on Psychology*, 35.
- + Osherow, N. (2004). Making sense of the nonsensical : An analysis of Jonestown. In Aronson, E. (Ed). *The Social Animal*. New York, NY: Worth Publishers, 80 - 97.
- * Haslam, S. A. & Reicher, S. (2007). Beyond the banality of evil: Three dynamics of an interactionist social psychology of tyranny. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 615 – 622.
- + Fisher, R. (1991) Getting to Yes. (2nd ed.) Chapter 3: Focus on interests, not positions. Penguin Books, 40-55.
- * Payne, K. (2006). Weapon Bias : Split-second decisions and unintended stereotyping. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15, 287 – 291.
- + Pratkanis, A.R. (July/August, 1994) Branch Rickey, Jackie Robinson, and the social psychology of affirmative action. *Across the Board*, 42-47.
- * Carnagey, N., Anderson, C., & Bartholow, B. (2007). Media violence and social neuroscience: New questions and new opportunities. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16, 178 – 181.
- * Plous, S. & Zimbardo, P. (2004, September) How social science can reduce terrorism. *Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- * Baumeister, R.F., and Campbell, W.K. (1999) The intrinsic appeal of evil: sadism, sensational thrills, and threatened egotism. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3, 210-221.
- * Miller, D. (1999) The norm of self-interest. *American Psychologist*, 54, 1053-1060.
- * Batson, C.D., and Thompson, E. (2001) Why don't moral people act morally? Motivational considerations. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10, 54-57.
- * Schwartz, B., Marcus, H. & Snibbe, A. (2006) Is freedom just a word for many things to buy? *New York Times Magazine*, 2/26/06.
- * Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999) If we are so rich, why aren't we happy? *American Psychologist*, 54, 821-827.
- * Frank, R. H. (2004). How not to buy happiness. *Daedalus*, 133, 69 - 79.
- * Seligman, M. (2004). Can happiness be taught? *Daedalus*, 133, 80 – 87.