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## PSYC 408-01, The Psychology of Justice, Fall 2005

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**PSYC 408: The Psychology of Justice**  
**Wednesday: 6-9pm, Clough 123**  
**Fall 2005**

Professor: Julie Steel, Ph.D.

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Course Description:

Questions about the nature of justice, fairness, morality, etc. are certainly not new to human consciousness; however, the *psychological* literature on justice has really just boomed in that past 20 years or so. This course will focus primarily on the current literature although we will certainly discuss differing philosophical perspectives as we delve into this literature. This is a graduate-style seminar; and, as a result, this is a **reading and speaking intensive course**.

In this class we will try to develop our own answers to a number of questions dealing with justice and fairness. What is justice? What social, emotional, and cognitive factors lead to decisions about fairness, injustice, and behavior reactions to unfair outcomes? How does affect/emotionality impact our justice considerations? Furthermore, what are the most appropriate ways to deal with unjust outcomes (and who decides what is appropriate)? Finally, are the mechanisms that we (as Westerners) use to restore fairness universal? We will deal with these and many other questions as we explore the available literature.

**Requirements**

**1. Required Readings.** There is no required textbook, the required materials are original source readings. You are responsible for making copies of the readings every week. The articles will be available on my door, in a folder labeled "Justice". Do NOT take the articles for longer than an hour - get it, photocopy it, and return it. If an article goes missing, tell me immediately so that I can track it down and/or replace it if necessary.

**2. Weekly reaction paper.** Approximately 3 - 4 articles will be assigned per week. You're expected to keep up. Each week, you will write a paper that is between one and three pages in length. It should not summarize the required readings but should provide your own original thoughts and ideas about the articles and chapters we are discussing. It should demonstrate that you read the materials and have carefully thought about them. Most articles will have parts that you like, parts that you dislike, and most importantly ideas that you can use in your own research (or future research). These are the kinds of things you should be talking about. And remember: focus on the substance of the articles not on superficial things such as writing style. Reaction papers are due at the start of class, so if you want a copy for class discussion, print out two copies. **Note:** these papers need not be fluffy or fancy - they should have IMPORTANT insights - but I'm not really concerned with APA style or title pages or any fluff. Impress me with your thoughts - that's what I'm looking for!

**3. Discussion leader.** I believe that one's knowledge goes only as far as one's ability to articulate that knowledge. Therefore, you will need to learn how to lead discussions in order to be an effective communicator of psychological science. Towards that end, each of you will be leading the discussion of several articles throughout the semester. To do that effectively you will need to have read and thought about the articles in detail and you will need to have prepared a brief summary of the article, lists of questions for the class, and topics for discussion. It will be **your job** to help us focus on the important aspects of your assigned articles, the interconnections between them and the other articles to be discussed, the contradictions amongst them and so on. And most importantly keep the discussion going!

**4. Participation and Attendance.** This is a seminar and in a seminar students are responsible for presenting ideas and insights. It's a time to talk, argue, and be opinionated. As such you will be graded on your participation. You should have something insightful to say about each article that we read and discuss. For articles that you are NOT assigned to lead the discussion, you may find it useful to bring at three or four written comments to class (these will undoubtedly overlap with what you covered in your reaction paper). Examples of reasonable comments include critiques of the article, things you liked about the article, research ideas generated by the article, relationships between the article and something else you've read in this class or another class. Be prepared to talk about your comments with the class and to argue for and defend your ideas.

**5. End of Semester Paper.** Any good seminar course should have as its final project something that potentially could become a work product. For that reason your final project will be an experimental research proposal (15-20 pages). This should include a literature review, experimental methods, anticipated results, and discussion/implications all written in APA style. If you are not a psychology student and feel that some other kind of paper would be more useful please just talk to me about it ahead of time. The goal should be for you to write something that could potentially be useful for your goals and might even lead to a published work product down the road. We will talk more about this paper later on in the semester.

### Class Policies

Due Dates: No late assignments will be accepted.

Academic Integrity: As in all courses at Rhodes, students are expected to act honorably in pursuit of our mutual educational objectives. In regard to the writing assignments, you should be careful to properly acknowledge ideas obtained from outside sources (textbooks, previous lectures/discussions, journals, the web, ideas of other students, etc.), and you should pledge this work as follows: *This paper is my own work, and the ideas in this report reflect my understanding of and thinking about this material.* You are expected to complete all assignments for this class independently unless the assignment specifically states otherwise.

**Course Grades:** Grades will be distributed on the following scale: 93-100 (A); 90-92 (A-); 87-89 (B+); 83-86 (B); 80-82 (B-); 77-79 (C+); 73-76 (C); 70-72 (C-); etc.. These grades will be based on the following requirements:

1. **Weekly reaction paper** 20%
2. **Discussion leader** 20%
3. **Participation and Attendance** 20%
4. **End of Semester Paper** 40%

**EXTREMELY TENTATIVE TOPICS for  
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF JUSTICE SEMINAR**

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 8/24/05  | Introduction to the Course: THANKS TO DR. WETZEL                                    |
| 8/31/05  | What is Justice?  |
| 9/7/05   | Intentionality  |
| 9/14/05  | Personality and Affect  |
| 9/21/05  | Development of Justice Conceptions  |
| 9/28/05  | Do we live in a just world?   |
| 10/5/05  | Justice and Politics  |
| 10/12/05 | Situational Factors that influence Justice Considerations                           |
| 10/19/05 | Prejudice   |
| 10/26/05 | Perspective-taking  |
| 11/2/05  | Forgiveness   |
| 11/9/05  | Cross Cultural approaches to Understanding Justice                                  |
| 11/16/05 | Social Dilemmas and Conflict Resolution Strategies                                  |
| 11/23/05 | No Class - Happy Thanksgiving   |
| 11/30/05 | Justice, Evolution, and Comparative Animal Behavior                                 |
| 12/7/05  | Fun, weird articles I want to read - so I will force you to join me in reading them |

**Final papers due by noon on Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>.**

## Readings

### Week 2: 8/31/05

- Walster, E. U., Berscheid, E., & Walster, G. W. (1973). New directions in equity research. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 25(2), pp. 151-176.
- Lerner, M. J. & Miller, D. T. (1978). Just world research and the attribution process: Looking back and ahead. *Psychological Bulletin*, 85(5), pp. 1030-1051.
- Blader, S. L. & Tyler, T. R. (2003). A four-component model of procedural justice: Defining the meaning of a "fair" process. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(6), pp. 747-758.
- Randall, Christina S.; Mueller, & Charles W. (1995). Extensions of justice theory: Justice evaluations and employees' reactions in a natural setting. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 58(3), pp. 178-194.

### Week 3: 9/7/05

- Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (selection to be decided by jsteel)
- Horan, H. D. & Kaplan, M. F. (1983). Criminal intent and consequence severity: Effects of moral reasoning on punishment. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 9(4), pp. 638-645.
- Kleinke, C. L., Wallis, R., Stalder, K. (1992). Evaluation of a rapist as a function of expressed intent and remorse. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 132, 525-537.
- Royzman, E. B. & Baron, J. (2002). The preference for indirect harm. *Social Justice Research*, 15(2), pp. 165-184.

- **Each student should sign up to present one of the above articles (please get me a list of who will present what).**
- **If there is an article remaining - I will serve as presentation leader for that article.**
- **If there are more students than there are articles - some lucky sap will get off easy- but will present on 9/14**

**The readings for the remaining weeks will be provided to you at a later date.**