

PSY 260: Social Psychology (Fall 2018)

Syllabus

Instructor: John V. Petrocelli
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Office hours: By appointment

Days: Tuesday/Thursday
Time: 12:30 – 1:45
Location: Greene Hall 313
Course website: <https://sakai.wfu.edu>

Required Text

Aronson, E., Wilson, T.D., Akert, R.M., & Sommers, S.R. (2016). *Social Psychology* (9th ed.). New York: Pearson. ISBN-10: 0133936546, ISBN-13: 978-0133936544

Course Readings

Course readings will come primarily from the required textbook and will serve as a framework for the course (see the Schedule section below). Any additional readings outside of Aronson, Wilson, Akert, and Sommers (2016) will be made available for download on the Sakai website. Please bring to class your textbook so that you can reference the material. Your performance in this course is likely to reflect your record of attendance and the effort that you put into reviewing the course readings.

Course Description

Social psychology involves the study of the ways in which human behavior, thought, and emotion are affected by the presence or actions of other people, as well as by the social context. Topics to be covered include social cognition, attitudes, social influence, aggression, interpersonal relationships, group behavior, and cultural influences, with an emphasis on the fundamental psychological processes that underlie these phenomena. In addition to examining theory and research in social psychology, the course will examine the methods that behavioral researchers use to study interpersonal processes. Prerequisite: PSY 151.

Course Design and Philosophy

This course offers you an opportunity to become familiar with the major theories and questions of the field of experimental social psychology. During this course you will be exposed to how *social psychology research* is typically *designed, conducted, and reported*. The required reading list serves as a global introduction to important issues as well as a set of specific examples that have put social psychology research methods to practical use. This model of learning will be complemented with lecture. However, the course will also be oriented towards a “learning by doing” approach. Successful students are those who review the required readings prior to lecture, come to every session of class, complete the assignments, and take an active role in their own learning. Please do not hesitate to utilize office hours or arrange other meetings as needed.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Social psychology may be viewed as a unique perspective of the world and human behavior. Social psychologists are skilled at asking interesting and useful questions and providing valid and reliable answers. Awareness of the social psychological research can improve prediction, explanation, and control of behavior. The course objectives and learning outcomes include:

- An understanding of core questions and major theoretical approaches in social psychology
- An understanding of empirical findings in social psychology and how major research designs address different questions and hypotheses
- An ability to critically evaluate social psychological research claims
- An ability to formulate social psychological problems/questions, to determine the degree to which an explanation is supported by reasoning/empirical evidence, to perceive alternative explanations and to determine what evidence is needed to choose between them, to synthesize empirical evidence and psychological concepts, and to critically evaluate existing explanations and generate new ideas
- Develop an attitude of thinking that includes persistence, open-mindedness, tolerance for ambiguity, and intellectual curiosity
- An ability to apply social psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues, recognize the relevance of social psychology to everyday life, and appreciate the importance of social psychological science to answering fundamental questions

Student Responsibilities and Class Discussion

Attend class, be prepared to participate, complete all course requirements, and check Sakai for updates. The learning experience in this course involves sharing of thoughts during class (relevant to the required readings). Come to class willing and prepared to voice your thoughts and opinions. Ask questions!

Grading

Your letter grade for this course is determined by the percentage of total points (500 possible) earned throughout the semester. A letter grade will be assigned on the basis of the following scale:

A+ 98 - 100% A 93 - 97% A- 90 - 92% B+ 88 - 89% B 83 - 87% B- 80 - 82%
C+ 78 - 79% C 73 - 77% C- 70 - 72% D+ 68 - 69% D 63 - 67% D- 60 - 62% F <60%

Points are earned in four ways:

- **Reaction Essays (25 points each; 2 x 25 = 50 points):** Write two Reaction Essays in response to two articles that you find in any of the following journals: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (JPSP), *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (JESP), *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (PSPB), *Social Psychological and Personality Science* (SPPS), *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* (BASP), and *Social Cognition* (SC). For each Reaction Essay, submit a one-page paper in reaction to an article. Essays should be double-spaced (approx. 250 words), but are not to exceed one page (if you have more to say, reduce the font and/or margins, change spacing). Include an APA-style citation at the top of your paper. A Reaction Essay is not a simple re-wording of the Abstract of an article or a summarization. Include no more than two summary sentences if you feel a need to describe the purpose or methods used. The Reaction Essay is an intellectual exercise that may take the form of an agreement, disagreement, elaboration, contrast, parallel, or critical analysis of the work selected. Examples of sentences to get you started:
 - 1) "I see a contradiction between Smith's (2002) article and the section we read about..."
 - 2) "A possible experiment that could address the hypothesis described in Smith's (2002) article..."
 - 3) "Smith's (2002) findings could be used to explain..." or "...helped me to analyze..."
 - 4) "I disagree with the interpretation of the findings described in Smith's (2002) article..."
- **Exams (100 points each; 3 x 100 = 300 points):** There are several conceptual, factual, and applied concepts that will be discussed in the assigned readings and during class time. Be prepared to understand these concepts, think deeply about them, and apply them to your understanding of the world and human behavior. All exams will be non-cumulative and drawn from both the lectures and textbook. The format will be multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short essay.
- **Field Study Replication (50 points):** One of the interesting things about social psychology is that its principles can be observed and applied almost everywhere: daily life, current events, television shows, books, movies, music, etc. Yet, one of the major criticisms of experimental social psychology is that many experiments conducted within the lab setting do not necessarily replicate in, or apply to, the real world. Short of conducting your own research, there is no better way to learn about social psychology than to take part in a study. Simply reading or hearing about an experiment in class is no substitute for taking part in the science of social psychology. Your task for the Field Study Replication is to work within a team of three students and accomplish three things:
 - 1) select any study cited within a current chapter of the textbook and find/review the original report
 - 2) design and implement a replication of a study using a field experiment to test a key principle reported in a study (manipulate only the single most important variable by randomly assigning a minimum of 10 "participants" to one of two conditions using a between-subjects design; or making 10 observations under two conditions using a within-subjects design)
 - 3) create a five-minute documentary video detailing: a) the study/article you attempted to replicate; b) the research question and basic principle tested; c) the procedures of the experiment and how they may be modified from the original study; d) the basic results (data analysis is optional); and e) final conclusions.

Note: Video of procedures and study outcomes should be role-played. No actual participants should be displayed in your video.



Before you begin – run the idea past me first via e-mail! (petrocjv@wfu.edu)

- **Film Analysis (100 points):** In addition to entertaining us, movies offer detailed portrayals of human social behavior. Your task in this assignment is to analyze – from a social psychological perspective – the behaviors and events depicted in a film. See Sakai for more details on this assignment.

Attendance

Class attendance will not be monitored. However, due to the participatory and interactive nature of this course, consider your attendance mandatory. Studies show that class time is the most efficient use of a student's time when it comes to learning material. Unless by reason of extenuating circumstances or participation in religious or civic observances, your attendance is expected at all times.

Lecture Notes

Lecture notes are not provided. Much of the lectures will be interactive, involving class-discussion related to the topic, thought experiments, and experimental procedure demonstrations. If you must miss a lecture, please get notes from a classmate (if they are willing).

Sakai

You are expected to become familiar with the Sakai Academic Suite <https://sakai.wfu.edu>. Sakai is an online course environment that allows Wake Forest University faculty and students to create, integrate, and maintain web-based teaching and learning resources. Grades will be posted on Sakai. Announcements or changes will be announced on Sakai as well.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Although I don't expect there to be any problems, cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated. When you signed your application for admission to Wake Forest University, you agreed to live by the honor system. As part of the honor system, you agreed to abstain from cheating, which includes plagiarism. You are accountable to the following from the Student Handbook: "Plagiarism is a type of cheating. It includes: (a) the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without complete acknowledgment of the source; (b) the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another agency or person providing term papers or other academic materials; (c) the non-attributed use of any portion of a computer algorithm or data file; or (d) the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of on-line material without complete acknowledgment of the source."

Pagers, Beepers, and Phones

Please make sure that your pagers, beepers, cell phones, noise horns, cow-bells, and other equipment that are likely to be disruptive and counterproductive to learning experience, are turned off during class.

Students with Special Needs

Please let me know if you are a student with special needs such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, or a learning disability.

Contingency Plan

In the event that the university closes due to pandemic or other disaster, please review and study the required readings. Reading quizzes (distributed over Sakai, if the internet is available; or by postal mail if the internet is not available) must be completed to test your comprehension of the readings. Complete all required work (to be distributed either through Sakai, e-mail, or postal mail) listed on the schedule and send the solutions to: John Petrocelli (petrocjv@wfu.edu), if the internet is available; or if the internet is not available to: John Petrocelli, P.O. Box 7778, Winston-Salem, 27109. You will be mailed or e-mailed a midterm and final examination that should be taken closed book, without access to papers, persons, or other resources. The return date for the examination will be specified in the mailing. If the internet is available, Professor Petrocelli will be available for normal office hours by e-mail.

Disclaimer

Consider this syllabus a binding contract of your responsibilities. As with most other courses, I do reserve the right to modify the schedule as deemed necessary. Any changes made to the schedule or policies within this syllabus will be announced in class and on Sakai.

Course Readings, Assignments, and Exams Schedule

WEEK	DAY	DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT / FSR/ EXAM
1	Tu	8/28	Introducing Social Psychology	Ch. 1	
	Th	8/30	Introducing Social Psychology	Ch. 1	
2	Tu	9/4	Methodology	Ch. 2	
	Th	9/6	Methodology	Ch. 2	
3	Tu	9/11	Social Cognition	Ch. 3	
	Th	9/13	Social Cognition	Ch. 3	
4	Tu	9/18	Social Perception	Ch. 4	
	Th	9/20	Social Perception	Ch. 4	
5	Tu	9/25	Recap Chapters 1-4		
	Th	9/27			EXAM 1
6	Tu	10/2	The Self	Ch. 5	
	Th	10/4	The Self	Ch. 5	
7	Tu	10/9	Dissonance and Justifying Actions	Ch. 6	Reaction Essay 1 Due
	Th	10/11	FALL BREAK		
8	Tu	10/16	Dissonance and Justifying Actions	Ch. 6	
	Th	10/18	Attitudes and Attitude Change	Ch. 7	
9	Tu	10/23	Attitudes and Attitude Change	Ch. 7	
	Th	10/25	Conformity	Ch. 8	
10	Tu	10/30	Conformity	Ch. 8	
	Th	11/1	Recap Chapters 5-8		
11	Tu	11/6	EXAM 2		
	Th	11/8	Group Processes	Ch. 9	
12	Tu	11/13	Group Processes	Ch. 9	
	Th	11/15	Interpersonal Attraction	Ch. 10	Reaction Essay 2 Due
13	Tu	11/20	Interpersonal Attraction	Ch. 10	
	Th	11/22	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
14	Tu	11/27	Prejudice	Ch. 11	
	Th	11/29	Prejudice	Ch. 11	
15	Tu	12/4	Prejudice	Ch. 11	
	Th	12/6	Recap Chapters 9-11		Film Analysis Due
F	M	12/10	FINAL EXAM 9:00am		