

**Social Psychology
Psychology 253 Section 1**

Winter 2007

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Teaching Assistants

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Required Texts

Text: *Social Psychology* (3rd Canadian Edition)
Authors: David G. Myers and Steven J. Spencer
Readings: That will be posted on UW-ACE

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 consist of 25 multiple choice questions. The tests will cover material that is presented in lectures, the text, and the articles. Approximately, fifty percent of the questions will be covered in both the lecture and in the text, fifteen percent of the questions will be from material only covered in lecture and fifteen percent will be from material only covered in the text. The remaining 20 percent of questions will be from material that is only covered in the articles and not covered in either lecture or the text. 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 and will consist of both multiple choice and essay questions. 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 what you have learned 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 1,200 and 1,800 words (which roughly translates into 5 to 7 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.

Research Participation – You will have the opportunity to participate in up to 4 studies in this course. Participating in a study gives you a great opportunity to learn about experimental design and methodology. You will be asked to complete a short write up for each experiment. It is the write up that will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. If you don't want to participate in the studies you can complete an alternate assignment. Materials for both the experiment and the

alternative assignment will be posted on UW-ACE. For more detail on these assignments see the statement at the end of the syllabus.

Grading

Each exam will be worth 20% of your grade, the application paper will be worth 16% of your grade, and participation in the experiments will be worth the final 4% of your grade.

“Note on avoidance of academic offences:

*All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). 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 I; on the Web at www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning what constitutes an academic offence; how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission; how to follow appropriate rules with respect to “group work” and collaboration; or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA and/or your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean. Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>.” You should also consult the following web site to help you understand plagiarism and how to avoid it, **“Avoiding Academic Offences”** (http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html).*

“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.”

COURSE SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Topic	Reading
Wednesday	1/3	Introduction	Chapter 1
Friday	1/5	Research Methods	Chapter 1
Section 1: The Power of the Situation			
Monday	1/8	Conformity	Chapter 6
Wednesday	1/10	Conformity (cont.)	Reading 1: Milgram, (1963)
Friday	1/12	Helping Others	Chapter 9
Monday	1/15	No Class – University Closed	
Wednesday	1/17	Helping (cont.)	
Friday	1/19	Aggression	Chapter 10
Monday	1/22	Aggression (cont.)	Reading 2: Anderson & Dill (2000)
Wednesday	1/24	Test #1	
Section 2: The Perceiver Shapes Reality			
Friday	1/26	The Self	Chapter 2
Monday	1/29	The Self (cont.)	Reading 3: Wilson & Ross (2001)
Wednesday	1/31	Attribution and Person Perception	Chapter 3
Friday	2/2	Attribution and Person Perception (cont.)	
Monday	2/5	Stereotyping & Prejudice	Chapter 12
Wednesday	2/7	Stereotyping & Prejudice (cont.)	Reading 4: Kunda & Sinclair (1999)
Friday	2/9	Persuasion	Chapter 7
Monday	2/12	Persuasion (cont.)	
Wednesday	2/14	Test #2	
Section 3: The Interaction of the Person and the Situation			

Friday	2/16	Social Comparison Theory and Emotion	Text pp. 35-36; 273-274
Monday	2/26	Social Comparison Theory and Emotion (cont.)	Reading 5: Schachter & Singer (1962)
Wednesday	2/28	Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Attitudes	Chapter 4
Friday	3/2	Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Attitudes (cont.)	
Monday	3/5	Self-Fulfilling Prophecies and Intergroup Relations	Text pp. 106-110; 443-450; Chapter 13
Wednesday	3/7	Self-Fulfilling Prophecies and Intergroup Relations (cont.)	Reading 6: Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein (2002)
Friday	3/9	Culture	Chapter 5
Monday	3/12	Culture (cont.)	
Wednesday	3/14	Test #3	
Section 4: Applying Social Psychology			
Friday	3/16	Social Psychology & Health	Module A
Monday	3/19	Social Psychology & Health (cont.)	Reading 7: MacDonald, Zanna, & Fong (1995)
Wednesday	3/21	Social Psychology & the Law	Module B
Friday	3/23	Social Psychology & the Environment	Module C
Monday	3/26	Social Psychology & Business - Application Paper due	Chapter 8
Wednesday	3/28	Social Psychology & Dating	Chapter 11
Friday	3/30	Social Psychology & Dating (cont.)	Reading 8: Murray & Holmes (1993)
Monday	4/2	Test #4	
Final Exam to be scheduled during exam period			

Participation in Psychology Research: Guidelines for Psychology Undergraduate Courses

Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Participation in research is one example of this. A number of undergraduate courses have been expanded to include opportunities for Psychology students to volunteer as research participants enabling them to learn first hand about psychology research and related concepts. Many students report that participation in research is both an educational and interesting experience.

Student participants may earn up to 4 percentage points towards their final mark in Psychology 253 by participating in studies conducted by students and faculty in the Department of Psychology. Students who do not wish to participate in research may choose an alternative approach to earning the same number of points; this is explained below in "Alternative to participating in research".

Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology and part of this course, students can earn up to 4% of their final grade by participating in these experiments.

Please note that all Psychology studies have undergone prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics.

Educational focus of participation in research

To maximize the educational benefits of participating in research, students will receive feedback information following their participation in each study detailing the following elements:

- Purpose or objectives of the study
- Dependent and independent variables
- Expected results
- References for at least two related research articles
- Provisions to ensure confidentiality of data
- Contact information of the researcher should the student have further questions about the study
- Contact information for the Director of the Office of Research Ethics should the student wish to learn more about the general ethical issues surrounding research with human participants, or specific questions or concerns about the study in which sh/he participated.

Alternative to participating in research

Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students wish to do so. As an alternative to participation in research, students may opt to review articles relevant to psychology and write a short 1 page review. Each review articles counts as

one percentage point. You cannot use the articles already assigned to be read for the class or the articles that you are using for your application paper. The articles must come from one of these three journals:

The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
The Journal of Experimental Social Psychology
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin

The review must:

- Be submitted by April 1st
- Be typed
- Include title, author, source and date of the article. A copy of the article must be attached.
- Identify the psychological concepts in the article and indicate the pages in the text that are applicable.
- Clearly evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article.

Students may complete any combination of a) participation in research or b) article review up to a total of 4% points.