

Social Cognition
Psychology 353
Fall 2006

Class Time and Location: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00 to 2:20 p.m., Room AL 208

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Office Hours:	Tuesday, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.	Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Course Description and Objectives

Social cognition is a prominent area of research in social psychology today. Some of the major questions addressed by this field can be stated as follows: How do we perceive, represent, interpret, and remember information about ourselves and other individuals and groups? How do we utilize our social knowledge? How does our social knowledge determine our social judgments, including stereotypes? To what extent can we control our thought processes that influence our judgments about ourselves and others? Are our social judgments influenced by our motivations, feelings and desires? How do cultural factors affect our thoughts and perceptions of ourselves and others? What do we know about the brain that can inform our understanding of social cognitive processes?

You will learn about all of the above themes in this course. Although social cognition utilizes both cognitive and social psychological theories and methodologies, we will predominantly focus on social psychological aspects of social cognition.

In addition to learning about the basic concepts and theory in social cognition, the course is designed to refine your ability to apply principles from the class to experiences in your life and that you see in the media (see example portfolio in the section of course requirements). You will also learn the basics of research methodology as you will learn about numerous well-designed studies.

You are expected to attend the lectures as they will cover materials not covered in the textbook. There will be two tests of your knowledge of the content of readings and lectures. However, an equal portion of your grade will be determined by your writing assignments – term paper and example portfolio (see section of requirements and grading for further details). Your writing will show the extent to which you have actively thought about the course material. Therefore, throughout the course, it is important for you to evaluate research and theories critically and draw connections between topics and issues that you learn about in the lectures and in the readings.

Required Readings

1. Text: Kunda, Z. (1999) *Social Cognition: Making Sense of People*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
2. Journal articles listed on the schedule below and included in the required coursepack, which is available at the UW Bookstore.

UW-ACE: Course Website

<https://uwangel.uwaterloo.ca/uwangel/home.asp?sid=&redir>

Check the course website regularly. Important announcements, as well as slides from lectures, will be posted there. Information about the final paper will also be posted on the course website later in the term.

Course Requirements and Grading

Tests (2 tests worth 25% each for a total of 50% of your grade)

There will be two tests in the course: a midterm exam on October 17th and an end-term exam on November 30th. Both exams will be part multiple choice and part essay. They will cover materials from lecture and from the readings. You should note that doing the readings – particularly the journal articles will be crucial for success on the tests. Neither exam will be cumulative. In general, there will be no make-up exams, but in cases of severe illness or other extenuating circumstances an essay make-up exam will be offered.

There will also be an optional final exam. This exam will be cumulative. If you choose to take the final exam, your score on that exam will replace your worst test performance. You can also take the final exam to replace an exam that you missed during the semester. It cannot hurt you to take the final; if you do worse on the final than your worst test then you will simply get the grade you would have gotten.

Example Portfolio (20% of your grade)

You should collect a set of examples of real-life illustrations of phenomena that you have learned about in class. These examples may come from your own experiences or from the media (TV, newspapers, magazines, etc.). For each example, you need to briefly define the phenomenon that your example relates to and explain exactly how your example maps onto it. This should take about 1/2 a page and may not be longer than 1 double-spaced page (1-inch margins). The portfolio must be typed and is due November 9th by 4:00 P.M. at the TA's office (room PAS 3040)

Your portfolio should include 8 examples, each illustrating a different phenomenon. At least 4 of your examples must come from the media and, if they come from print media, must be accompanied by copies of newspaper, magazine, or internet articles. All media examples must also include a full citation of the source (including movies and television shows). Up to 4 examples can be from your personal experience.

Please don't wait until the end of the term to construct your portfolio – this will almost inevitably have a negative impact on your grade. Start looking for examples of social cognitive phenomena right from the start of the term and keep a running log. Not only will this help give meaning to what you learn in class (and help you to better understand the dynamics of what occurs in the social world), it will also make this assignment an easy one to complete well.

Final Paper (30% of your grade)

There will be one 10 to 15 pages paper due on December 14th by 4:00 P.M. at the TA's office (room PAS 3040). Information about how to do your paper will be posted on the course website on UW-ACE later in the term.

Grading Distribution

The distribution of marks for the various aspects of the course is as follows:

2 Tests (25% each) 50%

1 Example portfolio 20%

1 Paper 30%

Late Assignment Policy

The two writing assignments of the course, examples portfolio and term paper, must be submitted on time. Keeping up with assignments is essential for getting the most out of this course as a student, and keeping track of late assignments is very time consuming for the instructor and TAs. Therefore, to encourage timely submission of assignments, late assignments will NOT be accepted. That is, if you turn in an assignment late, you will not receive credit for it. Only in cases of severe illness or other extreme circumstances will provisions be made for turning in an assignment late. If you should find yourself in such a situation it is necessary to contact the instructor immediately to make arrangements. Arrangements must be made in advance of the due date.

Avoiding Academic Offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating)

It is assumed by the instructor that all the work that you submit will be your own work. No plagiarism or cheating will be tolerated. As you probably know, the Undergraduate catalog defines plagiarism as “the act of presenting the ideas, words or other intellectual property of another as one’s own.” This means among other things that you will not submit someone else work, copy someone else’s work, or cheat in any other way. It means positively that you will cite work properly.

For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1; at <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>).

Special Needs

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term. Please provide me with necessary documentation as soon as possible.

Course Schedule

The following is the schedule of topics to be covered in this course. For most lectures there is assigned reading. Lectures will tend to build on basic topics in the reading. Therefore, it will be in your best interest to complete each reading before the lecture for which it is assigned.

Day	Date	Topic	Reading
Tuesday	9/12	Introduction	Chapter 1
Thursday	9/14	History & Research Methods	
Tuesday	9/19	Concepts	Chapter 2

Thursday	9/21	Concepts (cont.)	
Tuesday	9/26	Heuristics	Chapter 3
Thursday	9/28	Heuristics (cont.)	Kahneman & Tversky (1973)
Tuesday	10/3	Hypothesis Testing	Chapter 4
Thursday	10/5	Hypothesis Testing (cont.)	Snyder & Swan (1978)
Tuesday	10/10	Memory	Chapter 5
Thursday	10/12	Memory (cont.)	Loftus & Palmer (1974)
Tuesday	10/17	Test #1 - Midterm	
Thursday	10/19	Hot Cognition	Chapter 6
Tuesday	10/24	Hot Cognition (cont.)	Santioso, Kunda, & Fong (1990)
Thursday	10/26	Automatic Processes	Chapter 7
Tuesday	10/31	Automatic Processes (cont.)	Bargh, Chen, & Burrows (1996)
Thursday	11/2	Stereotypes	Chapter 8
Tuesday	11/7	Stereotypes (cont.)	Fein & Spencer (1997)
Thursday	11/9	Person Perception Example Portfolio Due	Chapter 9
Tuesday	11/14	Person Perception (cont.)	Prentice & Miller (1993)
Thursday	11/16	The Self	Chapter 10
Tuesday	11/21	The Self (cont.)	Markus (1977)
Thursday	11/23	Culture	Chapter 11 & Kitayama et al. (1997)
Tuesday	11/28	Social Cognitive Neuroscience	Ochsner & Lieberman (2001)
Thursday	11/30	Test #2	

Final paper is due on Thursday, 12/14.

Final exam will be scheduled during the exam period (12/8 to 12/22).