Social Cognition
Psychology 353
Winter 2012

Instructor	Abigail Scholer	
Office & Phone	3042 PAS 519-888-4567 x31362	
Meeting Days & Location	MW 2:30-3:50 pm, AL 211	
Office Hours	W 4-6 and by appointment	
Email	ascholer@uwaterloo.ca*	
Teaching Assistants	Daniel Nadolny	Emily Schryer
Office	PAS 3045	PAS 3250
Office Hours	Tuesdays, 11 am – 12 pm	Mondays, 10 am – 11 am
Email	dnadolny@uwaterloo.ca	ecschrye@.uwaterloo.ca

*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.

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. One approach to understanding why people do what they do, see what they see, and think what they think grew out of traditions, questions, and empirical tools at the intersection of social and cognitive psychology – a field known as social cognition.

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. Text: Kunda, Z. (1999). *Social Cognition: Making Sense of People.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
2. 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. Note that 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.

In-Class Exams (50%)

Two in-class exams (25% each) will be given over the course of the semester. These exams will draw from both lecture and readings and will be composed of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. They will not be cumulative. Attendance at exams is mandatory; make-ups will be given only for documented emergencies (unexcused absences will result in a score of 0 on that exam).

Final Exam (35%)

The final exam will be given during the university-scheduled final exam period in April. It will be a cumulative exam with a format similar to the in-class exams (multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions).

Applying Social Cognitive Principles Portfolio (15%)

You will compile a portfolio with six real-life examples of phenomena that you have learned about in this course. Four of these examples must come from the media (TV, newspapers, magazines, internet) and two may come from your own life. Each example must illustrate a different phenomenon.

Each entry in your portfolio 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 typed page, double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins). 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.

The portfolio provides an opportunity for you to creatively apply what you are learning in this course to what you encounter out in the world. 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 March 14 by the beginning of class. No late assignments will be accepted. Portfolios not turned in on time will receive a grade of 0.

Opportunity for Extra Credit: Experiential Learning

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 4%** in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 4% 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 grades (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 is worth 0.5 participation credits (grade percentage points) for each half-hour of participation. Researchers will record student's participation and will report the total credits earned by each student at the end of the term to the course instructor.

Study scheduling, participation and grade assignment is managed using the <u>SONA</u> 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 <u>when and how access your SONA account</u> and for a list of <u>important dates and deadlines</u> please, as soon as possible, click on:

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 research articles relevant to the course. The course instructor will specify a suitable source of articles for this course (i.e., scientific journals, newspapers, magazines, other printed media). *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 March 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 - 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 - 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 - Student Appeals, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

Special Needs

I strongly support all of the university policies for accommodating students with physical or learning 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, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term. Please provide me with necessary documentation as soon as possible.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Jan 4	Introduction and History	Chapter 1
Jan 9	Concepts and Categories	Chapter 2
Jan 11	Concepts and Categories	
Jan16	Heuristics and Biases	Chapter 3
Jan 18	Heuristics and Biases	Kahneman & Tversky (1973)
Jan 23	Hypothesis Testing	Chapter 4
Jan 25	NO CLASS	
Jan 30	Hypothesis Testing	Snyder & Swan (1978)
Feb 1	Automatic Processes	Chapter 7
Feb 6	Automatic Processes	Cesario, Plaks, & Higgins (2006)
Feb 8	Review and Integration	
Feb 13	**Test #1 – Midterm**	
Feb 15	Memory	Chapter 5
Feb 20	NO CLASS - Reading Week	
Feb 22	NO CLASS - Reading Week	
Feb 27	Memory	Libby, Eibach, & Gilovich (2005)
Feb 29	Hot Cognition	Chapter 6
Mar 5	Hot Cognition	Santioso, Kunda & Fong (1990)
Mar 7	Stereotypes	Chapter 8
Mar 12	Stereotypes	Logel et al. (2009)
Mar 14	Person Perception	Chapter 9
Mar 19	Person Perception	Morewedge, Preston, & Wegner (2007)
Mar 21	The Self	Chapter 10
Mar 26	The Self	Murray, Leder, Derrick, & Holmes (2008)
Mar 28	Culture	Chapter 11
Apr 2	**Test #2**	

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.