

PSYCHOLOGY 323 - SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spring, 2008

Professor: Chris Wetzel Office hrs: MWF 9 –9:30, MF 2-2:30; TTH 9–11, 1:30 – 2:30 Office: 115 Clough

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Besides teaching you about the discipline of social psychology, the purpose of this course is to provide you with alternative ways in perceiving and thinking about social phenomena around you. I suspect that a few weeks after you take the final, you will forget 90% of the theories, experiments, and names presented to you in this course. Hopefully, your new "perceptual, cognitive" framework will stick with you.

What exactly will you learn from this course? Will it be THE truth? Probably not. The one truth you will learn is that the world is terribly complex and that there are no simple answers or universal truths. Will you learn more about yourself? Probably not; instead you will come to "doubt yourself" even more. Will you be more confident about figuring out how other people tick? Probably not, instead you should learn to see more possible causes for people's behavior. In sum, you should come away from this course with increased skepticism for simplistic statements such as, "This causes that," or "Person X is like that because of Y."

In terms of the 12 course objectives that the IDEA form assesses, the following objectives are essential: #22 Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories; #23 Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions, and #31 Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view. The following are important: #24 Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field of this course; and #21 Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends). The remaining objectives are important but are not formally assessed in the course, so they are not used for course evaluation.

Your text is Social Psychology: the Heart and the Mind (5th Ed). by E. Aronson, T. Wilson, and R. Akert. There is also a study guide, by C Reed, which might be worth buying but see the website below first. You also need to be "webliterate" as much of this course is administered by WEBCT/Moodle. You also should make use of the textbook homepage: http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_aronson_socpsych_6/64/16425/4205041.cw/index.html [Select a chapter by clicking on the appropriate number in the "chapter bar" at the top]

Class time will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and demonstrations. Active involvement with the material is necessary to earn a good grade and to change your perceptual framework and thinking style!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance is important, but class engagement—contribution—is more important. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for any announcements, information, handouts, etc. from that class.
2. By the date that each chapter is to be read (usually a Friday), there will be a WEBCT quiz on the chapter. The quiz will generally consist of 2-3 multiple choice questions and/or a short answer, and you will need to complete this quiz by noon, the day of the class. The chapter quiz will opened 24 hours earlier. Since there are 14 reading assignments, you will have 14 quizzes. Your total comprises 14% of your total grade.

3. Course Projects/Activities. For most chapters, there is an associated course project. These frequently involve web exercises, experiments, and questionnaires (called "try it" in the text or on the course webpage), or they involve class demonstrations. Besides doing the projects, you will answer specific questions associated with that "try it." There will be given a "tryit" assignment list on WEBCT with these questions. Your top 10 of roughly 13 projects will count 26% of your grade.
4. Take two exams, counting a total of 40% of your grade. The exams will consist of 20-30 multiple choice questions and one essay. The multiple choice will not generally require the regurgitation of names, facts, etc. Instead you will be required to apply theories or concepts to novel situations. Before each exam, I will give you 2-3 essay questions, and you will write one essay that is due when you take the multiple choice part. Make-up exams will be given with the final (last exam).
5. The quality of your class engagement (worth 10% of the grade) will be judged by how often you challenge or critically comment on a statement made by the professor, or how often you answer a fellow student's question or follow up on another student's contribution either in class or on the WEBCT/Moodle discussions. Answering a question posed by the professor, asking for a clarification of either reading or lecture material, or asking an "applied" question (eg., what would theory X say about phenomena Y?) can also count.
6. The Book review. During the semester, you will read a mini-text, usually on a specialized or a popularized topic of social psychology. You will write a report on this text in which you will review and summarize the major points of the book, compare what it says to what your text says about the same material, and tell me how your understanding of the topic/phenomena has been changed by reading the mini-text (5-10 pages).
7. Extra Credit-- 2 ways

Interacting with a social psychologist. As you read about social psychology theories and experiments, you may want to know more about the theory/experiment or the psychologist authors. If they are still alive, you may be able to email them questions you would like answered. [Before you can do this, I must approve the person you pick as well as approve the questions you wish to ask him/her.] You will do some background reading, locate the person's webpage or email address (a collection of them is at: <http://www.socialpsychology.org/>), pose a series of questions (which I will screen), correspond with them electronically, and then write a brief report (1-2 pages) on what the person says and what you have learned.

You may participate in psychology experiments either here or at the University of Memphis. For each hour of participation, you will receive one-half point extra credit, for a maximum of 2 points. For each experiment, you must briefly describe what the experiment was about (identify research question, Independent and dependent variables, etc), what your role was in it, and any flaws or problems you noticed.

The maximum extra credit (added to your course grade) is 2 points.

Schedule

#	Day	Date	Reading	Topic	Assignment due or Class activity
1	W	1/9	-	Sex, Lies and Videotapes	Activity: Deception part 1
2	F	1/11	Chap 1	The Power and Paradox of Social Psychological interventions	course info materials & App #1 Activity: Common Sense
3	M	1/14	Chap 2	Research methods	ChapQuiz: 1 + 2
4	W	1/16		Tryit p.31, p. 41	Making judgments; App#2
5	F	1/22	Chap 3	Social Cognition	ChapQuiz #3
MLK day					
6	W	1/23		Tryit p.77 & 85	App #3;
7	F	1/25	Chap 4	Social Perception	ChapQuiz #4
8	M	1/28		In-Class: detecting deception	App #4: randomness exercise
9	W	1/30		Tryit p. 94	App #5
10	F	2/1	Chap 5	Self-knowledge	ChapQuiz #5
11	M	2/4			App #6
12	W	2/6			In-Class: self-handicapping
13	F	2/8	Chap 6	Self-justification esteem maintenance	ChapQuiz #6
14	M	2/11			
15	W	2/13			In-class: Assessing people's values
16	F	2/15	Chap 7	Attitudes and Attitude change	ChapQuiz #7
17	M	2/18			
18	W	2/20		Tryit, p. 294 and 203	APP#7
19	F	2/22			MIDTERM: chapters 1-7
20	M	2/25	Chap 8	Conformity	ChapQuiz #8
21	W	2/27		App#8: Milgram's boast	
22	F	2/29	Chap 9	Group Processes	ChapQuiz #9
Spring Break					
23	M	3/10			Select book for review
24	W	3/12		#9: Tryit, web chap 9: prisoner's dilemma	In-class: loving, let me count the ways
25	F	3/14	Chap 10	Interpersonal Attraction	ChapQuiz #10
26	M	3/17			In-Class: unusual ways to assess personality
27	W	3/19			
Easter Break					
28	M	3/24	Chap 11	Prosocial Behavior	ChapQuiz #11
29	W	3/26			In-class: Projective measures of personality
30	F	3/28			In-class: loving those we help
31	M	3/31			
32	W	4/2		Apps #10 + 11 due	
33	F	4/4	Chap 12	Aggression	ChapQuiz #12
34	M	4/7			Book review outline due
35	W	4/9	Chap 13	Prejudice	ChapQuiz #13
36	F	4/11			
37	M	4/14		App #12: IAT	In-class: the power of prejudice (IAT)
38	W	4/16	SPA:2 +3	Social psych in action: law and environment	ChapQuiz #14
39	F	4/18			Book review due
40	M	4/21		In-class: harvesting extra-credit	
41	W	4/23			
42	F	4/25		Attend & present at URCAS	
Final is at 5 pm on Monday April 28th					

* This syllabus schedule is only a rough guideline. There will be many changes, and they will be announced at least 24 hours before the day on which an assignment is due.

Here are some recent “hot” books

- R. B. Cialdini (2006). *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*.
- B. Caplan (2007). *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies*
- T. Cowen (2007). *Discover Your Inner Economist: Use Incentives to Fall in Love, Survive Your Next Meeting, and Motivate Your Dentist*.
- J deGraaf, D. Wann, T. H Naylor, & Vicki Robin. (2005). *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*
- B. DePaulo (2007). *Singled Out: How Singles Are Stereotyped, Stigmatized, and Ignored, and Still Live Happily Ever After*
- H. Dittmar (2007). *Consumer Culture, Identity, and Well-being: The Search for the Good Life and the Body Perfect*.
- D. Dunning. (2005). *Self-Insight: Roadblocks and Detours on the Path of Knowing Thyself*
- C. Dweck (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*
- D. Gilbert. (2006). *Stumbling on Happiness*.
- M. Gladwell (2002). *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*
- M. Gladwell (2007). *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*
- E. Goode (2000). *Paranormal Beliefs: A Sociological Introduction*.
- J Greenberg, S L. Koole, & T Pyszczynski (2004). *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology*.
- R. R. Hassin, J, S. Uleman, J. A. Bargh. (Eds.) (2005). *The New Unconscious*.
- E. Hastie & R.M. Dawes. (2001), *Rational Choice in an Uncertain World*.
- E. Hatfield & S. Sprecher (1986), *Mirror, Mirror: The Importance of Looks in Everyday Life*.
- S. Jeffes (1998). *Appearance Is Everything: The Hidden Truth Regarding Your Appearance Discrimination*.
- A. W., Kruglanski. (2004). *The Psychology of Closed Mindedness*.
- T. Kasser (2003). *The High Price of Materialism*
- S. D. Levitt & S. J. Dubner (2007). *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*
- S. Lyubomirsky (2007). *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want*
- A. S. Miller & S. Kanazawa (2007). *Why Beautiful People Have More Daughters: From Dating, Shopping, and Praying to Going to War and Becoming a Billionaire-- Two Evolutionary Psychologists Explain Why We Do What We Do*
- D. G. Myers (1993). *The Pursuit of Happiness*.
- D. G. Myers (2002). *Intuition: Its powers and perils*.
- D. G. Myers (2001). *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty*.
- T. D. Nelson (2005). *The Psychology of Prejudice*.
- C. Tavris & E. Aronson. (2007). *Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts*
- M. Van Hecke. (2007). *Blind Spots: Why Smart People Do Dumb Things*
- M. Seligman (2004). *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*.
- D. J. Schneider (2004), *The Psychology Of Stereotyping*.
- V. Swami & A. Furnham (2007). *The Psychology of Physical Attraction*
- B, Schwartz. (2004), *The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less*.
- J. Surowiecki (2005). *The Wisdom of Crowds*
- A. Vrij (2002). *Detecting Lies and Deceit*.
- D. M. Wegner. (2002). *The Illusion of Conscious Will*.
- T. D. Wilson (2002). *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*.
- R. Wiseman. (2007). *Quirkology: How We Discover the Big Truths in Small Things*
- P. G. Zimbardo.(2007). *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*