WHAT IS SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND WHAT DO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS DO?

Social psychology is the scientific study of how people’s thoughts, feelings and behavior are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other people (Allport, 1985). In other words, Social Psychologists try to understand the mental processes that determine how we think about ourselves and other people and how those other people influence our own behavior. This is more difficult than it sounds because we all have our own subjective intuitions and experiences, and all our beliefs are influenced by the cultures we grow up with (e.g., nations, religions, race, gender, political ideologies). In many cases those assumptions turn out to be wrong, and in other cases the research helps us more fully understand why the assumption was correct all along. There is a tremendous reason to study social psychology… the more we understand about ourselves and those around us the more effective we can be at achieving our own personal goals (e.g., having healthy relationships, improving your academic performance, protecting your safety) and advancing society (e.g., reducing violence, increasing productivity, facilitating cooperation between groups).

This course will teach you the scientific process that Social Psychologists use to study human thoughts, feelings and behavior and give you the opportunity to practice applying that process in a number of ways. You will learn how we (a) gather and critically evaluate research findings in the existing research literature, (b) integrate those findings into coherent and testable theories that explain objective observations, (c) design and conduct valid research that tests those theories and extends our knowledge, and (d) effectively communicate our theories and findings to a wide range of audiences. The result of the process is a more accurate and objective (rather than intuitive) understanding of the mental processes that influence us - and that is what prepares you to apply your scientific understanding to explain and influence a wide range of complex, challenging and controversial social problems.

Examples of how you will practice thinking and behaving like a Social Psychologists:

- Participate in classroom activities that require you to use the scientific process and the results from research studies in your understanding and discussion of “real world” applications and events.
- Complete critical writing assignments that put you in the shoes of a Social Psychologist and challenge you to engage in the process of scientific thought and practice.
- Develop a scholarly analysis paper that integrates your progressive learning of the scientific process and practice in the “real world” and develops new research ideas on topic of interest to you.

REQUIRED TEXT

COURSE GOALS/LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning objectives for this course are based on the Department of Psychology’s learning outcomes for all courses, which include developing students’ abilities in the following areas:

1) **Research Methods:** Understand basic research methods in social psychology, including design and interpretation. In other words, you should learn to think like a scientist who studies human behavior.
   a. Formulate testable predictions/hypotheses.
   b. Incorporate existing theoretical frameworks into new areas.
   c. Recognize limitations in applicability of results.
   d. Demonstrate technological competency and information literacy related to research methods.

2) **Critical Thinking:** Apply creative and critical thinking to behavior and mental processes.
   a. Use critical thinking and reasoning to recognize, develop, defend, and criticize arguments and other persuasive appeals.
   b. Be a good “consumer” of social science research.
   c. Distinguish between different types (and varying quality) of research.
   d. Understand how psychological research is portrayed (accurately or inaccurately) in the mainstream media.

3) **Communication:** Communicate effectively in a variety of formats.
   a. Develop effective writing skills.
   b. Develop interpersonal skills with peers and collaborators.

4) **Content:** Demonstrate familiarity with the content of the course: a sampling of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in social psychology.

As you can see, the overarching goal for you in this course is to develop an understanding process by which Social Psychologists apply the scientific method to understand and influence human thought and behavior.

COURSE FORMAT, GUIDELINES, AND REQUIREMENTS

1) **Attending in-class meetings.** It is imperative that you attend class regularly in order to learn the material. If I see class attendance drop significantly during the semester, I reserve the right to start conducting periodic attendance checks. Otherwise, the attendance/participation grade will be comprised of 3 things: 1) making a visit to my office hours at least once BEFORE the last week of classes, 2) completing the course evaluation at the end of the semester, which is very important for improving your undergraduate learning experience as well as other students to come, and 3) completing the Career Center assignment (detailed separately). All told, attendance/participation is worth 5% of your final grade.

You are responsible for any and all course material covered in class, announcements, and/or handouts if you are not present. Be sure to exchange contact information with at least two classmates. If you are unable to come to class because of an illness or another extenuating circumstance, please be aware that I will not be providing/distributing lecture notes. You will be expected to contact another student(s) in the class to receive notes/information. If you were present in class and would like to go over specific material from lecture, you are more than welcome to visit myself (or the TA) and we will gladly assist you. It is your responsibility to contact me and/or the TA for extra help as necessary.
In class: Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to demonstrate civility with one another, the teaching assistants, or me will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct or to the University Campus Police. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.

2) **This course is designed as a Blended Learning Course**, which means that scheduled class time will involve a variety of learning activities, including in-class activities/exercises and out-of-class assignments (alternating every other week - see the course schedule). Some activities will require you to work in teams or groups; others will require that you participate online instead of in the classroom. These assignments will be evaluated to assess (a) your demonstrated learning of the material, (b) the extent to which you form clear arguments supported by factual statements and (c) the quality of your academic writing. You are welcome (and encouraged) to work with classmates on these assignments, though your submission must represent only your own writing. The in-class activities/exercises will be worth 10% of your final grade, while the out-of-class (blended learning) assignments will be worth 15% of your final grade. All together, the weekly assignments will be worth 25% of your final grade.

These assignments will vary in content and structure. Some will be to watch videos pertaining to social psychological research. Some weeks you will be required to answer a few (3-5) multiple-choice questions and/or complete a writing assignment (approximately 1 page in length). It is to your advantage to use the blended learning assignments to bolster your writing abilities (especially with regards to content, structure, clarity, accuracy, organization, grammar, syntax, and punctuation). All told, completing the weekly assignments will be worth approximately 25% of your final grade. Details for each assignment, as well as objectives and grading rubrics will be provided separately.

Students who have not had as much experience with academic writing are encourage to take advantage of the resources available on campus. The Writing Center offers individual appointments to help you draft, proof and complete writing assignments. Even experienced writers can benefit! To schedule an appointment, and to see the other resources available to you, visit [http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter](http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter).

On the weeks that you are not submitting a blended learning assignment, you will be doing an activity in-class. If you do not participate in the in-class activity, 10 points will be deducted from your corresponding Blended Learning assignment.

3) **Final Analysis Paper.** A 5-page, typed, double-spaced paper is due on the last day of class (NOT the final exam day). The paper counts for 20% of your final grade. The task for the final paper is to identify a social phenomenon that interests you in the external world, and then, to write a paper that includes testable ideas for how to approach the study of that phenomenon as a social psychologist. The inspiration for this paper can come from a variety of different sources, including articles in the popular press/media (newspapers or magazines), or in a popular movie/film, etc. You will be charged with conducting a literature review, coming up with conceptual and operational definitions for your variables that can be measured, developing hypotheses and justifications for your predictions, design (conceptually) a study/experiment to test your hypothesis, and explaining the anticipated results, drawing conclusions and implications for understanding human social behavior.
4) **Exams.** There will be 2 midterm exams, each worth 15% of your final grade. They will include both multiple choice and short answer questions and will cover material discussed in class and in the textbook. Midterms are not cumulative, **however,** some concepts/facts fit into more than one unit (e.g., self-esteem and aggression), and may appear on an exam more than once. If that is the case, I will usually mention it again during lecture. Alternatively, it may appear a second time in the textbook. There will also be a final exam (worth 20% of your final grade), which will be cumulative and contain a higher number of questions, although it will focus more on the material covered since the 2nd midterm.

Note: No student will be allowed to start the exam once the first student finished has turned in his or her exam and exited the room.

Note: I encourage you to go over your exams with the TAs, especially if your grade does not match your performance goals. For any given exam, you have until the next exam is given to review it with the TAs. In other words, you have until the date exam #2 is given to review exam #1 with the TAs or myself.

Missed Exams. If you know you are going to miss an exam, you (the student) or a guardian must email me PRIOR to class to inform me that you will not be in attendance due to extenuating circumstances on the day of an exam and thus will miss the exam. On the very next class session that you are in attendance, you must present me with a note for missing the exam, accompanied with appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor's note, police report, obituary, etc.). This note must include the date of illness and a statement that the information you have provided is true. You must also state that if your statement is found to be false, you understand that you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. The statement must be signed and dated. If you do not inform me or if you do not present me with timely documentation, 0 points will be given to you for the exam/assignment. Note: In the case that you are unable to get a written medical excuse, you may ask your provider for a copy of your medical notes for the specific visit(s) in question.

4) **Group work.** Everyone can relate to having a bad experience with a group project, and in those cases it always seems to be either social loafing (someone not doing their share of the work) or conflict that isn’t handled well (disagreements over what to do or how to do it). Luckily, Social Psychologists have been studying groups and you’ll learn why loafing and conflict occur and what we can do to combat it. There is a considerable amount of collaborative work in this course, so to assess the extent to which you have developed and practiced strong group skills a portion of your grades will be based on intra-group evaluations. This is an essential professional skill and the perfect course to refine it in. The intra-group evaluation will assess your strengths in collaborative environments and identify areas for you to improve your skills. There are five things that you will develop and demonstrate… **a valued team member:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Takes Initiative</th>
<th>Eagerly contributes ideas and effort and voluntarily takes on responsibilities that advance the group’s collective effort.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is Responsive</td>
<td>Actively participates in group discussions, both in-class and online, and responds to requests and email communication in a reasonable timeframe (within 24 hours unless otherwise requested).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Reliable</td>
<td>Submits individual work by the agreed upon deadline and does not miss scheduled meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produces Quality</td>
<td>Submits individual work that is of excellent quality and requires no substantial revisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Collegial</td>
<td>Actively maintains a positive, team-oriented attitude and supports the group and its members, even during times of disagreement.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Much like in the “real” world, none of us have the right to expect that others will do our work for us, and none of us are entitled to benefits (e.g., grades, salaries, bonuses, awards) that we did not personally work to earn. Social loafing will not be tolerated... All students will sign an academic performance contract before joining a group. No one wants to be the type of person that no one else wants to work with.
**RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

Students may earn extra credit by participating in a minimum of 5 credits of experimental research as participants in the psychology department’s subject pool. If you have never done this before, you can learn about the subject pool here [http://psychology.umd.edu/research/partinfo.html](http://psychology.umd.edu/research/partinfo.html) and you can sign up for research studies by going to: [http://umpsychology.sona-systems.com](http://umpsychology.sona-systems.com). Upon completion of 5 credits of experimental participation, you will receive an extra credit bump of 1/3 of a letter grade (ex: from B- to B; from B+ to A-, from C+ to B-, etc). This will be taken into account after all other grades and credits are factored in. For more information see the psychology department's website or the YouTube video [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIDAjBHWWwg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIDAjBHWWwg).

**UNIVERSITY & DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

As a member of this campus community I expect that you are aware of, and will adhere to, all relevant policies that relate to this course. All university policies can be found at [www.president.umd.edu/policies](http://www.president.umd.edu/policies).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is the foundation of science and the policies will be strictly enforced. Any indication of academic dishonesty (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism and falsification) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct ([www.osc.umd.edu](http://www.osc.umd.edu)) without hesitation. That includes the worksheet and learning check submissions. Please see the Department of Psychology’s policy statement on academic integrity (attached) for more details.

**ACCOMMODATIONS & ABSENCES**

Students requiring specific academic accommodations should contact me with the appropriate documentation from DSS during the first week of the semester ([www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS)).

University of Maryland policy dictates that a single absence during the semester due to illness or injury will be excused with a signed letter attesting to the date of the illness and acknowledging that the information is true and correct and that providing false information is prohibited under the Code of Student Conduct. You are required to contact me by email prior to the class meeting if you expect to be absent for any reason, especially due to illness or injury.

Multiple absences, and those occurring on a major scheduled grading event, require written documentation of the illness or injury from the Health Center or an outside health care provider. The letter must verify the dates of treatment and the time period during which you were unable to meet academic responsibilities. Accommodations will be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

University policy “provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances...It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. Notice should be provided as soon as possible but no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period.” If you will miss class for a religious holiday, notify me at the start of the semester.
UNIVERSITY EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In the event that the University is closed for an emergency or extended period of time, I will communicate to you via email or phone to indicate schedule adjustments, including rescheduling of examinations and assignments due to inclement weather and campus emergencies. Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website [http://www.umd.edu](http://www.umd.edu). The snow phone line is 301-405-SNOW, as well as local radio and TV stations.

PROBLEMS

If you are experiencing a problem with the course or if you foresee a problem, PLEASE talk to me before it gets any worse. We will be much more sympathetic if the problem is small and if we have forewarning.

MUTUALLY-DERIVED EXPECTATIONS

I believe it is essential that we, as members of a learning community, agree upon what is expected of each other and ourselves. As a course instructor, my role is to design and manage a learning environment that is rigorous, engaging and focused on evidenced-based teaching practices. As a student, your role is to take personal responsibility for your learning and actively engage in all aspects of the course. What you see here comes directly from working with students in previous semester, and we’ll discuss these in class so that we can add or clarify anything that I’ve missed:

YOU, AS A STUDENT, HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT THAT:

- All work is evaluated by reasonable, objective and transparent criteria intended to assess learning
- All students are treated with equality, professionalism and respect
- I will be prepared and on-time for every class meeting and scheduled appointment
- I will maintain a classroom conducive to active learning, discussion and critical thinking
- I will, when possible, integrate contemporary examples, videos and activities to reinforce learning
- I will be available to assist with coursework and offer referrals to campus resources upon request
- I will read and respond to your emails within 24 hours on weekdays
- I will do my best to answer any questions you have, and if I don’t know the answer, I’ll do my best to work with you so we can find it (in other words, I won’t just make stuff up).

I, AS AN INSTRUCTOR, HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT YOU WILL:

- Devote the necessary time and energy to master the course material. According to Department of Psychology guidelines you should budget an average of 2-3 out-of-class hours per week for every hour in-class. If your schedule does not currently permit you to satisfy these requirements I advise you take the course at another time.
- Be prepared and on-time for every class meeting, having completed the assigned work
- Save newspapers, word & math puzzles, texting, IM, email, Facebook, etc. for outside of class
- Sleep in your bed, in someone else’s bed, in the hall, or under a tree… but not in class
- Take responsibility for getting anything you might have missed from a fellow classmate
- Monitor your email and Blackboard announcements at least once every 24 hours
- Adhere to all course and university policies, deadlines, requirements and grading criteria
- Seek assistance when you need it and see that your questions are answered to your satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester Length</th>
<th>Out-of-Class Hours/Week</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 weeks</td>
<td>6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>15-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>30-45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Course Evaluations**

You will have at least three formal opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of this course, though I first want to encourage you to schedule a meeting with me if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for how I can help support your learning and engagement. First, I will post an anonymous survey on Blackboard part way through the semester to help us identify ways that we can work together to further enhance our cooperative approach to learning. A second, end-of-the-semester evaluation will give you the opportunity to reflect on the whole course. Finally, the University will ask you to evaluate all of your courses through the online system ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)) towards the end of the semester.

As members of this learning community your feedback is crucial to the success of our program, and therefore to the value of your degree. All I ask is that in evaluating all of your courses you approach it the same way you expect instructors to evaluate your performance… be open, honest and objective.

**Grades**

**Grades are not given, but earned.** Your grade is determined by your performance on the various learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). With the exception of calculation errors, no grade changes will be made to your final grade at the end of the semester. If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing within 1 week of receiving the grade.

If eligible to be turned in late, work will be penalized 1 letter grade per 24 hours after the time it was due.

Attendance/Participation = 5%
2 Midterm Exams (15% each) = 30%
1 Final Exam = 20%
1 Final Analysis Paper = 20%
Bi-Weekly In-Class Assignments = 10%
Bi-Weekly Blended Learning Assignments = 15%
Total = 100%

**Please note:** Your grade in this class is weighted according to the relative percentage weights for each assignment/exam; it is not the accumulation of a raw total number of points. If you have questions about how grades are calculated, come see me or the TAs for clarification.

Your final letter grade will be based on the following grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-97</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**EXTRA CREDIT**

There are opportunities to receive extra credit. As stated above, completion of 5 credits of experimental participation will earn students a 1/3 grade extra credit bump. There is also a possibility of earning extra credit through in-class activities (*described in detail later on*).

*There is one other optional extra credit assignment: “Violating a social norm.” Students can earn extra credit by completing an assignment that will be detailed later on in the semester. The assignment is to creatively violate a social norm (without breaking any laws or harming yourself/others) in some aspect of society and then write a short 2-3 page paper about your experience. This paper must be handed in **no later than November 7th**. Detailed guidelines are on ELMS.*

Note: I encourage you to take advantage of extra credit, but be aware that no amount of extra credit can effectively boost a failing grade. An “F” cannot turn into a “D” with extra credit.

Other extra credit opportunities, if they are offered, will be announced in class and cannot be made up if missed.

**A NOTE TO THE CLASS**

I am anticipating a very thoughtful, interesting and insightful class. I expect us to have some great conversations about social psychology and how it relates to your lives and society. Although the course may be challenging, I believe you will all enjoy being in the class and learning what social psychology has to offer.

Tips for doing well in the course:

1) **READ THE TEXTBOOK**! This is crucial. Many college students shrug off the reading, and then are unhappy when they do not get the grade they desire. Reading up on the material can mean the difference between a B and an A, or a C and a B.

2) Form a study group! This is STRONGLY recommended. In my experience as a teacher, those students who work in a study group score (on average) about 10 points higher on exams and projects. Your learning will be enhanced, and so will your performance in the class. Don’t got it alone!

3) If you are struggling, utilize me the TAs. Come to office hours and chat with us if something is unclear.

4) Get an adequate amount of sleep, eat a healthy diet, and exercise.

5) Don’t neglect your relationships.

6) Enjoy the college experience. Have fun!
# COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic (Textbook Chapter)</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Introduction (Ch. 1)</td>
<td>No Discussion</td>
<td>No Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>NO CLASS – Labor Day</td>
<td>9/7: In Class</td>
<td>9/7: Blended Learning #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>9/14: Blended Learning #1</td>
<td>9/14: In Class “Fast Friends”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Social Cognition (Ch. 5)</td>
<td>9/21: In Class Personality Assessment</td>
<td>9/21: Blended Learning #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>The Self; Personality (Ch. 3)</td>
<td>9/28: Blended Learning #2</td>
<td>9/28: In Class Personality Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>Motivation (Ch. 4)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>Exam 1 – Monday October 1st</td>
<td>10/5: In Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>Attitudes (Ch. 7)</td>
<td>Exam Follow-up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>Persuasion &amp; Social Influence (Ch. 8)</td>
<td>10/12: In Class “Obedience”</td>
<td>10/12: Blended Learning #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>Aggression &amp; Altruism (Ch. 9 &amp; 10)</td>
<td>10/19: Blended Learning #3</td>
<td>10/19: In Class “Obedience”</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>Emotions &amp; Affect (Ch. 6)</td>
<td>10/26: In Class Morality &amp; Politics Panel</td>
<td>10/26: Blended Learning #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Morality &amp; Religion</td>
<td>11/2: Blended Learning #4</td>
<td>11/2: In Class Morality &amp; Politics Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Article: <em>Haidt – The New Synthesis in Moral Psychology</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Exam 2 – Monday November 5th</td>
<td>11/9: In Class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Political Psychology</td>
<td>Exam Follow-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Group Behavior 1 (Intra-group behavior)</td>
<td>11/16: Blended Learning #5</td>
<td>11/16: Blended Learning #5</td>
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<td>11/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Group Behavior 2 (Inter-group behavior)</td>
<td>11/23: No Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Attraction &amp; Exclusion (Ch. 11)</td>
<td>11/29: In Class “Role Reversal”</td>
<td>11/29: In Class “Role Reversal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Article: <em>Baumeister – Is There Anything Good About Men?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/3</td>
<td>Sexuality &amp; Close Relationships (Ch. 12)</td>
<td>12/7: Prep for final analysis paper</td>
<td>12/7: Prep for final analysis paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>Wrap Up</td>
<td>No Discussion</td>
<td>No Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM: TBA</strong></td>
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</table>

**NOTE:** The schedule above is **TENTATIVE.** It is an approximate schedule of topics and readings. I may be forced to shift things around slightly depending on time and interest. I will announce in class any changes as they happen, and I will post notes on Blackboard that reflect this. The one aspect of the schedule that I expect to remain fixed is the exam dates.

**ALSO NOTE:** This syllabus is *not* a binding document. I reserve the right to modify the syllabus for any time and for any reason. If anything is modified, I will notify the class but it is your responsibility to keep up with class announcements and updates. In addition, if you are confused about anything on the syllabus you are responsible to ask either me or the TAs for clarification.
Overview of PSYC 221 Coursework

To guide students in their understanding of the process by which Social Psychologists gather and advance knowledge and apply it to real-world problems, students will participate in guided in-class discussion activities and complete a number of practical learning assessments designed to sharpen their scientific thinking and skills. While these assessments are supported by the content covered in the assigned reading and discussed during the regular class meetings, the focus of these assessments is to give students the opportunity to refine their abilities with regards to applying theory and empirical reasoning in practical applications and to develop stronger communication skills. Each of the assessments will engage students in an authentic experience in social psychological science, and will cover an array of activities normally performed by a social psychologist.

In completing these assessments and receiving critical feedback throughout the course students will then apply their knowledge and skills towards a final analysis paper in which, like a Social Psychologists, they identify a phenomenon in the external world (that has not yet been extensively studied) and apply the same logic and process to understanding that phenomenon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Underlying Process</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) Gather and critically evaluate research findings in the existing research literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Integrate those findings into coherent and testable theories that explain observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Design and conduct valid research that tests theories and extends our knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Effectively communicate our theories and findings to a wide range of audiences.</td>
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To do so, students will approach the behavior in terms of a research question (e.g., “what causes people to do ______?”), while utilizing existing theories and data (literature reviews) and creating testable predictions and justified hypotheses. Students will communicate their original ideas, as well as the relevant background and previous findings to a broad audience through writing. Students will work in teams to help develop ideas for measures and experimental designs, as well as to critique each other’s work. Students will derive implications and conclusions from the existing scholarship and their original work, while synthesizing what they have learned in a format conducive to applications in the external world. Students will be assessed, critiqued, and assisted in improving their writing abilities, content knowledge, scientific perspective, and analytic skills.

In-Class Friday Discussion Meetings

Once each week the professor and the graduate TAs will conduct the class meetings in an alternate format, which will give the students opportunity to develop knowledge and applied skills that reflect scholarship and practice in social psychology. These activities will give students the opportunity to formulate hypotheses and study designs for future research studies, with operational definitions for experimental and correlational variables, critique existing research and synthesize psychological science with other disciplines. Each of these meetings will reinforce the common reasoning that underlies the process by which Social Psychologists conduct and apply scholarship in the field.

In Class #1: “Fast Friends” – Using the methods and protocol outlined by Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone, and Bator (1997; PSPB), students will be randomly paired and complete the “Fast Friends” procedure. This procedure is useful for building rapport quickly and has applications for facilitating teamwork in organizations and reducing prejudice and conflict between groups. Knowledge and experience with implementing this method falls under interpersonal work and application of social
psychological research to non-academic settings, as well as fluency with research methods. Students familiar with this method would be an asset to organizations or groups seeking to build productive work environments or positive social change between conflicting groups. After the procedure, students will read the original Aron et al. (1997) article and answer a handful of multiple-choice questions on it.

In Class #2: Personality Assessment – In small groups of ~5, students will design 10 questions/items for a personality assessment that indirectly measures actual behavior (e.g., “how many times do you brush your teeth per day?”), and then to find an established measure that could be used for validation purposes. Students must also explicitly define their target personality construct (e.g., “extraversion”). The goal for item creation will be “face validity;” students must generate items that tap into some domain of personality or self-concept. The goal for using an established measure will be “convergent validity” and “discriminant validity.” Scale creation and validation falls under scientific research and design, and students will also gain experience working in research teams. The submitted assignment will be the list of items as well as a description and citation for an established scale.

In Class #3: Stanley Milgram experiment documentary or “Quiet Rage” on the Stanford Prison Experiment. Students will view a feature-length documentary on a classic experiment in social psychology. Social psychologists like Phil Zimbardo are at the forefront of studying “dark behavior” and the lessons of these studies can be applied to understanding complex and disturbing events in recent years (e.g., Abu Graib prisoner abuse). Knowledge and practical relevance of these research findings falls under application. Following the video, students will answer a handful of multiple-choice questions on it.

In Class #4: Morality & politics panel discussion. Students will volunteer to be on a 5-6-person panel (mimicking academic conference style-symposia with discourse and debate) that will field questions related to religion, ethics/morality, and political psychology. While the initial questions will be geared toward the panel members, that will serve as a springboard for more open dialogue with the entire class; we will open up for general commentary, questions, and debate with all students having the potential to participate. Students will gain experience with communicating ideas, collaboration, and group work.

In Class #5: Gender role reversal activity. In small groups of ~5, students will “act out” behaviors stereotypically indicative of the opposite sex. Students will discuss gender norms, the influence of cultural stereotypes on personality and behavior, social norm violations, close relationships, and implications for how men and women are treated in contemporary society. This exercise will also give students the opportunity to examine myths and misconceptions put forth in the mainstream media (e.g., “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus”), and reflect on evidence-based ideas vs. naïve lay theories. Students will also read a related article by psychologist Roy Baumeister on the social psychology of gender, and answer a handful of multiple-choice questions on it.

In Class #6: Preparation for final term paper; “peer review.” In small groups of 2-3, students will share drafts of their papers with each other and critique their work for scientific accuracy, clarity, organization, and style. The professor and graduate TAs will also be available to help individual students with questions and concerns. With this exercise, students will gain the experience of “peer review,” a necessary component of social psychological research, as well as collaborative effort and
communicating ideas. The submitted assignment will be the review of another student’s paper, which will include a critique/commentary on strengths & weaknesses.

**Blended Learning Assignments**

Similar to the in-class activities, students will write a short (~500 words) structured paper (each specifically addressing a research problem or applying psychological research to another domain or industry). For the first two assignments, students will be directed toward specific academic articles and websites that can help facilitate their work using provided ‘clues’ to located them via commonly-used literature search tools. As the semester progresses, students will conduct their assignments more independently, and will be expected to utilize library and Internet resources to find primary source material that will facilitate their work. Each of the 5 blended learning assignments (described in detail) addresses specific activities relevant to the work of a social psychologist: experimental design, measurement, and scientific perspective, successful communication of ideas, and application of scientific findings/consulting. Each assessment will be evaluated by the following criteria:

**Be Advised:** All work submitted must be your own original writing, and any similarity to previous submissions, online sources or other documents will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct without hesitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALITY OF WRITING (105 points)</th>
<th>CONTENT (105 points)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>105 points</strong> Strong academic writing, very clear, well organized and free of spelling and grammatical errors</td>
<td>210 100% (A+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>75 points</strong> Acceptable writing, generally clear and organized with room for improvement</td>
<td>180 186% (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>50 points</strong> Writing is not representative of college-level work – frequently unclear or disorganized or containing multiple errors. Consultation with the writing center strongly encouraged</td>
<td>155 74% (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>0 points</strong> Unacceptable – consultation with the writing center required</td>
<td>105 50% (F)</td>
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**Blended Learning #1: Social Cognition & Research Design**

“Priming” or spreading activation happens when a thought, image, emotion, memory, etc. becomes more salient in the mind after some related stimulus triggers it. The following studies and resources detail experiments in “embodied cognition,” which is the process by which metaphors related to the physical world activate schemas in the interpersonal and social world.


Option A: Imagine that you are a professor of social psychology, and you are in the process of designing an experiment. Your task is to devise a clever way of activating a thought/idea/etc. in someone’s mind without explicitly saying it. It MUST be related to some aspect of social behavior, and cannot utilize an experimental design that involves reading a list of related words. Your write-up must include, in scientific language, an experiment that tests whether your priming strategy will work. Explain how you will operationalize your variables (independent & dependent) and what results you would expect to find. Be sure to explain what spreading activation is in plain English.

Option B: Imagine that you have been hired as an advertising or public relations consultant. Your task is to find an advertisement that makes use of spreading activation or “priming.” This could be through imagery, music/sounds, or words that trigger related concepts in the mind. Your task is to draft a cover letter that pitches the technique of “spreading activation” to a company or organization that is involved in public relations, marketing, or advertising. Your letter should be professionally written, and it should draw on published social psychological research findings. Briefly explain how the advertisement you found demonstrates priming, and how that technique would be useful to the company in their core mission. Be sure to explain what spreading activation is in plain English, and be sure to give one specific example of how priming a psychological concept is related to a behavioral outcome that falls within public relations, marketing, or advertising.

Blended Learning #2: Motivation and Mental Health

Option A: Social psychological research has demonstrated the unique importance of intrinsic motivation, self-determination needs, and self-control/willpower for optimal fulfillment and goal achievement. Imagine that you are hired as a managerial consultant for a medium-sized company, and your task is to improve worker productivity and psychological well-being. Drawing on motivation research, your task is to explain to the employees of the company how they can utilize this research to their advantage. Explain how self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation, and self-control/willpower can be utilized for optimal productivity and psychological fulfillment. Be sure to explicitly define concepts/phenomena and explain them in plain English. Make sure to discuss this in terms of measurable variables; how would you assess an “optimally functioning” company? How would you best increase those outcomes? Draw on the following articles and resources for your assignment:

http://www.selfdeterminationtheory.org/


Option B: Social psychological research has demonstrated the importance of expressive writing for psychological health and well-being, with particular emphasis on language and the process of
deriving meaning in life experiences. Imagine that you are hired as an advisor by a local group of doctors. Drawing on research examining the psychological and physical health benefits of “meaning-making” and personal expressive writing, draft a letter to your local hospital or medical group. The purpose of this letter is to urge doctors to adopt a practice of having their patients (who are undergoing major medical treatments) to engage in meaning-making and expressive writing activities. Be sure to explicitly define concepts/phenomena and explain them in plain English. Discuss how mental and physical health can be improved with these methods. Draw on the following articles and resources for your assignment:

http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/HomePage/Faculty/Pennebaker/Home2000/JWPhome.htm


Blended Learning #3: Altruism/Pro-social Behavior and Persuasion

Option A: Persuasion and Social Influence – Imagine that you are hired as an advisor by the administration at your university. Your task is to come up with a scientifically-grounded approach to influence people’s behavior in a way that is beneficial to the community. As an example, promoting recycling and reducing energy consumption are both goals for a more optimally functioning community, but these pro-social behaviors are often inhibited by laziness or apathy. It is possible to promote these positive outcomes and create social change through a powerful persuasive message or influential behavioral technique. Your strategy should be simple enough to be utilized by university administration, with the target audience being the faculty, staff, and student population. Drawing on research examining the psychology of social influence and/or persuasion, draft a letter to the university administration. In this letter, you will propose that the administration broadly disseminate your persuasive message, or adopt a new policy that encourages specific behaviors. Be sure to explicitly define concepts/phenomena and explain them in plain English. Your letter must be scientific and must describe in detail at least 1 study/experiment that psychologists have performed on the topic.

Option B: Altruism – There is a long-standing debate between social psychologists about whether “pure” altruism exists (that is, helping someone else without gaining anything in return). Some social psychologists endorse the empathy-altruism instinct, and the framework that altruism is naturally occurring and rewarding, but other social psychologists argue for evolutionary-based survival mechanisms that promote altruistic behavior. Imagine that you are a psychology professor who studies altruism. In the form of an Op-Ed piece that would appear in a major newspaper (e.g., New York Times), magazine (e.g., The Atlantic), or online publication (e.g., The Daily Beast), discuss some of the scientific research on altruism and make an argument for one of the two sides (in other words, whether “pure” altruism exists or not). Be sure to explicitly define concepts/phenomena and explain them in plain English. Your essay must be
scientific, and must describe in detail at least 1 study/experiment that psychologists have performed that helps to answer this question.

**Blended Learning #4: Emotions and Political Psychology**

*Option A*: Promoting emotional intelligence education in school curricula – Imagine that you are hired as an educational psychologist by a local school district. You are familiar with the research on Emotional Intelligence (“EI” or “EQ”) as a specific form of intelligence independent of academic, creative, or athletic abilities. Your task is to draft a letter to the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), persuading them to adopt a program of emotional intelligence education and literacy in the school district. Drawing on some research describing the beneficial outcomes of such curricula (including psychological health, social behavior and interpersonal conduct, academic performance, and athletic performance). Be sure to explicitly define concepts/phenomena and explain them in plain English. Your proposal must be scientific, and must describe in detail at least 1 study/experiment that psychologists have performed on the topic.

*Option B*: Political psychology applications – Imagine that you are hired as a political consultant by a major candidate for public office (it can be for whichever political party you choose). Your task is to come up with a 2-3 point proposal for how to run an effective political campaign, drawing on political psychological research, as well as research on power, leadership, and the media. Note: This proposal should not focus on persuasive messages and the techniques described in earlier units on social influence. Your proposal should be more strategy-based, utilizing what we know about political ideology, party affiliation, voting behavior, etc. Be sure to explicitly define concepts/phenomena and explain them in plain English. Your proposal must be scientific, and must describe in detail at least 1 study/experiment that psychologists have performed on the topic.

**Blended Learning 5: Group Behavior**

*Option A*: Social loafing and group performance. Imagine that you have been elected as a leader of a group or organization on campus (a club, fraternity, team, etc.). Your peers (fellow students) look up to you as a role model, and the faculty advisor/coach has asked you to devise a strategy to reduce selfish behavior and social loafing (“free riding”) as well as optimize group performance. Your task is to come up with a proposal for how to accomplish this that draws on social-psychological research. Be sure to explicitly define concepts/phenomena and explain them in plain English. Your proposal must be scientific and must describe in detail at least 1 study/experiment that psychologists have performed on this topic.

*Option B*: Inter-group bias/prejudice. Imagine that you have been asked by a community leader at your school to help improve relations between 2 groups that have historically experienced a great deal of conflict. Your task is to propose a plan to reduce prejudice, discrimination, and inter-group conflict. Design an intervention that
integrates at least 2 specific feasible strategies to accomplish this. Be sure to explicitly define concepts/phenomena and explain them in plain English. Your proposal must be scientific and must describe in detail at least 1 study/experiment that psychologists have performed on this topic.

Final Analysis Paper

The students’ understanding of the process by which Social Psychologists practice across a wide range of domains will culminate in a scholarly written analysis of an aspect of human behavior of particular interest to them personally. Their analysis requires a much broader synthesis of knowledge as it builds on their earlier work and learning and requires further independent literature research (a) to integrate a variety of different social psychological concepts (b), generate new ideas for research (c), and apply them to real-world behavior much as real practitioners in the field would in the form of discussion, peer review and academic writing (d). This scholarly product represents an authentic practice in the field in the same way that observations of human thought and behavior have driven the science forward through the process the students have been learning throughout the semester. A few examples that students will have learned about include:

- The murder of Kitty Genovese, and subsequent research on the “bystander effect” in groups  

- Testimony at the Nuremberg Trials, and subsequent research on obedience to authority figures.  

- The killing of Amadou Diallo, and subsequent research on implicit prejudice (the “weapon bias” and the “shooter bias”).  

Instructions for the students:

Throughout this course you have learned about, and practiced, the way in which Social Psychologists thinking scientifically about some of the most complex and puzzling aspects of human nature and behavior. Integrating everything you have learned about the field and that process, you will now prepare a scholarly written analysis that demonstrates your ability
to think like a Social Psychologist about some aspect of human behavior that is of interest to you.

For this analysis, your task is to make an observation about a phenomenon in the world that has not yet been studied extensively, and then write a paper with detailed ideas for how to study it (as a Social Psychologist would). The social phenomenon you identify and describe should be something that is important and interesting to you. It does not have to be negative. The crux of the assignment will be to develop testable ideas for how to study the phenomenon, and follow through with a sketch of what such research would look like and what you would expect to find. You will need to clearly identify and explain the social phenomenon involved, define your variables, and design (conceptually) a scientific study that would help illuminate the causes and/or effects of this phenomenon. This will involve the following:

1. Creating conceptual and operational definitions for social variables that can be measured objectively.
   a. You must identify, define, and describe social psychological phenomena as they manifest in the behavior of others (in film, popular press/media, and academic articles). This will involve citing clear, appropriate, and relevant examples of social psychological concepts in the external world, and explaining precisely how people's behavior demonstrates these concepts.
   b. You must also describe how the behaviors you've identified will be studied. This involves coming up with conceptual definitions for abstract behavior (e.g., conformity, aggression) and operational definitions (e.g., responses on a visual perception task; blasting another person's ears with noise).

2. Conducting a review of relevant existing literature and explaining what has already been studied and discovered (related theories and facts) and how they may guide new research. You MUST include 5 theoretical and/or empirical academic journal articles in social psychology.
   a. In your literature review, you should summarize results (concisely) from scientific studies in social psychology, in such a way that the findings are accessible to a mainstream audience, while commenting on broader theoretical implications for understanding human social behavior.
   b. You should also identify gaps or limitations in the previous research. Critique the existing literature for strengths and limitations.

3. Developing hypotheses for what you would expect to find (and justifications for why you would expect those findings based on theory and research evidence).

4. Developing the methodology that you would use to scientifically test your hypothesis

5. Explaining how the results of the proposed research would increase our understanding of human social behavior (in other words, what the implications/conclusions would be).

Feel free to draw inspiration for this project from various sources. You can make an observation based on a news story (e.g., a magazine article in the popular press) or noteworthy event/incident related to human social behavior. You may choose to critique some questionable claims made by journalists or commentators in the media and argue for/against what they say (e.g., “Facebook depression”), using your proposed research.
design as a way to test their claims. You may also draw on a popular film/movie in which the characters display behaviors that reflect social psychological processes.

The extent to which you have achieved the learning objectives for this course will be evaluated using a rubric that gauges:

- **Clarity:** Excellent papers will demonstrate that the student has a firm understanding of the scientific process that underlies their analysis of behavior while discussing it in a way that is free of scientific jargon and would be easily understood by a lay audience.

- **Organization/Structure:** Excellent papers will have strong organization, each point following logically and sequentially, organized around a central thesis statement, question, or argument following the underlying sequence of thought involved in the scientific process.

- **Scientific Accuracy:** Excellent papers will have all terms, concepts, phenomena, and theories explicitly and accurately defined, with research studies that are described thoroughly and cited appropriately.

- **Professional Style:** Excellent papers will have professional writing throughout, free of casual, conversational language, esoteric colloquialisms, etc. The paper presents information in a way that reflects the standards of a working professional academic environment, in APA style.

- **Writing Quality:** Excellent papers will contain writing that is polished and free of errors in spelling, grammar, diction, punctuation, etc.

**GROUP WORK:** Note that this assessment will involve working with your peers in a discussion and peer review process. A portion of your grade will be based on intragroup evaluations on which you and your peers evaluate your contribution to the collective effort.

With your permission we will publish these analysis papers on a course blog that demonstrates how you are learning to think and practice like a Social Psychologist.
Careers in Psychology Assignment

Overview - The purpose of this assignment is to learn about career options available to you. There are many jobs that someone can get after studying social psychology. The University Career Center & The President’s Promise is an excellent place to find out about getting a job no matter what your field of study is. Your assignment is to find out more about career options in social psychology.

To fulfill this assignment, you must:
1) Create an account on the University Career Center & the President’s Promise website: c4t.umd.edu (if you do not have an account set up already). Instructions are below.
2) Use information on the website to learn about jobs and career options in psychology or a related field.
3) Pick one job that you would apply for. Briefly describe the responsibilities/duties that job requires.
4) In ½ page, describe 3 concepts from social psychology that you learned this semester, that would apply to the job you selected. What practical knowledge or skills do you now possess that would enable you to do this job well?
5) In ½ page, describe 3 tips for the interview or application process (based on concepts learned from social psychology this semester) that would better equip you to be hired for that job. This can include what clothes to wear, how to position your body, etc.
6) In total, the assignment will be ~1 page long. You must make reference to social psychological concepts (e.g., impression formation and the “Halo Effect”), and use these concepts to illustrate why your knowledge/skills are beneficial for the job application process and for doing the job successfully.
7) This assignment can be turned in at any point in time but it must be submitted in hard copy format BEFORE the Thanksgiving Break.

Instructions for setting up a Career Center account and exploring jobs/careers:

1. Go to The University Career Center & The President’s Promise website: www.c4t.umd.edu and register for an account.
2. Click on Focus2 F2 on the website’s main page.
3. Create an account and login on Focus2 (you will have to do this even though you already created an account on c4t)
4. In the Main Menu, Under “Research any Career/ Explore the Possibilities” click on “what can I do with a major in . . . ?”
5. The system may ask you to do a brief assessment. I encourage you to take the assessment, but you don’t have to if you don’t want to. When you see the list of majors, scroll down and click on ________.
6. Look at the different careers, their average salaries, and which have the brightest outlooks. Click on any that you find interesting and read about skills, education, etc. required for that job.