Psychology 847 – Advanced Social Psychology (Core Course)
Dr. Andy Karpinski
Spring 2006

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Office Hours  
Tu/Th 10-11 am  
W 1:30-3:30 pm  
and by appointment

I am happy to meet with you to go over lecture material, journal readings, tests, assignments, or to address any questions you have about the class – just stop by during office hours or make an appointment.

Class Meets: Wednesday, 10:30 am -1:30 pm, 642 Weiss Hall

Prerequisites: A reasonable understanding of statistics and research design.

Required Books: One of the following:

Course Website: Blackboard
With the exception of the required books, all required journal and book readings will be available from the course website on Blackboard.

Why are we here???
This course will provide you with a graduate level introduction to the theoretical perspectives, research methods, and empirical findings in contemporary social psychology. Social psychology is the scientific study of how people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are affected by the real or imagined presence of others. More specifically, the three main goals of this course are for you to learn:
1) The major concepts, research findings, issues, and controversies in the field of social psychology,
2) How social psychologists derive and test their theories and hypotheses through research, and
3) How to think critically about social psychological findings

Class Structure
The first two hours of class will be a lecture/discussion format. I will lecture on the material covered in that week’s readings and moderate a discussion around those topics. In the last hour of class, two students will lead a debate on a topic related to that week’s materials.

For you to get the most out of this class, it is essential that you:
1) Read. There is a heavy reading load for this class. I expect you to have critically read all of the readings before you come to class.
2) Think. It will not be sufficient for you to memorize key theories and empirical findings. You must think critically about the readings, lectures, and discussions.
3) Write. You will have to write weekly discussion questions and two brief papers (a 4-5 page debate paper and a 4 page book commentary).
4) Participate. I expect you to be an active participant in the class discussions and to lead a class debate once during the semester.
Grading:
- Midterm Exam 25%
- Final Exam 35%
- Reaction Comments/Thoughts 10%
- Debate Paper/Presentation 20%
- Book Commentary 10%

Exams
There will be an in-class midterm and an in-class final exam. Details on the format and content of the exam will be provided in class.

Reaction Comments/Thoughts
Each week you must email me your thoughts/comments/questions on that week’s readings (approximately 1 page; no more than 2 pages). These comments should be a springboard for class discussion on the readings. You can comment on common themes, contradictions, important factors that were omitted by the authors or areas in which the authors appeared to be confused. Comments must be emailed 24 hours before class meets (10:30 am on Tuesday) in the text of a message (not as an attachment), and they will be graded on a √+, √, √-, primarily on the basis of depth of thought. You do not need to email comments on the week that you will be leading the debate.

Debate Papers/Presentation
During the last hour of class, two students will lead the class in a debate on a topic that is at least loosely related to that week’s topic. You will be assigned a topic and a position to defend regarding that topic. Before class, you must turn in a 4-5 page paper in which you defend your position. This paper should include outside references. You should prepare a 15-minute presentation defending your position that you will present in class. After the presentations, we will have 30 minutes for questions, comments, and discussion. Your grade will be determined by the quality of your paper, your presentation, and your ability to engage the class in your position. You must email me your paper and also turn in a hard copy.

Book Commentary
You will be assigned one of four non-scientific books about a social psychological topic. For the final class (April 26), you should write a brief (no more than 4 pages) paper in which you critique and evaluate the book. What I am particularly interested in is your views on how the author presents social psychological information to a general audience. In class, you and your fellow bookmates will have 30 minutes to lead a lecture/class discussion on the content and merits of the book (4-6 students will be assigned to each book). The presentation should be a joint effort with your bookmates, but each person must turn in an individually written paper. You must email me your paper and also turn in a hard copy.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, or another person's assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating, you will fail the assignment, and, depending upon the severity of the violation, you may fail the class. I will not hesitate to bring the matter to the college.

Classroom Needs: If you have any specific needs (e.g., related to vision, hearing, learning, or medical conditions) or any religious or cultural practices, please let me know by the second week of class so that I can make the appropriate arrangements.
Class Schedule

Week 1: Jan 18
History of Social Psychology

Week 2: Jan 25
The Person in the Situation

*Debate topic*: Are repressed memories real?

Week 3: Feb 1
Automaticity of social processes

*Debate Topic*: Do people have free will?

Week 4: Feb 8
Cognitive Consistency/Dissonance

*Debate Topic*: Is deception of human participants ethical?

Week 5: Feb 15
Attribution and Person Perception

*Debate Topic*: Are people rational perceivers of the social world?
Week 6: Feb 22
Attitudes & Behavior


Debate Topic: Is subliminal persuasion a myth?

Week 7: March 1
Exam 1

Week 8: March 15
The Social Self


Debate topic: Are self-esteem improvement programs misguided?

Week 9: March 22
Social Interactions


Debate topic: Are girls at a disadvantage to boys in a school setting?
Week 10: March 29

**Stereotyping and Prejudice**


Debate Topic: Is affirmative action a good solution to race problems?

Week 11: April 5

**Relationships & Attraction**


Debate Topic: Is evolutionary psychology a useful framework for understanding gender differences in attraction/mating?

Week 12: April 12

**Aggression**


Debate topic: Does media violence cause aggression?

Week 13: April 19

**Group Processes**


Debate Topic: Is social neuroscience the future of social psychology?
Week 14: April 26
Popular Social Psychology (Read only one book; No discussion questions)

Week 15: May 3
Final Exam