

**Social Psychology
Psychology 253 Section 1
Winter 2005**

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Required Texts

Text: *Social Psychology* (2nd Canadian Edition)
Authors: David G. Myers & Steven J. Spencer
Readings: Eight articles available as a coursepack from the bookstore

Course Web Page

www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~sspencer/psych253

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course surveys the major theories and research in social psychology. Social Psychology is a field that studies how people affect one another. In the first part of the course we will examine how people are influenced by the situations (and especially the other people in those situations) they encounter. We cover conformity, aggression, and helping behaviour in this part of the course. The second part of the course will focus on how people influence the situation and the people they encounter. Topics in this section will include the self-image and self-esteem, attribution and person perception, stereotyping and prejudice, and persuasion. In the third section of the course, we will examine how these first two processes interact. That is, we will examine how the power of the situation and the perceiver's perception of the situation work together in shaping people's thoughts and actions. Here we will examine cognitive dissonance theory, social comparison theory, self-fulfilling prophecies, and culture. Finally, we will apply social psychology to some important social issues, health and well-being, law and the courts, the environment, business, and attraction and relationships.

I have six goals for the course:

1. That you will learn how people are influenced by the situations that they are in.
2. That you will learn how people's beliefs and thoughts can influence the situations that they are in.
3. That you will gain some understanding of how the situation interacts with the person to shape behavior.
4. That you will gain some ability to apply social psychological principles to important social issues.
5. That you will learn the basics of research methodology and will be able to differentiate a good study from a bad study.
6. That you will learn to read and understand primary source material.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Requirements

Tests - You will take four tests during the semester. These tests will be part multiple choice and part essay. The tests will cover material that is presented in the text, the articles, and in lectures. In general, there will be no make-up exams, but in cases of severe illness or other extenuating circumstances a 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.

Application Paper – You will write a short paper applying the research from one of the eight articles that you read in the course to a current event. The current event can be something local, provincial, national, or international, but it should have occurred during the semester. The paper should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words (which roughly translates into 5 to 8 double-spaced pages with reasonable fonts and margins, but pay attention to the word count and not the page count). More details about the application paper will be given later in the semester.

Grading

Each exam will be worth 22% of your grade, and the application paper will be worth 12% of your grade.

It is assumed by the instructor that all the work that you submit will be your own work. No plagiarism will be tolerated. As you probably know the Undergraduate Calendar 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’s work, copy someone else’s work, or cheat in any other way. It means positively that you will cite work properly. You should read Policy #71 in the Undergraduate Calendar for a full discussion of these matters.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Topic	Reading
Monday	9/8	Introduction	Chapter 1
Wednesday	9/10	Research Methods	Chapter 1
Section 1: The Power of the Situation			
Friday	9/12	Conformity	Chapter 6
Monday	9/15	Conformity (cont.)	Reading 1: Milgram, (1963)
Wednesday	9/17	Helping Others	Chapter 9
Friday	9/19	Helping (cont.)	
Monday	9/22	Aggression	Chapter 10
Wednesday	9/24	Aggression (cont.)	Reading 2: Anderson & Dill (2000)
Friday	9/26	Test #1	
Section 2: The Perceiver Shapes Reality			
Monday	9/29	The Self	Chapter 2
Wednesday	10/1	The Self (cont.)	Reading 3: Wilson & Ross (2001)
Friday	10/3	Attribution and Person Perception	Chapter 3
Monday	10/6	Attribution and Person Perception (cont.)	
Wednesday	10/8	Stereotyping & Prejudice	Chapter 12
Friday	10/10	Stereotyping & Prejudice	Reading 4: Kunda & Sinclair (1999)
Monday	10/13	Thanksgiving Holiday	
Wednesday	10/15	Persuasion	Chapter 7
Friday	10/17	Persuasion (cont.)	
Monday	10/20	Test # 2	

Section 3: The Interaction of the Person and the Situation

Wednesday	10/22	Social Comparison Theory and Emotion	Text pp. 35-36; 273-274
Friday	10/24	Social Comparison Theory and Emotion (cont.)	Reading 5: Schachter & Singer (1962)
Monday	10/27	Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Attitudes	Chapter 4
Wednesday	10/29	Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Attitudes (cont.)	
Friday	10/31	Self-Fulfilling Prophecies and Intergroup Relations	Text pp. 106-110; 443-450; Chapter 13
Monday	11/3	Self-Fulfilling Prophecies and Intergroup Relations	Reading 6: Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardtstein (2002)
Wednesday	11/5	Culture	Chapter 5
Friday	11/7	Culture (cont).	
Monday	11/10	Test #3	

Section 4: Applying Social Psychology

Wednesday	11/12	Social Psychology & Health	Module A
Friday	11/14	Social Psychology & Health (cont.)	Reading 7: MacDonald, Zanna, & Fong (1995)
Monday	11/17	Social Psychology & the Law	Module B
Wednesday	11/19	Social Psychology & the Law (cont.)	
Friday	11/21	Social Psychology & the Environment – Application Paper due	Module C
Monday	11/24	Social Psychology & Business	Chapter 8
Wednesday	11/26	Social Psychology & Dating	Chapter 11
Friday	11/28	Social Psychology & Dating (cont.)	Reading 8: Murray & Holmes (1993)
Monday	12/1	Test #4	

Final Exam to be scheduled during exam period