

Psychology 410

Recognizing Privilege: Getting the fish to see the water

Fall, 2004

Course Goals

Privilege has been defined as an “invisible knapsack” of unearned benefits that provides special advantages to members of certain groups: Caucasians, males, heterosexuals, the wealthy, the physically attractive, etc. This seminar will examine what factors lead to awareness of one’s privilege, what are the consequences of this awareness (e.g., increased guilt, decreased prejudice, increased psychological justifications for privilege), and how does the type of privilege influence the answers to these first two issues?

The course objectives are to: 1) expand a newly developing area in psychology on privilege, especially following-up on Nicole Lindner's honors project on white privilege; 2) train you in some of the experimental methods of social psychology; 3) provide you with an experience of how graduate research seminars operate; and 4) give you an appreciation of how difficult it is to do good research!

Course Activities

The philosophy underlying this course is "learning by doing" in that you will design and run an experiment on some aspect of the course topic. You and a partner will create an experiment which will test a hypothesis about some aspect of privilege awareness. You will test your hypothesis by modifying experimental materials and procedures used in the previous research. After conducting the experiment and analyzing the data, you will write up the project as an APA-style paper.

You will also participate in an ongoing project to assess the Rhodes campus climate. You will help with the refinement of the survey items and methods, as we will pilot test the climate assessment instrument this fall [to be administered to faculty, staff, and students next spring]. Built into this survey will be assessments of privilege awareness plus a variety of other constructs which should prove useful to your experimental project.

You will do extensive reading of primary research articles related to the course research topic. Although there will be no exams on these readings, your understanding of the primary research articles will be demonstrated by how well you write the APA journal style paper.

Class will be held for one hour on Monday, 4 – 5, and for almost 2 hours on Thursday night, 7 – 8:45. Class will be run in seminar format, with you making presentations on the past literature, presenting your own ideas, and offering suggestions to other students. The class discussions should teach you the art of constructive criticism and persistent "why" questioning (e.g., why this technique over another, why couldn't it be this way instead, etc). You will be part of a research team; thus, you will also learn the fine art of cooperation, coordination, and negotiation.

Assessment

The research paper counts 50% of your grade. The other assignments are: past research presentation (8%), IRB proposal (7%), oral presentation of your research project (10%), and a participation grade (25%, with 15% coming from class participation and 10% coming from your research activities). For the final paper and the IRB proposal, you will write your own personal draft and then combine it with your partner's to create a joint draft. Both will be evaluated, and your grade is the average of the two.

With such a small class, I expect all students to do very well and receive high grades — unless they carry out their experimental duties irresponsibly.

Schedule

We will spend the first two - three weeks getting up to speed in the literature and planning the research studies. The month of October will be spent collecting data

<u>Week of:</u>	<u>Activities</u>
Aug. 26	Getting us all on the same page, begin key readings (see below)
30 - 2	Present research
	Labor Day recess
Sept 9	Discuss possible research Qs
13 - 16	design research project submit personal IRB proposal
20 - 23	redesign research project; submit joint IRB proposal
27 - 30	first draft of methods section;
Oct. 4 - 7	begin running subjects
11 - 14	finish running subjects
	Fall Break recess
21	help with climate survey; analyze experiment data
25 - 28	first draft of results
Nov. 1 - 4	revise results section, first draft of discussion
8 - 11	revise discussion, first draft of introduction
15 - 18	revise introduction
22	present climate survey results to climate research group
29 - 2	put it all together: the final paper is due
Dec. 7	oral presentation/poster of your research [to be used in the spring research symposium]

Course resources

- Banaszynski, T. L. (2000). *Beliefs about the existence of white privilege, race attitudes, and diversity-related behavior*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *Racism without racists*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Feagin, J. & O'Brien, E. (2003). *White men on race: Power, privilege, and the shaping of cultural consciousness*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Gallagher, C.A. (1995). White Reconstruction in the University" *Socialist Review*, 94, 165-187.
- Gallagher, C. A. (2003a). Color-blind privilege: The social and political functions of erasing the color line in post race America. *Race, Gender & Class*, 10, 1-17.
- Gallagher, C. A. (2003b). Playing the ethnic card: Using ethnic identity to negate contemporary racism. In A. Doane & E. Bonilla-Silva (Eds.), *White out: The continuing significance of race* (pp145-158). New York: Routledge Press.
- Helms, J. E. (Ed.). (1990). *Black and white racial identity: Theory, research, and practice*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Iyer, A., Leach, C. W. & Crosby, F. J. (2003). White guilt and racial compensation: The benefits and limits of self-focus. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29, 117-129.
- Lindner, N. (2004). *Identifying precursors to white privilege and white guilt*. Unpublished manuscript, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN.
- McIntosh, P. (1989, July/August). *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack*. *Peace and Freedom*, 10-12.
- Plous, S. (Ed.). (2003). *Understanding prejudice and discrimination*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Royster, D. A. (2003). *Race and the invisible hand: How white networks exclude black men from blue-collar jobs*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shapiro, T. M. (2004). *The hidden cost of being African American: How wealth perpetuates inequality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Swim, J. K. & Miller, D. L. (1999). White guilt: Its antecedents and consequences for attitudes toward affirmative action. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 500-514.
- Woodzicka, J.A., Mentz, J. Chew, L. (October, 2000). *Deconstructing privilege: Thoughts and feelings related to white, male, and heterosexual advantage*. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Social Psychology meeting, Atlanta, Ga.