

Social Psychology

PSYC 3730 | Spring 2019 | 4 credits

Mondays and Wednesdays 11AM-12:50PM | Coliseum 3008

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Office Hours: 1-5PM Mondays & Wednesdays, by appointment only

Course Description:

How do orderly crowds turn into violent mobs? How do others' interactions with us impact our sense of self? Why are people inclined to stereotype members of different groups? How can we resolve the conflicts of society? What does it mean to practice love towards ourselves and others?

In this course you will learn about research and theories in social psychology that help answer these questions. Social psychology tries to explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings. This course will specifically explore three main domains of social psychology: (1) the individual within the social world; (2) the influence that individuals have on other individuals or groups; (3) the dynamics of groups and society. The textbook used in class primarily studies social psychology through a *natural science* approach, providing insights about social behavior via the scientific method and experimental research. However, this course will also incorporate insights drawn from the *human sciences*, such as Buddhist, narrative, existential, psychodynamic and phenomenological psychologies.

This course is designed to help you *cultivate curiosity* and generate your own questions about social phenomena that are of interest to you. Each class will kick off with questions that have arisen for you about what it means to be social as a human being, in response to the assigned readings. To satiate your curiosity, you will participate in a group research project in which you and your peers will select a specific research question of interest to you pertaining to social psychology. You will interview research participants about this topic, generate research findings, share those findings with the class, and discuss its relevance to our real-life social worlds. In this manner, this course will empower you to transform your own personal curiosities into the contribution of new knowledge for the field of social psychology.

The course will be conducted in both discussion and lecture format, and participation is expected. Therefore, preparation prior to each class is necessary.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Be familiar with basic principles of social psychology, including major theories and developments in the history of social psychology
2. Evaluate empirical literature regarding the science of social behavior
3. Apply psychological concepts, theories and research findings to social dynamics in everyday life and current events in our wider society
4. Design and conduct a qualitative research study about a social psychology topic of interest, and present research findings through a class presentation and formal research paper.

Required Readings:

We will primarily be using the following textbook:

Gilovich, Keltner, & Nisbett (2012). *Social Psychology* (3rd Ed). New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN: 978-0393913231

Additional articles will be also assigned which are accessible as pdfs on Courseden.

The course goals will be met and evaluated on the basis of the class assignments below.

Evaluation and Grading:

Participation/Attendance (10%): Every student will be expected to come to each class prepared to contribute 1-2 questions they have about social psychology, sparked from the reading material assigned for that day. Sharing your curiosities from the readings will help us kick off dialogue about the topics that we are exploring together. You are also expected to bring the textbook, and hard copy of the pdf readings, to class. Attendance will also factor into your participation grade, and more than three unexcused absences will lead you to lose all points in this area (i.e. a 10% grade drop of your final grade).

Quizzes (10% of final grade)

There will be five short quizzes given in-class throughout the semester, designed to test your knowledge up until that point. The quizzes will cover material from the assigned course readings, both textbook and PDFs. The quizzes will be impromptu and unannounced.

Short Essays (20% of final grade):

1. *Due 2/17: "Social Psychology and Self-Other Encounters"* (5 double spaced pages): Think of an encounter with another person that feels curious or interesting to you. Describe the encounter, and then analyze it in light of socio-psychological principles learned in class. Illustrate how this encounter impacted your self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-presentation, self-regulation, and self-evaluation. Also analyze the ways in which attributions, biases, explanations, and heuristics/judgments about the other person were operating during/after this encounter.
2. *Due 3/20: "Social Psychology and Current Events"* (5 double spaced pages): Select a particular news story/current event that interests you from a newspaper, magazine, TV/video, or radio outlet. (1): Identify concepts and theories from social psychology that are relevant to the news story/current event, and analyze the event through the lens of those concepts. And (2): analyze the particular *persuasion techniques* used by the media outlet in conveying the news story in a manner that strives to influence readers' social emotions/cognitions/behavior.

Midterm Exam (30% of final grade):

There will be a midterm exam that consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. The questions on the exams will draw from material covered in both the textbook readings and class lectures, in order to ensure that you have learned and retained the significant concepts of psychology to that point.

Group Qualitative Research Project (30% of final grade):

At the beginning of the semester, I will pass around a sign-up sheet with research topics about social psychology. You will be divided into groups, in which you will conduct a qualitative research study throughout the semester to form a specific research question about a social psychology topic of interest, and uncover knowledge about it.

The final project will be presented to the class at the end of the semester. Each group will have 20 minutes to present their research topic and findings, with 10 minute for Q&A. Feel free to be incorporate creative elements in your presentation style, such as powerpoint, movies, performance skits, poetry, artwork, music, or however else you might best impart knowledge to us about your newfound expertise in this research area.

The group will also be required to submit a 8-10 page research paper (double spaced) which summarizes their literature review, research question and methodologies, research findings, and relevance/application. All group papers will be due on the final exam day.

Grading Information and Policy:

There are a total of 100 points possible in the course. These 100 points will be used to calculate a percentage grade according to the standard percentage point divisions (see table below):

Grading structure and point scale

90-100 points	90% - 100%	A
80 points - 89 points	80% - 89%	B
70 points - 79 points	70% - 79%	C
60 points - 69 points	60% - 69%	D
< 60 points	< 60%	F

Attendance/Late Policy:

Formal attendance will be taken throughout the semester. More than three unexcused absences in the semester will lead to a loss in participation points and result in a 10% grade drop.

Additionally, three unexcused “tardies” (arriving after attendance has already been taken at the start of class) will be counted as the equivalent of one unexcused absence.

Syllabus

As this document corresponds with a dynamic entity (a class), this syllabus is subject to change.

Semester Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading due	Assignment due
M 1/7	Introduction and syllabus		
W 1/9	Introduction to social psychology	Textbook Chapter 1	
M 1/14	Methodological approaches to social psychology	Textbook Chapter 2	

W 1/16	Designing a qualitative research study	PDF on Courseden: "An invitation to qualitative research"	
M 1/21	No class to honor MLK Jr.		
W 1/23	The social self	Textbook Chapter 3	
M 1/28	The storied self	PDF on Courseden: Hardcastle "Self-Stories"	
W 1/30	The political self	PDF on Courseden: Simon: "Politicized Collective identity"	
M 2/4	Social cognition	Textbook Chapter 4	
W 2/6	Social cognition cont'd	Finish Chapter 4	
M 2/11	Social attributions	Textbook Chapter 5	
W 2/13	Social attributions cont'd	Finish Chapter 5	Short Essay #1 due on Courseden by Sunday 2/17 at midnight
M 2/18	Persuasion	Textbook Chapter 8	
W 2/20	Persuasion cont'd	Finish Chapter 8	
M 2/25	Social influence	Textbook Chapter 9	
W 2/27	Social influence cont'd	Finish Chapter 9	
M 3/4	Groups	Textbook Chapter 10	
W 3/6	Groups cont'd	Finish Chapter 10	
M 3/11	Midterm review		
W 3/13	Midterm exam		
M 3/18	No class: spring break		
W 3/20	No class: spring break		
M 3/25	Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination	Textbook chapter 11	
W 3/27	Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination (cont'd)	Finish Chapter 11	
M 4/1	Guest lecture TBD		
W 4/3	Aggression	Textbook Chapter 12	Short Essay #2 due on Courseden by Sunday 4/2 at midnight
M 4/8	Altruism and cooperation	Textbook Chapter 14	
W 4/10	Altruism and cooperation	Finish Chapter 14	
M 4/15	Love	PDF on Courseden: bell hooks "All About Love"	

W 4/17	Phenomenological research study example; class time to prepare		
M 4/22	Final group research projects (3)		
W 4/24	Final group research projects (3)		
M 4/29	Final group research projects (3)		
W 5/1			All final group research papers due

Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the [Student Handbook](#).

Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

Accessibility Services

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR;

further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact [Accessibility Services](#).

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement: If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and require assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the [Office for Accessibility Services](#). UWG also provides [Accessibility Statements for Technology](#) that you may be required to use for this course.

For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, UWG Email, Credit Hour, and UWG Honor Code policies as well as information on Academic Tutoring, Student Services, and Technical Requirements, Privacy Policy, and Accessibility Statements, please see the [Common Language for Syllabus](#) document.

Academic Support

The [Center for Academic Success](#) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu

The [University Writing Center](#) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu

[Smarthinking](#) offers online tutoring services and resources (including the Writing Center) for UWG students/instructors in all courses. A link to Smarthinking is available in CourseDen under Resources in the navigation bar.

Here is a great resource of [Student Services](#) for all students at UWG, whether or not they are taking online courses. This link provides students with most of the information they need. If a student is experiencing distress and needs some help, check out [UWG Cares](#).

Additional Support Information

Technical Support: Technical support for CourseDen, as well as the technological requirements, accessibility statements, privacy statements, tutorials, and other information can be found at [Technology Requirements](#).