

**Social Cognition**  
Psychology 353  
Fall 2013

|                         |   |                       |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Instructor              | Abigail Scholer                             |                       |
| Office & Phone          | 3042 PAS<br>519-888-4567 x31362             |                       |
| Meeting Days & Location | TR 1:00 – 2:20 pm, AL 211                   |                       |
| Office Hours            | Thursdays, 2:30-4:30 pm, and by appointment |                       |
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|                         |   |                       |
| Teaching Assistants     | Noah Forrin                                 | Jane Klinger          |
| Office                  | PAS 2257                                    | PAS 3041              |
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\*The best way to reach me is via email. You are welcome to try me by phone as well, but you will generally get a faster response by email. For any requests or questions regarding exam absences or assignments, please email both the teaching assistants and me.

### Course Description and Objectives

Many of us are drawn to psychology because of our interest in understanding why people do what they do. We're social animals, trying to figure out how we—and others—navigate the social world. Social cognition, one of the predominant research perspectives in social psychology today, utilizes both social psychological and cognitive theories and methodologies to examine why people see what they see, think what they think, and do what they do.

In this course, we'll be exploring a number of questions that are studied by social cognition researchers. For instance, how do we represent, interpret, and use information about ourselves, other individuals, and groups? How does our social knowledge influence perceptions, judgments, and behaviour? To what extent are these processes controlled versus automatic? We will explore these questions primarily through a focus on the **social psychological aspects of social cognition**.

This course is designed to help you:

- Gain an understanding of the basic concepts and theories in social cognition
- Critically evaluate social cognitive research methodology and theory
- Improve your ability to think critically about research design and methodology
- Improve your ability to read and critique primary source material
- Apply principles from social cognition to everyday experiences (in your life, in the media)

## Required Readings

1. The core text for this course will be: Kunda, Z. (1999). *Social Cognition: Making Sense of People*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. This textbook is available online through the library; all assigned chapters can be downloaded as PDFs. Although this is an older textbook, I chose it because I believe that it remains one of the best (if not the best) social cognition textbooks available; it has a wonderful organizing structure for understanding the field. It will be supplemented by readings from other books and journal articles.
2. Book chapters and journal articles listed on the schedule below and posted on the course management site on Learn.

## Course Website

It is your responsibility to check the course site on *Learn* regularly. Important announcements, journal articles, and lecture slides will be posted there. Full lecture slides will only be posted *after* each lecture.

## Course Assessment

Please note: Lectures will draw from, but go beyond, material that is presented in the textbook and required readings. Attendance at lectures is expected and will help you in your ability to integrate course material. If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate.

### Exams (75%)

Three in-class exams (25% each) will be given over the course of the semester. Each exam will cover approximately one-third of the course material. These exams will draw from both lecture and readings and will be composed of multiple-choice and short essay questions. They will not be cumulative.

There will also be an optional final exam during the university-scheduled final exam period in December. The optional final can be used in place of the lowest scoring exam during the semester. The optional final will be cumulative and longer than the in-class exams, but will have a similar format (multiple-choice and essay questions). Please note that you may not know your grade for Exam 3 when you have to make the decision about taking the final. The final will be held at the university-scheduled exam time; if it falls at the beginning of the final-exam period, it is unlikely that we will have completed grading for Exam 3.

Attendance at exams is mandatory; accommodations will be arranged only for documented emergencies. If you miss one in-class exam, you are required to take the final exam. In other words, if you miss one in-class exam due to illness or other emergency, the final exam automatically takes the place of that exam score. In this situation, you cannot drop the other two in-class exams.

In the very rare circumstances in which a student might miss two exams due to documented emergencies, you will be required to make-up the second missed exam *and* take the final exam.

In the case of an illness or emergency that affects exam attendance, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor and teaching assistants of your illness by the exam date and provide documentation in a timely manner. Consistent with UW policy on missed assessments and assignments, if there is undue delay or insufficient documentation, the instructor reserves the right to refuse an extension or makeup. The timing of the makeup exam is at the discretion of the instructor.

### Applying Social Cognitive Principles Portfolio (25%)

The portfolio provides an opportunity for you to actively and creatively reflect on and synthesize course material. It has two components. Rubrics for each component will be posted on Learn by the beginning of October.

The first component of the portfolio, *Applications of Social Cognition*, (13%) provides an opportunity for you to creatively apply what you are learning in this course to what you encounter out in the world.

The *Applications* section of your portfolio will include four real-life examples of phenomena that you have learned about in this course. At least three of these examples must come from the media (TV, newspapers, magazines, internet) and one may come from your own life (it is also okay if all four come from the media). Each example must illustrate a different phenomenon. A few example portfolio entries will be posted on Learn.

Each entry in the *Applications* section must include the full citation of the source (or description of personal event) and a brief write-up that includes a description of the phenomenon and how your example illustrates it (no longer than 1.5 typed pages, double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins + references). For print media examples, your portfolio must include hard copies of the relevant newspaper, magazine, or internet articles. Other media examples (e.g., movies, television shows) must include complete information about the source and specific reference to the relevant scene(s). When possible, include links to video content available online.

For the second component of the portfolio (12%), you have a choice of completing one of the following:

Option A: *Social Cognition in the Future: Research Proposal*. Select a topic that we will cover this term (e.g., availability heuristic, implicit stereotyping, priming and social behaviour), find at least one recent (2010 onwards) empirical paper that is relevant to the issue, and propose a new study that advances the exploration of the issue in some interesting way. Your proposal should be no more than 4 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins + references). You should spend no more than 2 pages summarizing the general question, the target paper, and any other relevant research. The remainder of your paper will describe your proposed study. Your proposed study description should include clear articulation of how it advances current knowledge, identification of your independent and dependent variables, description of your methods, and predicted results. Your paper should follow APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition formatting and citation/reference guidelines.

Option B: *Social Cognition Rocks: Video*. Select a topic that we will cover this term and create an engaging, brief (no more than 5 minutes) video that presents the topic to a general audience in a fun and engaging way. For some examples of relevant creative expressions that may serve as examples, check out this video on Statistics:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS9GmU5hr5w&list=PL40958AF3FFC86074&index=1&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS9GmU5hr5w&list=PL40958AF3FFC86074&index=1&feature=plpp_video) or examples from the annual “Dance Your PhD” contest:

<http://vimeo.com/30314886>. You may work in groups of up to 3 students on this video, but in addition to submitting the video, each student must write their own 2 page reflection (double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins) that explains the social cognitive concept, the development of the concept for the video, and his/her specific roles in the project. Videos and reflections will be assessed both for accuracy and creativity. If want to work on the video, you must let us know by October 24 what your topic is and who your group members are if you are working in a group. Videos should be submitted on a DVD.

I strongly recommend that you begin working on the portfolio early in the term, as it will provide a way for you to be actively reflecting on course material as we are discussing it in class. The completed portfolio is due November 19 by the beginning of class. No late assignments will be accepted. Portfolios not turned in on time will receive a grade of 0.

#### Experiential Learning: Research Experience Marks (up to 2% bonus)

Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Research participation is one example of this, article review is another. A number of undergraduate courses have been expanded to include opportunities for Psychology students to earn grades while gaining research experience.

Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology, students may earn a **"bonus" grade of up to 2%** in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 2% may be earned and will be added to the final grade if/as needed to bring your final grade up to 100%.

The two options for earning research experience credit (participation in research and article review) are described below. Students may complete any combination of these options to earn research experience grades.

#### *Option 1: Participation in Psychology Research*

Research participation is coordinated by the Research Experiences Group (REG). Psychology students may volunteer as research participants in lab and/or online (web-based) studies conducted by students and faculty in the Department of Psychology. Participation enables students to learn first-hand about psychology research and related concepts. Many students report that participation in research is both an educational and interesting experience. Please be assured 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 s/he participated.

Participation in LAB studies is worth 0.5 participation credits (grade percentage points) for each 30-minutes of participation. Participation in ONLINE studies is worth .25 credits for each 15-minutes of participation. Researchers will record student's participation and will advise the course instructor of the total credits earned by each student at the end of the term.

Study scheduling, participation and grade assignment is managed using the SONA online system. All students enrolled in this course have been set up with a SONA account. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you get an early start on your studies. For detailed instructions on when and how access your SONA account and for a list of important dates and deadlines please, as soon as possible, please go to:

<http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~regadmin/regparticipant/sonainfo/#SonaSignUp>

**Please do not ask the Course Instructor or REG Coordinator for information unless you have first thoroughly read the information provided on this website.**

More information about the REG program is available at:

<http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~regadmin/regparticipant/>

*Option 2: Article Review as an alternative to participation in research*

Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students wish to do so. As an alternative, students may opt to gain research experience by writing short reviews (1½ to 2 pages) of peer-reviewed research articles relevant to the course. *You must contact your TA to get approval for the article you have chosen before writing the review.* Each review article counts as one percentage point. To receive credit, you must follow specific guidelines. The article review must:

- **Be submitted by November 28 at the beginning of class. Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.**
- Be typed.
- Fully identify the title, author(s), 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 textbook that are applicable. Critically evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article. If inappropriate or incorrect, identify the error and its implications for the validity of the article. You may find, for example, misleading headings, faulty research procedures, alternative explanations that are ignored,

failures to distinguish factual findings from opinions, faulty statements of cause-effect relations, errors in reasoning, etc. Provide examples whenever possible.

- Clearly evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article.
- Keep a copy of your review in the unlikely event we misplace the original.

## Academic Integrity

An effective learning environment is one in which we can openly engage in dialogue and trust one another in our academic exploration. Such an environment requires a firm foundation of academic integrity. I think it matters, I take it seriously, and I expect that you will also. In keeping with the University of Waterloo's policies and principles, you are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in this course. No plagiarism or cheating will be tolerated.

Please see the following sites for more information about the university's policies regarding academic integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/> for more information.]

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>], to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm) - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm) - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read [Policy 72](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm) - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

## Access Ability Services

I strongly support all of the university policies for accommodating students with physical or learning disabilities. The Office for Access Ability Services, 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, please register with Access Ability Services at the beginning of each academic

term. Please provide me with necessary documentation as soon as possible.

### **Concerns About the Course or Instructor (Informal Stage)**

We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies (*Myra Fernandes from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2014*) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor. Contact information is as follows:

Myra Fernandes

Email: [mafernan@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mafernan@uwaterloo.ca)

Ph 519-888-4567 ext 32142

### **Official Version of the Course Outline**

If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline and the outline posted on LEARN, the outline on LEARN will be deemed the official version. Outlines on LEARN may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.

## Schedule

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>  | <b>Readings</b>                          |
|-------------|---|--|
| Sept 10     | Introduction and History  | Chapter 1                                |
| Sept 12     | Concepts and Categories   | Chapter 2                                |
| Sept 17     | Heuristics and Biases<br>( <i>Guest Lecture: Dr. Richard Eibach</i> )     | Chapter 3                                |
| Sept 19     | Heuristics and Biases<br>( <i>Guest Lecture: Dr. Vanessa Bohns</i> )      | Flynn & (Bohns) Lake<br>(2008)           |
| Sept 24     | Hypothesis Testing  | Chapter 4                                |
| Sept 26     | NO CLASS ( <i>Society for Experimental Social Psychology Conference</i> ) |  |
| Oct 1       | Hypothesis Testing  | Snyder & Swann (1978)                    |
| Oct 3       | Memory  | Chapter 5                                |
| Oct 8       | Memory  |  |
| Oct 10      | <b>EXAM #1</b>  |  |
| Oct 15      | Automatic Processes   | Moskowitz (2005, pp.<br>84-95)           |
| Oct 17      | Automatic Processes   | Cesario, Plaks, &<br>Higgins (2006)      |
| Oct 22      | Hot Cognition   | Chapter 6                                |
| Oct 24      | Hot Cognition   | Fitzsimons & Shah<br>(2008)              |
| Oct 29      | Stereotypes   | Fiske & Taylor (2013,<br>pp. 281-309)    |
| Oct 31      | Stereotypes   | Cohen, Garcia, Apfel,<br>& Master (2006) |
| Nov 5       | <b>EXAM #2</b>  |  |
| Nov 7       | Person Perception   | Chapter 9                                |
| Nov 12      | Person Perception   |  |
| Nov 14      | The Self  | Chapter 10                               |
| Nov 19      | The Self, <i>Portfolio Due</i>  | Reznik & Andersen<br>(2007)              |
| Nov 21      | Culture   | Markus & Kitayama<br>(2010)              |
| Nov 26      | Culture   |  |
| Nov 28      | <b>EXAM #3</b>  |  |

Final Exam to be scheduled during university exam period.

Note: Although this syllabus outlines the general structure for lecture topics and readings, it is subject to change. The most updated information will be on the course site on *Learn*. It is your responsibility to check the site for assigned readings, etc.