

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY  
PSY 3730 01-W  
SYLLABUS  
A Writing Across the Curriculum Course  
4 hr. credit  
MW 10:45 am - 12:25 pm Melson 104  
Prerequisite: Psy 1010 or permission of instructor

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Office Hours: Monday, 12:45- 4:00 pm; Tuesday: 12:45 -4:00 pm. & by appointment; Wednesday: 12:45 to 2:00 pm. only.

Appointment hours can be set up in order to facilitate individual meetings, in-depth intellectual inquiry and for the further exploration of classroom discussions and questions. Please avail yourself of such opportunities by making an appointment. There will be times during my office hours that I will be unavailable due to meetings, other appointments, conference calls, etc. The best idea *always* is to make an appointment ahead of time so that we are assured of adequate time together. The best way to contact me is by email.

As you know, all official email and notifications come through campus email (MyUWG) and so, please check it with unerring regularity.

### I. Course Objectives

- To understand the impact of groups and social institutions on the behavior, personality development, and psychological structure of the individual.
- To experience and empirically study the impact of groups on individual experience
- Self-understanding & the understanding of others
- Analyze & synthesize issues in a psychological context
- This is a *Writing Across the Curriculum Class*. As such, it requires two forms of writing: Writing to Learn and Writing to Communicate. The class will encourage a sense of the possibilities of writing and encourage learning to use writing as a discipline specific tool to understand the material taught.

### II. Course Description

Overall the class studies the impact of language, culture, and social structure upon the development of the person in society. This impact and essential aspect of our humanness is approached from the psychological side.

Social psychology as it is taught in mainstream psychology is a fashionable, interesting field that focuses on the predictable ways we interact with others. From studies of conformity to studies of love, there appear to be general structures or patterns to which we humans fall prey. Often how we are as individuals are overridden by the rules that govern group and dyadic organization. The effect of others on our individuality is the subject matter of this course. We will do some reflections on our experience of sociality, consider the social ramifications of the findings of Social Psychology, examine the structure of modern society and clarify the reading material. The course also involves writings, group discussions and class presentations that take the ideas of social psychology beyond the classroom and into the realm of our own social existence. The impact of mass media will be given special attention.

This course also explores issues related to questions of what it means to be living at the beginning of the twentieth first century & how we can re-imagine community.

This course includes an empirical component requiring fieldwork, group work, and very preliminary experiments. These exercises are listed on the Workbook sheet at the end of this syllabus.

This course is also a writing across the curriculum course, which means that we work with writing intensively. Throughout the class, there will be informal writing exercises (WTL). Although not all of these are graded, they are required. A final formal paper of 12 pages in length will also be required. A rough draft will be submitted and the revised paper graded (WTC). WAC accepts as a guiding principle the idea that writing is a valuable tool for learning and communication. Therefore, the writing components of a course so designated are designed to help you learn the material and communicate what you have learned. Students are required to take two “W” courses for an undergraduate degree in the College of Arts and Sciences.

### III. Course Requirements

#### Exams

There are three exams. A number of questions will be multiple choice. The exam may also contain short answer/essay questions on material presented in class (lectures/discussion/videos) as well as the readings. The exam will give you a choice of a short essay answer (one page). The dates of these exams are noted on the course schedule. The material covered in the exams always involves both the lectures and the textbooks. **You are responsible for both!** The short answer questions must be reasonably well written. **I do not want scrambled egg thought as when the student tosses out memorized ideas.** One should have working knowledge of the covered material.

#### Workbook: Fieldwork, experimental journal & shorter papers

The attached worksheet describes the short papers, fieldwork projects, and group projects. All of these projects must be handed in, evaluated, and given a grade. Some assignments are more heavily weighted than other assignments. The worksheet includes minor exercises, short papers, and an experimental journal project. Group projects partially receive group grades and individual projects receive an individual grade. If you miss a class you must turn in the assignment early. Late assignments will be marked down.

#### Class Attendance & Participation

Overall I encourage discussion and I encourage questions, during my lectures. I really do and so interrupt. If you have a child or family member that would require your cell phone be on vibrate, please leave it as such. Otherwise, all cell phones are off. If you talk during class in a matter that is distracting, I will call you out and may ask you to leave.

- PLAGIARISM is strictly prohibited. If you are confused about what counts as plagiarism ask me I reserve the option of totally flunking you if there is any plagiarism or cheating. And I will report it to the Dean regardless of the action I take. Plagiarism can be defined taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. Lifting phrases from books or papers etc will count as plagiarism even if you change the order. Think for yourself and write for yourself. Academic integrity is absolutely required.
- There are no opportunities for extra credit.
- You can not turn in material done in this class in any other class.
- If you miss an exam and you must have a viable excuse, you can make it up during exam week by taking a comprehensive exam.

#### IV. Evaluation

60% of grade is tabulated from an average of your exam grades

20% of grade is tabulated from an average of your worksheet projects, informal writing projects, experimental projects, and so forth. Of these, the 3 page experimental write-up is most heavily weighted. The points are given on the worksheet at the end of the syllabus. Add them up and you will see that you can receive up to 100 points. Your grade thus will reflect how many points you receive.

20% of grade will be the last paper & rough draft

#### V. Required Books & Readings

Aronson, E. (2008). *The Social Animal*, Tenth Edition, New York: W.H. Freeman.

John Stewart, (2007) *Mass Media, Politics & Democracy*. New York: Palgrave Press.

Electronic Reserves can be accessed through the Ingram Library Website. They will be under my name. As soon as I have a password, I will pass it on. These articles are:

- Schutz, A. (1964). The stranger: an essay in social psychology. In *Collected papers. Vol. II. Studies in social theory*, pp. 95-105. On e reserve
- *Wendy Hollway: Social Psychology: Past & Present* in Social Psychology Matters e-reserve
- Malone & Barabino: Narrations of Race in STEM forthcoming in *Science Education on e-reserve*
- Potter & Wetherell, *Unfolding Discourse Analysis in Critical Readings in Social Psychology*, pp. 61-73;
- Wendy Stainton Rogers, *Methods & Analytics in Critical Social Psychology in Social Psychology: Experimental & Critical Approaches*, pp. 80-95

Books are available at the West Georgia Bookstore and at the University Bookstore. You need both books. Please purchase them. Used versions may be available on-line. .

V

#### I: Course Schedule

Please have read the material assigned BEFORE the class!!!

### **Week of August 19**

- Introduction to syllabus
  - Critical thinking, aim to good writing
- Introduction to Social Psychology
- VIDEO: Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment

*Reading to be done: Aronson: pp. 1-11*

### **Week of August 26**

- TOPICS: Introduction to Social Psychology & Its History and Approaches

*Readings: Wendy Hollway: Social Psychology: Past & Present in Social Psychology Matters e-reserve*

- Breaking the Rules Break-out Groups: Turn in your proposal

### **Week of September 1**

#### **Labor Day Holiday**

- TOPIC: Conformity
- VIDEO: MILGRAM EXPERIMENT  
Write up of response to Video (WTL)
- Reading: Schutz, A. (1964). The stranger: an essay in social psychology. In *Collected papers. Vol. II. Studies in social theory*, pp. 95-105. On e reserve

### **September 8**

- TOPIC: Conformity
- *Reading Aronson, pp. 13-58.*
- Breaking the rules paper due on Wednesday (WTL)

### **September 16**

- Preparing for an Experiment or Research Problem
  - Readings: Aronson: pp. 405-429; Potter & Wetherell, *Unfolding Discourse Analysis in Critical Readings in Social Psychology*, pp. 61-73; Wendy Rogers, *Methods & Analytics in Critical Social Psychology in Social Psychology: Experimental & Critical Approaches*, pp. 80-95. On e-reserve.
  - **EXAM #1 on Wednesday**

### **September 23**

- TOPIC: Mass Persuasion & Communication,
- Media Free Day assigned
- VIDEO: Spin

*Readings: Aronson, Chapter Three, pages 59-117.*

### **September 30**

- VIDEO: Ad & Id
- Summary of Assigned Reading- due Wednesday (WTL)
- TOPIC: Mass Persuasion & Communication
- *Reading: Street, pp. 1-80.*

### **October 6**

- TOPIC: Mass persuasion & Communication

- VIDEO: The Corporation
- Reading: *Street*, pages 124-162.

**October 13**

- TOPIC: Mass Persuasion & Democracy
- Turn in Media Free Day (WTL)  
*Reading: Street, pp. 185-211.*

**October 20**

Review, creation of exam, assignment of stereotypes list, & discussion of paper project  
Exam #2 –

**October 27**

- Experimental & Research Group time: Topics and plans must be turned in by end of Wednesday’s class in written form
- **turn in stereotypes list**
  - TOPIC Prejudice

**November 3**

- TOPIC Prejudice
- *Readings, Aronson, Chapter Seven Prejudice, pages 301-356*
- Experimental Project Group Time on Wednesday

**November 10**

TOPIC: Prejudice

Reviewing Stereotypes Collection

VIDEO: *Color Adjustment*

Steele, Claude.. Frontline: Secrets of the SAT. An interview found at this website:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/sats/interviews/steele.html>

Malone & Barabino: Narrations of Race in STEM forthcoming in *Science Education on e-reserve*

**November 17**

TOPIC: Liking, loving and Interpersonal Sensitivity

Readings: Aronson: 357-404.

meeting about paper if necessary

**November 24**

**Rough draft of paper is due**

Thanksgiving holiday

**November Dec 1**

Review- return of rough draft

Exam #3

**Final Exam period is Tuesday Wednesday Dec 10 at 10:30 -12:30.**

1) You are to turn in your experimental journal at this time (3 pages) and if you miss an exam, this will be the time to make the exam up. 2) Everyone MUST turn in his or her final corrected paper in at this time and in person. 3) You can get your last exam at this time.

### Workbook Assignments (20 % of grade)

#### #1 Breaking the Rules – worth 15 points

Each individual will attempt to take up two activities that violate implicit norms governing the public sphere. **The violation will only involve harmless behavior.** If you do something that I deem dangerous you will receive no credit. The individual will then write a three page essay that reflects upon their experience of breaking the rules. This essay should be in dialogue with all assignments that are related to conformity. The reflection should include thoughts on conformity, the responses of others and our own internal responses. Is there social pressure to conform to established norms? Why? How is this demonstrated in our daily lives? Do you observe yourself and others following these norms? What was it like to break an implicit social norm – how did you feel, how did others treat you? Why do you think they responded as they did? Critically reflect on your experience. The class will generate a list of activities from which to choose. All activities must be approved in class. Two to three pages, double space 12 pt font, one inch margins

#### #2 Collecting Stereotypes – worth 5 points

Collect stereotypes from your friends and family. Collect five stereotypes. We will pool collected data during class time and discuss.

#### #3 Media Free three hours – with 15 points

Each individual will be required to spend at least 3 hours trying to live without any form of media. This involves commercial media – billboards, household products, as well as non-commercial media (CDs, t.v., etc...) Advertising **MUST BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS.** The idea is to turn back the clock about 120 years. You will then write a paper describing your experience **and how it relates to the ideas in this course** – what did you learn about the role of media in daily living? How is your life enhanced and/or adversely affected by the pervasiveness of the media? What, if any, changes did you notice in your behaviors, thoughts, priorities, mood, etc... Was this easy, difficult, fun, tortuous, strange, informative? Why? One to two double space 12 pt font, one inch margins.

#### #4 In Class responses – worth 15 points

Discussion groups and short response papers. Reflect on movies and or readings as indicated in the syllabus. This paper must be turned in.

#### #5 Your experimental journal: - worth 50 points

Each of you will need to work with your group to do a mock experiment. Since experiments in social psychology often need confederates, then you will need your fellow students. You guys will need to:

- Design and do your experiments together. Or attempt qualitative research. You co-members will be grading you.
- You can share reference material and you must each cite then in your paper
- Write up an experiment journal:
  - Track the progress of the experiment- date what happened and how the group decided on the experiment
  - Tell me your hypothesis or if using qualitative research: what you are trying to understand

- Briefly explain your experiment and the context of the experiment using material read in class. You must present your data in an organized fashion. You must draw conclusions about your data in relationship to previous research.

Choosing Group Experiments Here are some ideas.

- #1 Asch Conformity Study (Aronson on conformity) 10-15 *different* trials, four confederates, one subject
- #2 Self-Justification justification of effort (Aronson on self-justification) hard/easy/no initiation to listen to discussion –observe ratings of discussion by each group. perform dull task for high/low reward – observe appraisal of dull task
- interviewing people at race track before and after bets (irrevocability) / interview people about car purchases before and after
- dating services – more committed are to current partner, less attractive rate alternative partners (unless they are not an option for you...) No threat, no dissonance. Lepper study – for or against capital punishment, provided articles for and against their position. Instead of modifying position, seeing complexity, cling to favorable article, derogate opposing article to reduce dissonance presented by evidence suggesting you could be wrong!, narrow-minded, etc...
- #3 Something on media watching, stereotypes, and violence, following the research cited in Aronson or discussed in videos and class.
- #4 Johnny Rocco Experiment
- #5 Credibility as effect of gender
- #6 Race and probation judgments, judgments about grades, ratings of desirability, etc.
- #7 : Think of one on your own
- #8: Video analysis.
- #9: Conformity in taste, staleness, or rottenness, etc.
- #10: Transcript analysis of a conversation on a topic related to Social Psychology

#### Final paper (20 % of grade)

- The final paper will be a **research paper or theory paper** that is based on the ideas of this class but uses original research and topic:
  - At least **five new references** should be used. You can expect that you will read a number of references that you can't use so don't try to just put together whatever five essays that you happen to find.
  - Your final paper is to be at least 10 pages long, using type no greater than a 12 font and there should be one-inch margins.
  - The bibliographies at the back of the books for class should be a good source of your references. Otherwise you can use Academic Premier Search, PsychFirst, or Pro Quest internet engines to find essays. The articles you choose must be **peer reviewed articles**. Just running a google search will not be accepted.
  - Please attach your earlier draft paper to the final paper when you submit the final paper.
  - Paper must be in APA style. I am not a stickler but references need to follow this format.
  - I will not accept late papers or papers by email.

<b>The class requires STRICT attendance and cooperation within assigned groups</b>
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**YOUR GROUP Evaluation: this needs to be handed in with your experimental journal write up.**

First and Last names of members of your group:

Please grade each group member giving a thoughtful and generous evaluation on their overall participation in the group: Include in your grade consideration of class discussions and group projects. A score of 10 means that the member worked equally with all other members. A score of 1 means the person was absolutely useless in every aspect of the project.