

## **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (SOP 3004)**

**FALL, 2006**

Section 8726; Room: NEB 100; Meeting Times: T4, Th4-5

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Web Site for Course Materials:

[www.psych.ufl.edu/~schlenkr/courses.htm](http://www.psych.ufl.edu/~schlenkr/courses.htm)

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTLINE**

Social psychology is the study of how people think about, feel about, and relate to one another. Phrased differently, it is the study of how we influence and are influenced by each other. Human experience is shaped by social considerations, from the way culture shapes our interpretations of the world around us to the ways our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors take into account the real or imagined presence of others. The domain of social psychology is far reaching. It includes a panorama of areas of human concern, such as the nature of belief formation and change, self and identity, person perception, prejudice, aggression and violence, altruism and helping behavior, liking and love, group behavior, social power, and conflict. This course is a survey of the basic ideas and research methods proffered by social psychologists in their quests to understand, predict, and sometimes control social behavior. We will cover the major principles, empirical findings, and methodological orientations in the discipline.

#### **Course Objectives:**

1. Learn the key concepts, principles, findings, and methodological techniques in social psychology.
2. Learn how everyday social events can be better understood through the application of scientific principles.
3. Learn how the discipline of social psychology can help you better understand and perhaps control events in your own life.

#### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Myers, David G. *Social Psychology* (8th edition). New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.

#### **EXAMS and GRADES**

There will be three exams. Each will cover five chapters in the text plus the relevant lectures.

1. Thursday, September 28. The first exam will cover Chapters 1-4 and Chapter 14 in Myers' text plus the lectures up to that point.
2. Thursday, November 2. The second exam will cover Chapters 5-8 and Chapter 15 in Myers' text plus the lectures since the first exam.
3. Monday, December 11. The third exam will cover Chapters 9-13 in Myers' text, plus the lectures since the second exam. It will be held during the regularly scheduled final exam time, Monday, December 11, at 7:30 am, in our classroom (NEB 100).

The exams will consist of multiple-choice items. They are not cumulative.

The final distribution will be based on the following percentages:

90% = A

80% = B ; 86% = B+

70% = C ; 76% = C+

60% = D ; 66% = D+

below 60% = E

Grades will be determined by your exam scores. Do not ask at the end of the semester what you can do to get a better grade than you have earned on tests. Also, assume the exams will require you to know the material well. "Getting the gist" of the material is inadequate and unlikely to yield a passing grade, much less a good grade. If material is unclear, ask questions during or after class. Take advantage of my office hours, too, to ask questions and discuss the material.

Excuses will rarely, if ever, be accepted for missing an exam. If make-up exams are given, they usually will include fill-in-the blank and essay items as well as multiple-choice items. Depending on the circumstances, the grade on a make-up exam may be lowered by up to the equivalent of 1 full letter grade to compensate for the additional study time.

## **CLASS**

Class time will be devoted to covering some of the major topics of interest to social psychologists. Class lectures and discussions will often parallel but not duplicate the text. Also, some material will be covered in greater depth in class while other material will receive more condensed coverage. Consequently, do not wait for a topic to be discussed in class before reading about it in the text. If you have any questions about the material in the text, do not hesitate to ask about it during class. Despite the size of the class, I would like to facilitate as much class discussion as possible. I encourage questions and comments.

Listed below is the order for class coverage of topics. Corresponding text chapters are given in parentheses.

1. Social Psychology, Science, and the Study of Social Life (Chapter 1)
2. Research Methods (Chapter 1)
3. Self (Chapter 2)
4. Social Cognition and Biases in "Common Knowledge" (Chapters 3, 14)
5. Attitudes and Behavior (Chapter 4)  
**Exam 1** (Chapters 1-4, 14)
6. Genes, Culture, & Social Life (Chapter 5)
7. Conformity (Chapter 6)
8. Persuasion (Chapter 7)
9. Group Influence (Chapter 8)  
**Exam 2** (Chapters 5-8, 15)
10. Aggression & Violence (Chapter 10)
11. Altruism & Helping (Chapter 12)
12. Attraction: Liking & Love (Chapter 11)
13. Conflict (Chapter 13)  
**Exam 3** (Chapters 9-13)

**NOTE:** Two chapters in Myers' text will NOT be discussed in class: Chapter 15 on Social Psychology in Court (for Exam 2) and Chapter 9 on Prejudice (for Exam 3). The material in these chapters

WILL be covered on the relevant exams. Some of the material in these chapters will be mentioned at appropriate points throughout the course but, because of time constraints, they will not be discussed as concentrated topics.

## **STUDY TIPS**

It is important to keep up with the material because if you fall behind in the reading, it will be difficult to catch up. The material may seem straightforward, but there are many new concepts and ideas that you are responsible for mastering. You need to allocate appropriate blocks of time each week. You cannot expect to read and digest a chapter in one sitting, especially if you try to do so late one evening when you are less than alert. You may get the gist, but you will not have command over the material.

I recommend the following three-step process when reading and studying each chapter. First, skim the chapter rapidly. Get an idea of the topics that will be covered and the general content. This will give you a mental schema, or overall organizational outline, into which you can fit the more detailed material as you read it.

Second, go back and read the chapter carefully. Underline or mark the key points. When you finish reading each section, stop and think about the major points in that section. Try to summarize in a sentence or two, in your own words, the major conclusion(s) that should be drawn from that section. Do the same with the major concepts in that section. Ask yourself questions about the material (e.g., “How does dissonance theory differ from self-perception theory?” “Why are people overconfident about the accuracy of their beliefs?”). Make sure the appropriate conclusion is marked or highlighted in the text so you can find it easily when you study later.

Another way to view this is to imagine having to summarize, for a friend, the major points the author was trying to make in the section. The best way to learn material is to try to teach it to others, and you can simulate this process by imagining that you are summarizing the material for someone else. Do this for each section, subsection, and even paragraph in the chapter. This is a thorough way to go through the material and set it in mind. Don’t read passively, akin to watching the TV with your mind only semi-engaged, hoping you’ll recognize the material later on a test. It’s amazing how good all the alternatives look on a multiple-choice exam if you do not know the material well. Read actively, thinking about the material and raising questions as you go through it to set it firmly in mind.

Third, prior to each exam, go back and study the material you emphasized or highlighted. If any of it looks somewhat puzzling or unfamiliar after the passage of time, reread that section.

Keep up with the readings. Do not let the readings accumulate or you are likely to find the material overwhelming. Also, do not expect to be able to cram for a test successfully, because most people cannot pull it off. Cramming usually causes ideas to blur together in your mind, so that you cannot clearly distinguish one important point or conclusion from another. The infamous lament, “I did poorly because I think I studied too much for this test” (yes, believe it or not, students have actually used this line), does not reflect “too much studying,” it reflects last minute cramming that produced cognitive overload. If you keep up with the material as we go along, and then use the time before exams to solidify what you have already studied, you should do fine.

### **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **Honesty Policy**

In courses, as in life generally, ethical principles are of paramount importance. Integrity and fidelity are vital to the scientific enterprise and are core components of the American Psychological Association's ethical code. Students are expected to exhibit exemplary ethical conduct in the course. The University's honesty policy regarding cheating and the use of copyrighted materials will be enforced. The University's honesty policy can be found at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>