

Psychology 830:321
Social Psychology, Fall 2015
T/TH 1:40-3:00pm
TILLET 254

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Course Description

The goal of social psychology is to understand how our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the actual, imagined, and implied presence of others. At the heart of social psychology is the recognition that our responses are dramatically influenced by social situations. Perhaps you have laughed at a joke you didn't get because others around you were laughing. Maybe you have noticed you act one way when you are around one group of people, say your family, but act a different way when you are around others, like your friends. Our responses are not simply the products of our individual personalities but rather are shaped and molded by the social context around us, often times without us even realizing it. Indeed, the current social situation can influence how we perceive, evaluate, remember, and act within our environments.

This course will provide students with an overview of research and theory in social psychology. Not only will students learn about interesting, relevant, and timely research findings, they'll also learn *how* social psychologists have discovered this evidence. What makes the social psychological approach to understanding human behavior different from, say, a philosophical or historical approach is that social psychology is a science. It applies the scientific method to the study of the human condition. In this course, we'll learn about the psychological science of topics such as attitudes, persuasion, conformity, obedience, perceptions of others, stereotyping and discrimination, romantic relationships, aggression, and helping behavior. The course emphasizes an understanding of important scientific methods, findings, and principles in the field of social psychology, which it then applies to everyday life and to broader social problems.

Course Format and Requirements

Class Format: We'll meet twice a week for 80-minute classes. Classes will consist of lectures, videos, demonstrations, extra credit exercises, guest speakers, and discussions. Because exams will include information covered in class that is NOT covered in the reading material, I strongly recommend attending every lecture or getting comprehensive notes from a classmate if you miss a class.

Textbook: The required text for the course is: Kassin, S., Fein, S., & Markus, H.R. (2014). *Social psychology* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage. It is available in the NJ Books/Rutgers University Bookstore. For students who prefer an electronic textbook, check out the following link for a much cheaper e-book version: <http://www.cengagebrain.com/isbn/978-0-495-81240-1?cid=rdl>.

Readings: You are expected to read the assigned textbook chapters BEFORE the class where we will cover them. My lectures will review what is covered in the text, but I will also expand upon those topics and introduce new concepts and ideas. It will help you immensely to keep up with the readings so that the terms and concepts are already familiar to you during lectures.

In-Class Exercises: Throughout the course of the semester, I will introduce four in-class extra credit opportunities. These won't be announced in advance. Because missing an in-class exercise cannot lower your grade, and because they are part of the in-class activity for that day, extra credit assignments **cannot** be made up or turned in late, regardless of the reason for your absence. Each assignment will be worth one half of a percentage point toward your course grade (e.g., if your course average is an 88% and you competently complete all four in-class exercises, your overall course grade will be raised to 90%).

Exams: There will be three regular exams and one cumulative final exam. The exams will cover readings as well as lectures and videos shown in class. Exams will be multiple choice format and will be administered during the class times designated on the schedule below. The three regular exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions covering just the previous section's material. The final exam will consist of 100 multiple choice questions and will cover material from the entire semester.

Make-up Policy: If you must miss an exam for a legitimate reason (e.g., religious holiday), contact me at least one week before the scheduled exam. You will have to take the make-up exam at one of the make-up sessions scheduled by the Psychology Department. If you miss an exam *without* contacting me ahead of time, you will only be allowed to take the make-up exam with proper documentation (e.g., note from doctor). REGIS reporting is not sufficient to warrant a make-up exam. You must provide documentation or have received prior approval from me in order to receive an opportunity to take the make-up exams. Please note that MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL CONSIST ENTIRELY OF ESSAY QUESTIONS.

Additional Extra Credit Opportunity: Following the third exam, you'll have one additional opportunity for extra credit. I'll post info about this opportunity on Sakai following the third exam and will briefly go over the assignment in class. This assignment will be worth one percentage point toward your grade. So in total, if you do all the in-class and out of class extra credit opportunities, you will have the potential to raise your grade three percentage points.

Grading

Your grade in this class will be based on your performance on the regular exams, the cumulative final exam, and any extra credit you earn. Grades will not be “curved”—in other words, everyone could get an A, or everyone could get a C. Your success in the class does not affect anyone else's and vice versa. You will get the grade that you, and you alone, earn in this course.

I do know, however, that anyone can have a “bad day.” To help reduce the impact of a bad exam day, the lowest of your three regular exam grades will be replaced by the average (i.e., statistical mean) of your best and worst exams. For example, if you get 50pts, 40pts, and 30pts on the three regular exams, the 30 will be replaced with a 40 (the average of 50 and 30). Note that a missed exam is scored as a 0. So if a student misses the first exam (gets a 0) and gets a 40 and 30 on the next two regular exams, the 0 will be replaced with a 20 (the average of 0 and 40). Grade replacement only applies to regular exams and cannot be applied to the final exam.

Final grades are based on the total number of points earned (as well as up to 3 percentage points of extra credit) in accordance with the grading scale below, **no exceptions**. There is no end-of-semester negotiation period where students can plea and barter for a better grade in the class. If you are dissatisfied with your performance in the class, discuss the situation with the professor or the TA early— don't wait until it's too late to bring up your grade.

<u>Points</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>
250 – 225	100% - 90%	A
224 -- 218	89.9% - 87%	B+
217 – 200	86.9% - 80%	B
199 -- 193	79.9% - 77%	C+
192 – 175	76.9% - 70%	C
174 – 150	69.9% - 60%	D
149 – 0	59.9% - 0%	F

Standards for Conduct

Attendance Policy: I won't monitor attendance. As an adult, it's your decision how you use your time. But lectures are designed to help you learn, and to be fun and interesting. I will elaborate on concepts from the readings, introduce new material, conduct demonstrations, and show videos. Your exams will be based on all of this material, so regular attendance at the lectures will help you earn a higher grade on exams. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out *from a classmate*, not from the instructor or the TA, what occurred in class. Also, as noted above, in-class extra credit exercises cannot be made up. So while you don't lose points by skipping class, you may miss the opportunity for bonus points. In short, it will be difficult to earn a good grade in this course if you do not come to class.

Class Etiquette: Please turn off your cell phone before class. Please come to class on time and wait until the lecture is over to start packing up (you may think you're being quiet, but when 150 people start shuffling and zipping bags, it can be quite disruptive!). Most importantly, this class aims to foster a learning environment that promotes and values respect for others and their viewpoints. The topics we'll learn about in this class are easily relatable to everyday life, making students inclined to share their own anecdotes and experiences. I welcome and encourage that—indeed, that's one of the most exciting and unique aspects of this class. But as such, it is imperative that students behave in a respectful and considerate way to their fellow classmates during class discussions. Inappropriate, disruptive, or offensive interpersonal behavior is not acceptable.

Academic Misconduct: Students are expected to follow the University Policy on Academic Integrity. Cheating will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: having a cell phone or other electronic device during an exam, attempting to or leaving the classroom with a copy of the exam, looking at another student's exam, or taking pictures of the exam (during office hours or in class). You will receive an automatic zero on exams for cheating and other disciplinary action for a violation of academic integrity will follow University policy.

Course Schedule and Readings

(As much notice as possible will be given if scheduling changes occur.)

Date	Topic	Reading
Tues, Sept 1	Intro to the course and syllabus review	
	<i>Section 1: Social Perception</i>	<i>Chapters 1-5</i>
Thurs, Sept 3	Intro to Social Psychology, Research Methods, Part 1	Chapters 1 & 2
Tues, Sept 8	***NO CLASS: MONDAY CLASS SCHEDULE***	
Thurs, Sept 10	Research Methods, Part 2	
Tues, Sept 15	Social Self, Part 1	Chapter 3
Thurs, Sept 17	Social Self, Part 2	
Tues, Sept 22	***NO CLASS***	
Thurs, Sept 24	***NO CLASS***	
Tues, Sept 29	Perceiving Others, Part 1	Chapter 4
Thurs, Oct 1	Perceiving Others, Part 2	
Tues, Oct 6	Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination	Chapter 5
Thurs, Oct 8	Catch Up Day & Exam Review	
Tues, Oct 13	***EXAM 1***	
	<i>Section 2: Social Influence</i>	<i>Chapters 6-8</i>
Thurs, Oct 15	Attitudes	Chapter 6
Tues, Oct 20	Conformity, Part 1	Chapter 7
Thurs, Oct 22	Conformity, Part 2	
Tues, Oct 27	Group Processes	Chapter 8
Thurs, Oct 29	Catch Up Day & Exam Review	
Tues, Nov 3	***EXAM 2***	
	<i>Section 3: Social Relations</i>	<i>Chapters 9-11</i>
Thurs, Nov 5	Attraction & Close Relationships, Part 1	Chapter 9
Tues, Nov 10	Attraction & Close Relationships, Part 2	
Thurs, Nov 12	Helping Others, Part 1	Chapter 10
Tues, Nov 17	Helping Others, Part 2	
Thurs, Nov 19	Aggression	Chapter 11
Tues, Nov 24	Catch Up Day & Exam Review	
Thurs, Nov 26	***NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING***	
Tues, Dec 1	***EXAM 3***	
	<i>Section 4: Applying Social Psychology</i>	<i>Chapters 12, 14</i>
Thurs, Dec 3	Applying Social Psychology: Law	Chapter 12
Tues, Dec 8	Applying Social Psychology: Health	Chapter 14
Thurs, Dec 10	Wrap Up & Review	
Tues, Dec 15, 12:00-3:00pm	***CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM***	

Students with Disabilities. Students with documented disabilities who need special arrangements in this course should speak to me as soon as possible or email me regarding their special accommodations.