Welcome to our class on “Sociological Approaches to Social Psychology”! This semester we’ll explore sociology’s contributions to our understanding of the way we think. By focusing on families, organizations, professions, ethnic groups, religious groups, and other “thought communities” rather than on individuals, this course sheds light on the impersonal, conventional, and normative aspects of the way we perceive, remember, reckon time, make distinctions, notice and ignore things, assign meaning, as well as construct our identity.

There are four required books for this course: Social Mindscapes by Eviatar Zerubavel (ISBN 0-674-81390-1), The Social Construction of Reality by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (ISBN 0-385-05898-5), The Fine Line by Eviatar Zerubavel (ISBN 0-226-98159-2), and Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs by Wayne Brekhus (ISBN 0-226-07292-4). They have all been ordered through the University’s bookstores (the Douglass one as well as the Barnes & Noble by the train station). All the other required course readings are posted on the course website on sakai.rutgers.edu. Students are expected to read all the required material prior to the class for which it is assigned.

The course’s learning goals are to help you gain (a) an understanding of the way our social environment impacts the way we think, which we often wrongly assume to be strictly psychologically and/or biologically based; (b) an ability to use sociological concepts to think about a wide variety of topics (from the social construction of similarity and difference to the social foundations of both rigidity and curiosity); (c) an improved understanding of major intellectual debates over relativism, ethnocentricity, essentialism, and constructionism; and (d) an ability to communicate complex ideas effectively to a general audience. By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to articulate sociological theories, review disciplinary literature, synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights, produce a well-written paper, and present their work orally. In addition, they will also be able to demonstrate multicultural sensitivity as well as global awareness.
The course assignments include (a) a **midterm exam** on October 12, (b) a **5-page term paper** (due on November 21), and (c) a **final exam** (on December 20 at 12:00). Each of these assignments will count for one third of your final course grade, and no extra credit will be permitted. Late assignments will be penalized, so make sure that your work is submitted on time. No late papers or make-up exams will be permitted without a valid written excuse such as documentation from your doctor or dean.

Class attendance (including arriving on time and staying until the end of the class period) is required. **Students are expected to attend all classes.** If you expect to miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. **Poor class attendance will affect the grade.**

It is acceptable to use other people’s ideas in your written work as long as you give credit to the original author. You act professionally and ethically when you do this, and it is considered dishonest to pass others’ ideas or words as your own. Such behavior constitutes plagiarism and can result in failure in the class and potentially dismissal from Rutgers. Students are required to follow current Rutgers’ Academic Integrity Policy as indicated in the website [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf). For further information on how to avoid plagiarism in your work, see [http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml). To give credit to the original author of ideas you present and protect yourself from charges of dishonesty, always cite in your text the sources you used and list all of them in a bibliography at the end of your written assignment.

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Behavior that distracts students and faculty during class is therefore not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, and leaving early without informing your instructor beforehand. 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 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 and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles.

The best way to reach me is by email. **Please write “Soc 319” in the subject line** so I can recognize your email quickly. Please remember to also **sign your name** in the email.
1. Introduction

September 5

General Introduction

2. Sociology and Cognition

September 7


September 12

Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, pp. 6-13, 100-110.

September 14


3. Classification

September 19


September 21


**September 26**


**September 28**


**October 3**


4. Memory

**October 5**


5. Perception

**October 10**


Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, pp. 23-34.

**October 12**

**Midterm Exam**

6. Framing

**October 17**

7. Attention

October 19
Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, pp. 35-44.

October 24

October 26

October 31

8. Symbols and Meaning

November 2
November 7

Zerubavel, Social Mindscapes, pp. 72-76.

9. Markedness and Unmarkedness

November 9


November 14


November 16


10. Social Identity

November 21

Term Paper Due


November 28

**November 30**


### 11. Conclusion

**December 5**

Student Presentations

**December 7**

Student Presentations

**December 12**

Conclusion