



PSYC 221H - Social Psychology

PSYC 221 Section 0101– University of Maryland – Fall 2015

WHAT IS SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND WHAT DO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS DO?

Social psychology is the scientific study of how our behavior is influenced by other people around us and how we influence the behavior of others. Social psychologists study 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 our expectations about social behavior turns out to be wrong and those assumptions turn out to be wrong, and in other cases social psychological 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 academic performance, protecting our 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 pPsychologist:



- Participate in five *in-class 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 four *individual activities* 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

Stangor, C. (2011). Principles of Social Psychology. Flat World Knowledge, Washington DC.

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) **Course material.** I expect you to attend class every week but you are responsible for any and all course material covered in class even if you are not present. I will post the lecture notes and the powerpoints for each class on Canvas. Email me ahead of class if you have to miss. I’ll allow one unexcused absence – beyond that you’ll need an excuse. The **course participation grade** will be assigned based your completion of the course evaluation and your contribution to class discussions. Course participation is worth 10% of your final grade.

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 group activities and out of class individual assignments. 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. The in-class activities will vary in content and structure. Some weeks you will be required to answer a few (3-5) multiple-choice questions and/or submit a brief writing assignment. The individual assignments will always be 500-word essays and will be rigorously graded based on content and writing quality. It is to your advantage to use the assignments to bolster your writing abilities (especially with regards to content, structure, clarity, accuracy, organization, grammar, syntax, and punctuation). Think of the writing assignments as opportunities to improve your analytic skills.

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 and the individual assignments will each be worth 15% of your final grade. Details for each assignment, as well as objectives and grading rubrics will be provided on ELMS.

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 availabl to you, visit <http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter>.

3) **Final Analysis Paper.** A 5-page final paper is due on December 14th at 5pm. 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 (one that has not yet been studied), 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. The requirements for this assignment will be detailed separately.

4) **Quizzes.** There are no exams, but we will have five quizzes, each covering the material up to and including the previous class period. The quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions, with the *possibility* of some short-form questions (e.g. matching, true/false.). Quizzes are **not** cumulative, **however**, some concepts/facts fit into more than one unit (e.g., self-esteem and aggression), and may appear on a quiz 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 not be essay questions. In total, the quizzes will be worth 40% of your final grade. There will be some extra-credit questions built into the quizzes.

Note: I encourage you to go over your exams with me, 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. In other words, you have until the date exam #2 is given to review exam #1.



RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Students may earn extra credit by participating in up to 4 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> and you can sign up for research studies by going to: <http://umpyschology.sona-systems.com>. Each credit of experimental participation is equal to 1 point of extra credit on your final course average (ex: 2 SONA credits brings you from 89 to 91). 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>.

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.

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) without hesitation. Please see the Department of Psychology's policy statement on academic integrity as well as the University of Maryland's policy documents regarding student conduct/academic integrity 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).

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>. 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 Canvas 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

Semester Length	Out-of-Class Hours/Week
16 weeks	6-9
6 weeks	15-22
3 weeks	30-45

COURSE EVALUATIONS

You will have several 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. I will post an anonymous survey on Canvas part way through the semester to help us identify ways that we can work together to further enhance our cooperative approach to learning. In addition, the University will ask you to evaluate all of your courses through the online system (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 of all 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). 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 you request a re-grade, I will handle it (not the TAs) and my re-grade is final. Your grade may go up, it may go down, or it may stay the same. You must submit a ½ page explanation of why you feel your assignment/paper was unfairly graded and why you deserve a re-grade. Note: A re-grade is different than an error in scoring/grading.

If eligible to be turned in late, work will be penalized 1 letter grade per 24 hours after the time it was due. **Note:** The final term paper is NOT eligible to be turned in late, for any reason. Late term papers (even if submitted less than 5 minutes beyond the deadline) will receive zero credit (0 points).

I highly recommend utilizing a network-based drive to ensure that you do not risk losing your work should a computer die, get lost or be stolen. There are many options available...including Google Drive and Dropbox. Tip: it works best if you download and install the free software because then you can just save things to the folder on your computer like you already do and it will automatically save a copy on the network that you can access from anywhere. It even stores previous versions of the file in case you edit or delete it.

Participation = 10%

5 Quizzes = 40%

1 Final Analysis Paper = 20%

In-Class Assignments = 15%

Opportunity 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—you may also use the grade calculator, but keep in mind that this will give you an estimate based on limited information.

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

LETTER GRADE = **SCORE** **LETTER GRADE** = **SCORE**

A+	=	97.0-100	C+	=	77.0-79.9
A	=	94.0-96.9	C	=	73.0-76.9
A-	=	90.0-93.9	C-	=	70.0-72.9
B+	=	87.0-89.9	D+	=	67.0-69.9
B	=	83.0-86.9	D	=	63.0-66.9
B-	=	80.0-82.9	D-	=	60.0-62.9
			F	=	< 60

EXTRA CREDIT

There are opportunities to receive extra credit. As stated above, SONA credits give you extra credit on your final course grade. Extra credit questions will be built into the quizzes.

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 will 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.
- 2) Do NOT procrastinate. Begin working on your assignments early (**especially** your final term paper).
- 3) Don't expect this class to be “easy.” The material and assignments are highly challenging. Don't strategize by slacking off to devote efforts to your “harder” courses, as this will result in an undesirable grade.
- 4) Begin with the mindset that your current grade is a zero (0%) and you must work up to earn points in your exams/assignments.
- 5) Assume that you currently do NOT have the ability to score an A in the course, and the only way in which you will score an A is to change, adapt, grow, develop, and learn new skills that will translate into achieving excellent marks.
- 6) Form a study group! This is **STRONGLY** recommended. Your learning will be enhanced, and so will your performance in the class. Don't go it alone!
- 7) If you are struggling, **come to office hours and chat with me** if something is unclear. Do NOT wait until the last week of the semester to investigate why you're not getting the grades you desire.
- 8) Get an adequate amount of sleep, eat a healthy diet, and exercise.
- 9) Don't neglect your personal and social relationships.
- 10) Enjoy the college experience. Have fun!