

**Advanced Topics in Social Psychology
Myths and Misconceptions
01:830:421:H2**

CLASS INFORMATION:

**Summer 2016
MTWTh
12:10-2:00pm
Tillett 252**

On line schedule of classes <http://www.acs.rutgers.edu/soc>

INSTRUCTOR:

Lyra Stein, Ph.D.

Email: Lyra@rci.rutgers.edu

Office: Tillett 313 <http://rumaps.rutgers.edu/?q=tillett+Hall>

Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore common myths and misconceptions in popular psychology. Popular misconceptions will be used as a vehicle for determining how to distinguish factual from fictional claims in pop psychology. In addition, some of the great debates in psychology will be analyzed, such as nature vs. nurture and determinism vs. free will. This course will also provide an opportunity for students to consider issues which cut across previous course boundaries and thus help achieve an overview of the field. Furthermore this course will polish skills in written communication and engage critical analysis of theories and research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Become a wise consumer of psychological research and information that you are exposed to through the media.
- Develop your critical thinking skills by examining current research in psychology.
- Improve your writing and oral presentation skills by writing and speaking about controversial topics
- Learn to write a research paper in APA style
- Increase your ability to understand and appreciate alternative viewpoints that differ from your own..
- Enjoy learning about a variety of topics in psychology

CURRENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu> *Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.*

General Academic Integrity Link:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Resources for instructors (and students) can be found at:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources>

Take a 20 minute interactive-tutorial on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity,

<http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html>

LEARNING RESOURCES:

Assigned readings posted on Sakai

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

Multitasking in Class: Research shows that when we do more than one thing at a time, we shift our attention from one thing to another and then back. In that shift, we lose focus, and it takes a little time to refocus on the new task. Multitasking is an inefficient use of time. I am going to do my part to do all I can to provide interesting class sessions so you won't feel the need to shift focus onto something else, and I am going to ask that you help with this by keeping your cell phone where you won't be tempted to check incoming texts. Thanks!

Do not leave lecture early: Besides distracting your fellow students, when I hear people leaving or packing their bag, I become very distracted. I lose my train of thought and will have to stop the lecture until the noise ceases. [P.S.: I understand that occasionally people must miss part of a class. **If you intend to do so, please sit in the back** so you won't distract everyone

Syllabus & Sakai Site: This contains everything you need to know about the course; keep this in your notebook and refer to it often.

COURSE/ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Because this is primarily a discussion-based course, attendance is not only important, but required to do well. As evidence of your attendance and preparation for each class, you will be required to upload a 1-2 page summary of all assigned articles by 9am on the day the class to your dropbox. Summarize the reading assignments for the topic in 1-2 pages and include your own view on the topic and why. You are only required to submit 8 summary papers. I will give extra credit for any additional summaries (you can submit 5 additional). I will not accept late summary papers.

For each topic, 2-3 students will be the discussion leaders for the class. You will present the evidence for the topic (if a debate topic, you will present both sides). This need not be a formal presentation with Powerpoint, but can be a roundtable discussion. You will find an additional article relating to the topic and present this to the class in addition to the required reading. You will then open a discussion to the class and pose questions which you think will stimulate discussion.

Part of your grade will be based on participation, therefore make sure you have read all of the assigned readings and are ready to discuss the issues.

You can miss 3 classes without penalty. If you miss more than 3 classes, 5 points will be deducted from

your total for each class missed.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Appropriate accommodations will be made for students with disabilities.

Full disability policies and procedures are at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

FINAL PAPER:

This is a writing intensive course and therefore you will be evaluated on a final research project.

The paper should be 8-10 pages (not including title page or references). Use APA style formatting for: Title page, Headings, Citations (Author, Year), and References.

Have a clear stance on a controversial topic/myth in psychology that was not formally discussed in class. See list for ideas.

Support your ideas using original research articles published in professional journals. Search online databases such as Psychinfo, Medline, Google Scholar, etc. Of the at least 10 reliable sources you need, MOST (8) should come from scientific journal articles.

Present scientific evidence to support your view. Comment on the reliability and validity of the research methods used to support your view, and point out any alternative interpretations of the research results. Example: Is there an obvious bias in the research?

The electronic copy will be submitted to a plagiarism detection web site (TurnItIn.com). This is primarily to help you learn how to properly cite your sources and to ensure that you do not quote extensively from your sources.

DUE DATE: August 13-upload to your Sakai dropbox

EVALUATION:

Evaluations are based on:

Summaries	40 points (8 x 5 points each)
Discussion Leader	100 points (2 x 50 points each)
Classwork	100 points
Final Paper	100 points
Participation	50 points
<u>Other assignments</u>	<u>110 points</u>
Total Points possible	500

A: 450-500 points, B+ 425-445 points, B: 400-424 points, C+ 375-399 points, C: 350-374 points, D: 300-349 points, F: 0-299 points

LECTURE TOPICS AND READING:

****(All dates are approximate and changes will be announced in class)****

Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
M 7/11	Introduction to Class/Careers in Psychology/Research Design		
T 7/12	Cognitive Biases/Internalized beliefs/Cognitive Dissonance	-Chapter 6	-Assignment 1- Careers
W 7/13	Cognitive Determinants of Questionable beliefs	-Chapters 2 & 4 in Gilovich	-Assignment 2- internalized beliefs
Th 7/14	Motivational and Social Determinants of Questionable Beliefs	-Chapters 5,6 & 7 in Gilovich	
M 7/18	APA style/The format of research papers/Library research/Plagiarism/ Critical Thinking	-Shermer, Chapters 5, 6	
T 7/19	Critical evaluation of evidence	Shermer Chapter 7 Read http://www.naturalnews.com/027178_autism_vaccines.html and http://www.parents.com/health/autism/vaccines/health-update-more-proof-that-vaccines-don't-cause-autism/?page=1 before coming to class	Topic for paper
W 7/20	Introduction to Evolution and Evolutionary theories	-Chapter 7 -Intercessory prayer	-Assignment 3 Evaluating Evidence
Th 7/21*	Does the Evidence Support Evolutionary Accounts of Female Mating Preferences?	-Assigned Readings	-Summary (9am by email) -Assignment 4 Mate Preference
M 7/25*	Should Therapists be Eclectic	-Assigned Readings	-Summary (9am by email)
T 7/26*	Are all Psychotherapies Equally Effective	-Assigned Readings	-Summary (9am by email)
W 7/27*	Stereotype Accuracy	-Assigned Readings	-Summary (9am by email) Reference list for paper

Th 7/28*	Can Positive Psychology Make Us Happier?	-Assigned Reading	--Summary (9am by email)
M 8/1*	Are Positive Illusions Healthy?	-Assigned Reading	--Summary (9am by email) -outline of main points for paper from references
T 8/2*	Are Today's Youth More Self-Centered Than Previous Generations?	-Assigned Reading	--Summary (9am by email)
W 8/3	Work on Papers		
Th 8/4	Peer Review Papers		-rough draft of paper
M 8/8*	Does Facebook Have Generally Positive Psychological Effects?	-Assigned Reading	--Summary (9am by email)
T 8/9*	Dating-Do Opposites Attract? Do we know why we are attracted to others?	-Assigned Reading	--Summary (9am by email)
W 8/10*	Can Sex be Addictive?	-Assigned Reading	--Summary (9am by email)
Th 8/11*	Is Homosexuality Biologically Based?	-Assigned Reading	--Summary (9am by email)
M 8/15	Final Peer Review		-almost final draft of paper
T 8/16*	Does Money Lead to Happiness	-Assigned Readings	--Summary (9am by email)
W 8/17*	ESP	-Assigned Readings	--Summary (9am by email) -Final Papers Due

Student-Wellness Services:

[Just In Case Web App](http://codu.co/cee05e)

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.