Sociology 529/492: Social Psychology
Spring 2015
Monday 9:30 a.m. - 12:10 p.m., Davison 128

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Course Description: This is an intensive lecture and discussion course surveying social psychology, with an emphasis on the interrelations among individuals, groups, and society. Social psychology has four major concerns, the impact that: (1) individuals have on one another; (2) a group has on its individual members; (3) individual members have on the group; and (4) groups have on one another. The course will begin with an overview of theoretical perspectives and research methods. The remaining weeks will be devoted to core areas of theory and empirical research, including social cognition, attitudes, persuasion and social influence, group conformity and cohesion, interpersonal attraction, the self, impression management, altruism, aggression, deviance, and social structure & personality.

Social psychology is a vast field; as such, this course cannot cover everything. The course incorporates material from both psychological and sociological psychology, but is somewhat slanted toward psychological approaches. Students are encouraged to further pursue their interests in social psychology in other courses, such as Social Structure and Personality.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor is required. Some familiarity with quantitative research methods is highly recommended. A handout distributed on the first day of class provides a basic review of statistical methodologies; students with limited backgrounds in statistics should familiarize themselves with this information.

Course Objectives: Students will be able to (1) identify and critically assess the core theoretical frameworks used in social psychology; (2) understand the basic quantitative and qualitative research methods used in social psychology: (3) evaluate the ways that individuals, groups, and society mutually influence one another; and (4) develop an independent research project that draws on the themes, concepts and methods of social psychology. Several methods will be used to measure achievement of these objectives: (1) participating in in-depth weekly discussions of assigned readings; (2) leading the discussion for a seminar; (3) submitting weekly discussion questions on the assigned readings; and (4) writing a final research paper or research proposal.

Readings Assignments: The course reading list includes review chapters and articles, classic works, and recent empirical studies. All readings are available via our course Sakai site, unless noted otherwise. The two required books are available at the Rutgers Barnes & Noble. Students are encouraged to read recent issues of the two premier social psychology journals: Social Psychology Quarterly (American Sociological Association) and Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (American Psychological Association). I do not expect students to read the Recommended Readings each week, yet they are an important to the education of sociological social psychologists!
Required books:


Overview of Course Requirements and Grading:
The course is organized as a seminar, and will blend lecture and discussion. During the first half of each class, I will provide a lecture clarifying key concepts and an overview of the week’s readings. The remaining time will be dedicated to in-depth discussion of the week’s readings, and a discussion of questions that students introduce. Each week a student (or pair of students) will lead and moderate discussion. Course grades will be based on three components:

1. **Leading a discussion (10 percent of grade).**
   Each week, a student or pair of students will be responsible for leading discussion. The student leader(s) may base the discussion on the questions submitted by class participants, or may design a discussion that incorporates both course readings and his/her own research interests. Each week, all class members will email 2-3 discussion questions to the discussion leader and professor, no later than 3 p.m. Sunday on the day prior to class. Students will not receive credit for questions submitted after deadline.

2. **Participation in weekly discussion (20 percent of grade).**
   This grade reflects class attendance, participation in discussion, and the quality of the questions submitted each week. Students should read carefully so that they come to class with insightful comments and questions. Students who read materials that are not on the syllabus but that are germane to the discussion should feel free to contribute their expertise to the discussion.

3. **Final research paper or proposal (70 percent of class grade).**
The main course requirement is the preparation of an original research paper or research proposal (about 25 pages, double spaced). Each student will present a brief synopsis of their research project during the final class session. Paper topic and methodology will be chosen in consultation with the instructor. The paper should define a research question, review relevant prior studies, and either: (1) analyze suitable data, and present the findings and their implications (research paper) or (2) propose a detailed strategy and justification for conducting an original research project (research proposal). Students are encouraged to use this class project to develop a qualifying paper, conference paper, dissertation prospectus, or journal article. Completion of the paper/proposal will proceed in four steps.

   a. Each student will submit to the Sakai site a brief (2-3 page) proposal by the start of class on February 23. This brief proposal should describe your research question, the data or method to be used, and the analyses to be undertaken. You are encouraged to meet with me early in the semester to discuss your research plan.
b. OPTIONAL. A first draft of the paper/proposal is due by 7 p.m. on Monday April 27. Students who submit early drafts will receive feedback by Friday May 1, so that they may incorporate this feedback into their final class presentations.

c. Each student will make a ~10-15 minute presentation to the class on May 4. (Duration of presentations will be based on total number of students in the course.

d. The final draft of the paper/proposal is due no later than Monday May 11 at noon. I will not accept papers submitted after that deadline.

For students planning to conduct secondary data analyses, many data sets with rich social psychological measures are available through University of Michigan’s Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu). Among these data sets are the Adolescent Health Study (Add-Health), General Social Survey (GSS), Midlife in the United States (MIDUS), Monitoring the Future (MTF), and many others. Information on accessing data sets will be made available during the early weeks of the seminar.

**NO INCOMPLETES WILL BE GIVEN.**

**UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES**

**Academic misconduct:** Rutgers University policies state that academic misconduct may involve: cheating; fabrication; facilitating academic dishonesty; plagiarism; denying others access to information or material. Any instances of academic misconduct will be reported to your dean. Plagiarism is using someone else's words without giving the author proper attribution. For further information on plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty see the University's academic integrity policy: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml)

**Class conduct:** The Sociology Department encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe and productive classroom environment. Students and faculty must act with mutual respect and courtesy. Behaviors that distract students and faculty are not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by the instructor. Courteous expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted. If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. The University Code of Student Conduct [http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml](http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml).

**Diversity Statement**
The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.
READING SCHEDULE

January 26. Introduction & Theoretical Perspectives

Required:


Recommended:


February 2. Research Methods

Required:


*Recommended:*


*Social Cognition*

*Required:*


*Recommended:*

**Attribution**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


**Person Perception**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


[Note: Test your own implicit attitudes here: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html]

February 16. NO CLASS SESSION [Work on initial project proposal]

February 23. Attitudes and Attitude-Behavior Linkages

Required:


Recommended:


March 2. Persuasion and Social Influence

Required:


**Recommended:**


**March 9. Groups and Group Dynamics: Cohesion, Conformity, and Conflict**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


**March 16. Enjoy your spring break!**

**March 23. Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


March 30. Self & Identity

Required:


Recommended:


April 6. Symbolic Interactionism and Impression Management

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


April 13. Altruism and Aggression

**Altruism & Helping**

**Required:**


*Recommended:*


*Aggression and Anti-Social Behavior*

*Required:*


Recommended:


April 20. Deviance

Required:


**Recommended:**


**April 27. Social Structure and Personality: An Overview and Course Wrap-up**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


**May 4. Student Presentations**

Have a wonderful summer vacation!