

# Social Psychology

830:321:B6

## Basic Course Information

Instructor: Meghan C. McLean, Ph.D. Student, M.S., B.A.,

Course location: Tillett 246, Livingston Campus

Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 6:00-9:40pm



## My Contact Information

Email: [meghan.mclean@rutgers.edu](mailto:meghan.mclean@rutgers.edu)

Office: Tillett 615

Office hours: Tuesday 3:30-5:30pm

## Course Overview

Human beings are amazingly social. Think about the number of people you have seen or interacted with today alone. Even if you did not make eye contact with or speak to every person you passed, their mere presence affected your behavior. In your frequent and varied interactions with others, you interpret their behavior, make assumptions about their intentions and beliefs, and shape your own actions to portray yourself as you wish to be seen.

Social psychology examines these topics – people’s feelings, thoughts, and beliefs within the context of social situations – in a scientific way. In this course, we will discuss the theory and research behind topics such as group influence, attitudes, social perception, attraction, and social conflict. Because we interact with people almost constantly, we have developed our own personal theories for human behavior. For the most part, we believe we know why other people do the things they do. In this course, you may realize that some of the theories you have developed are not supported by research. In fact, one of the reasons social psychology is so interesting and important is because research findings can be counter-intuitive.

Be prepared to think critically about your own experiences and how they relate to psychological findings and theories!

## Course goals:

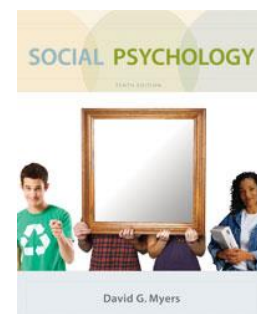
- Gain a general knowledge of the major theories and research findings in social psychology
- Understand basic scientific methods used in social psychological research
- Apply social psychological theories and principles to everyday experiences
- Critically evaluate psychological topics and research

**Readings:** The required textbook for the course is:

Title: Social Psychology

Edition: 10<sup>th</sup>

Author: David G. Myers



## Course Evaluation

Attendance and in-class exercises: Attendance is essential in this course. Summer courses are fast-paced and intensive. Missing a class can set you behind and it may be difficult to catch up. Additionally, there will be material on the exams that is covered in class, but not covered in your readings. There will also be several in-class exercises throughout the session that will be included in your grade. There are no make-up assignments for missed in-class work. However, I will drop your lowest score, so if you absolutely must miss a class, you will not be penalized. Please make sure that you get the lecture notes from a classmate if you cannot come to class.

**Exams:** There will be one in-class exam consisting of multiple choice and a few short answer responses. The exam will cover only the first half of the material covered in class and will serve as your midterm grade. The questions will be taken from the required chapters, heavily from class lectures, from class discussions, and from the abstracts of the additional presentation readings, with a strong emphasis on material covered in class. Make-up exams are not permitted without advance permission. Permission will be granted only for unavoidable circumstances (e.g., serious illness, family emergency).

**In-class presentation:** Each student will work in a groups of 3 (one group of 2) once this semester to give a 10-15 minute Powerpoint presentation on an additional article complementing the topics discussed in the chapter assigned that day. There should be at least one slide for each section of the paper (excluding the Abstract and optionally the Results, e.g., a slide for the Introduction, a slide for the Methods, etc.). On the last slide (after the Discussion section slide), students should pose a question to the class, tapping into students' reactions (e.g., can you relate to this psychological effect...) and include their own critical thoughts or reactions to the paper (e.g., I did not like that...). Open the In-class Presentation Overview ppt I uploaded to the Presentation Articles folder for instructions relating to each slide.

All students should read the Abstract of the paper being presented in class before every class. The Midterm Exam will include a few questions from the Abstracts of the papers the groups will present.

**Final paper and presentation:** The final will be a 3-5 pages, double spaced, paper on any topic covered after the midterm. You must briefly describe a media or cultural example relating to the topic of your choice, and describe exactly how it relates to the topic. Students must attach the media/cultural example (e.g., news articles, commercials, links to complete videos, Ted Talks) and include proper APA references in their paper (same format used in the textbook). Students will also have to make a 5-minute Powerpoint presentation based on their paper in which they will show the media example to the class (or only a representative snippet), ask the class for their own interpretation or to relate it to the material we have covered, and then provide a slide with your own interpretation.

**Grading:** Grades will be based on participation, in-class exercises, homework assignments, an in-class presentation, your midterm exam, and your final paper and presentation. Extra credit points will be directly added to your midterm exam grade and can be earned by participating in social psychology research outside of the classroom. You will earn 4 points (out of 100 possible points) to your midterm grade for participating. A description of the extra credit opportunity will be discussed in the second class.

### **Projected Grade Breakdown** (*subject to minor changes*)

Participation: 10%

In-class exercises: 10%

Homework assignments: 11%

In-class presentation: 12%

Midterm exam: 27%

Final Paper and presentation: 30%

### **Course Policies**

**Reading assignments:** Assignments should be completed by the date they are posted on the schedule. You should come prepared to discuss the readings. I encourage you to take notes as you read and write down any questions that come up or thoughts you would like to share with me and the rest of the class. You do not need to bring the book to class with you, but I will assume that everyone will have done the reading. Brief quizzes on the reading material at the start of class are possible and will count towards your in-class exercise grade if they occur.

**Note about class discussion:** Discussion is encouraged and will form your participation grade. You will have many opportunities to ask questions and share your thoughts. However, you are never required to share any personal experiences. Most importantly, be respectful of other students' opinions and the information they share. If you would like to boost your participation grade, you can briefly describe a recent study you read about (from Science Daily or another news platform) or a recent media example related to the chapter discussed that day. I will ask whether anyone has anything to share at the beginning of each class.

**Cheating/plagiarism:** Hopefully you are all here to learn, not just get a good grade. Cheating on exams and quizzes or attempting to pass off other people's work as your own not only undermines the goals of the course and your fellow students, but it is a serious offense. If you are not familiar with the University's academic integrity policy, you can find more information here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>. If I suspect someone of cheating, I will have to report that student to the disciplinary panel. If you have any questions about what qualifies as cheating or plagiarism, please ask me or refer to the academic integrity website.

**Students with disabilities:** Students who need accommodation for a physical or learning disability must submit a letter from Disability Services by the 3<sup>rd</sup> class. You may email me, come to my office hours, or wait until after class to give me the letter. To get a letter to request accommodations, students should contact the Office of Disability Services at 848-445-6800, or

visit the office in Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145. More about Rutgers' policy here:  
<https://ods.rutgers.edu/>.

## Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments

*(subject to change)*

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Tue 5/26	Intro to the course & <b>Chapter 1</b> ( <i>reading optional</i> )
Thu 5/28	The self in a social world <b>Chapter 2</b> & Social beliefs and judgments <b>Chapter 3</b> Additional presentation reading: Gardner, Gabriel, & Hoschild (2002) <i>Abstract required for class, entire paper required for presenters excluding Study 2</i>
Tue 6/2	Behavior and attitudes <b>Chapter 4</b> <i>Two additional presentation readings tbd</i>
Thu 6/4	Genes, culture, and gender <b>Chapter 5</b> <i>Additional presentation reading tbd</i>
Tue 6/9	Conformity and obedience <b>Chapter 6</b> <i>Additional presentation reading tbd</i>
Thu 6/11	Persuasion <b>Chapter 7</b> and midterm review <i>Additional presentation reading tbd</i>
Tue 6/16	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b> (chapters 1-7) Group influence <b>Chapter 8</b> <i>Additional presentation reading tbd</i>
Thu 6/18	Prejudice <b>Chapter 9</b> <i>Additional presentation reading tbd</i>
Tue 6/23	Aggression <b>Chapter 10</b> <i>Additional presentation reading tbd</i>
Thu 6/25	Attraction and intimacy <b>Chapter 11</b> <i>Additional presentation reading tbd</i>
Tue 6/30	Helping <b>Chapter 12</b> and morality <i>Additional presentation reading tbd</i>
Tue 7/2	<b>FINAL PRESENTATIONS and final paper due</b>

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