

PSYC 360

ADVANCED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Instructor: Larry White, professor of psychology
Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 – 3:50 in Science Center 250
Office Hours: MF 9:30 – 10:30 and TuTh 4:00 – 5:00 in Science Center 236
Telephones: 608-363-2282 (office) and 608-365-0275 (home)
E-mail: WhiteLT@beloit.edu

Course Objectives

Social psychology is the scientific study of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals in social situations. This advanced seminar is intended for juniors and seniors who have some background in social or cultural psychology and wish to gain a deeper understanding of major issues in the field. We will read and discuss classic and contemporary theory and research in social psychology, with special attention given to how ideas develop. You will also design and put into action an “intervention” that aims to remedy a specific problem or enhance the quality of life on campus.

This seminar is a capstone experience that asks you to build upon what you have learned as a psychology major and as a student at a top-notch liberal arts college. I expect you to perform at a high level in four domains: (1) understanding and discussing complex ideas, (2) evaluating evidence and the validity of claims, (3) building on what you have learned about research methods and statistics to design and evaluate an intervention project, and (4) making well-reasoned moral judgments about what is good, right, and just.

Books

The first four books are required; the fifth is recommended. All five books are available at Turtle Creek Bookstore.

1. Aronson, E. (2010). *Not by chance alone: My life as a social psychologist*. New York: Basic Books.
2. Ross, L., & Nisbett, R. (1991/2011). *The person and the situation: Perspectives of social psychology*. London: Pinter & Martin Ltd.
3. Cooper, J. (2007). *Cognitive dissonance: Fifty years of a classic theory*. London: Sage Publications.
4. Wilson, T. (2011). *Redirect: The surprising new science of psychological change*. New York: Little Brown and Company.
5. Schwartz, B. M., Landrum, R. E., & Gurung, R. A. R. (2012). *An easyguide to APA Style*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Journal Articles

These articles, most of which are citation classics, are written BY research psychologists FOR research psychologists. I don't expect you to understand 100% of what you read. I simply ask that you do your best. This means you'll sometimes need to use a dictionary or search on-line for definitions of technical terms and professional jargon. You'll need to spend time with each book

chapter and article. Highlight key points, write notes in the margin, pose questions while you read, and make connections with other things we've read. If you read in this way, you'll understand the material better and remember it for a longer period of time. You'll also be better prepared for our conversations in class and for the exams.

1. Pepitone, A. (1981). Lessons from the history of social psychology. *American Psychologist*, 36(9), 972-985.
2. Berscheid, E. (1992). A glance back at a quarter century of social psychology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, 525-533.
3. Cialdini, R., Reno, R., & Kallgren, C. (1990). A focus theory of normative conduct: Recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(6), 1015-1026.
4. Bateson, M., Nettle, D., & Roberts, G. (2006). Cues of being watched enhance cooperation in a real-world setting. *Biology Letters*, 2, 412-414.
5. Latané, B. (1981). The psychology of social impact. *American Psychologist*, 36(4), 343-356.
6. Triandis, H. C. (1989). The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts. *Psychological Review*, 96, 506-520.
7. Crocker, J., & Major, B. (1989). Social stigma and self-esteem: The self-protective properties of stigma. *Psychological Review*, 96(4), 608-630.
8. Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497-529.
9. Cialdini, R. (2001, October). Harnessing the science of persuasion. *Harvard Business Review*, 72-79.
10. Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (2005). The influence of attitudes on behavior. In D. Albarracín, B. T. Johnson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *The Handbook of Attitudes* (pp. 173-221). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
11. Weick, K. (1984). Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems. *American Psychologist*, 39(1), 40-49.
12. Bushman, B. J., & Anderson, C. A. (2001). Media violence and the American public: Scientific facts versus media misinformation. *American Psychologist*, 56(6/7), 477-489.
13. Kassin, S. (2005). On the psychology of confessions: Does "innocence" put innocents at risk? *American Psychologist*, 60(3), 215-228.
14. Iyengar, S., Wells, R., & Schwartz, B. (2006). Doing better but feeling worse: Looking for the "best" job undermines satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, 17(2), 143-150.
15. Keizer, K., Lindenberg, S., & Steg, L. (2008). The spreading of disorder. *Science*, 322, 1681-1685.
16. Thaler, R., Sunstein, C., & Balz, J. (2013). Choice architecture. In E. Shafir (Ed.), *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy* (pp. 428-439). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
17. Watters, E. (2013, February 25). We aren't the world. *Pacific Standard*. Retrieved from <http://www.psmag.com/magazines/pacific-standard-cover-story/joe-henrich-weird-ultimatum-game-shaking-up-psychology-economics-53135/>
18. Varnum, M., Grossmann, I., Kitayama, S., & Nisbett, R. (2010). The origin of cultural differences in cognition: The social orientation hypothesis. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 19(1), 9-13.
19. Gelfand, M., et al. (2011). Differences between tight and loose cultures: A 33-nation study. *Science*, 332, 1100-1104.
20. Stephens, N. M., Markus, H. R., & Townsend, S. S. M. (2007). Choice as an act of meaning: The case of social class. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93(5), 814-830.
21. Gilbert et al. (2009). The surprising power of neighborly advice. *Science*, 323, 1617-1619.
22. Cialdini, R. (2009). We have to break up. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4(1), 5-6.
23. Abbott, A. (2012). Disputed results a fresh blow to social psych. *Nature*, 497, 16.
24. Carpenter, S. (2012). Psychology's bold initiative. *Science*, 335, 1558-1561.

Part 1: A (Brief and Selective) History of Social Psychology

Tuesday, Jan. 21	Introduction to the course.
Thursday, Jan. 23	Discuss Aronson's memoir, Introduction and Chapters 1-4.
Tuesday, Jan. 28	Discuss Aronson's memoir, Chapters 5-7.
Thursday, Jan. 30	Discuss Aronson's memoir, Chapters 8-10.
Tuesday, Feb. 4	Discuss articles 1 and 2.

Part 2: Formative Perspectives and Influential Models

Thursday, Feb. 6	Discuss articles 3 and 4.
Tuesday, Feb. 11	Discuss articles 5 and 6.
Thursday, Feb. 13	Discuss articles 7 and 8.
Tuesday, Feb. 18	Formal presentation of proposed projects.
Thursday, Feb. 20	Discuss articles 9 and 10. Project proposal due in class.
Tuesday, Feb. 25	Discuss Ross & Nisbett, pp. 24-26 (overview) and chapters 2-3.
Thursday, Feb. 27	Discuss Ross & Nisbett, chapters 4-6.
Tuesday, March 4	Discuss Ross & Nisbett, chapter 8 and Afterword.
Thursday, March 6	Midterm exam.

Part 3: An In-Depth Case Study – The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance

Tuesday, March 18	Discuss Cooper's <i>Cognitive Dissonance</i> , Chapters 1-3.
Thursday, March 20	Discuss <i>Cognitive Dissonance</i> , Chapters 4-6.
Tuesday, March 25	Discuss <i>Cognitive Dissonance</i> , Chapters 7-8 & Afterword.

Part 4: Applications of Social Psychology

Thursday, March 27	Discuss articles 11 and 12.
Tuesday, April 1	Discuss articles 13 and 14.

Thursday, April 3	Discuss articles 15 and 16.
Tuesday, April 8	Discuss Wilson's <i>Redirect</i> , chapters 1-3.
Thursday, April 10	Discuss Wilson's <i>Redirect</i> , chapters 4-6.
Tuesday, April 15	Discuss Wilson's <i>Redirect</i> , chapters 7-10.
Thursday, April 17	No class. Student Symposium Day.
Tuesday, April 22	"Social Psychology in Action" poster session.

Part 5: The Contemporary Scene in Social Psychology

Thursday, April 24	Discuss articles 17-19.
Tuesday, April 29	Discuss articles 20 and 21.
Thursday, May 1	Research report due in class.
Tuesday, May 6	Discuss articles 22-24.

If you are unable to attend class or complete an assignment because of an upcoming event (e.g., a religious holiday), please talk with me as soon as possible so we can make alternate arrangements.

If you have a disability and would like to speak to someone about possible accommodations, please visit the Office of Learning Enrichment and Disability Services (LEADS), located in Pearsons Hall on the second floor. If you wish to receive accommodations in this course, you must obtain an Accommodation Verification Letter from the Director of LEADS, dated for this semester.

Assignments and Responsibilities

Based on my experience as a college teacher and feedback from former students, I propose the following assignments and responsibilities.

Discussions of Assigned Readings: I will present a few mini-lectures, but most of our time together in this seminar will be devoted to discussions of common readings. To have a fruitful conversation, it's important that everyone be fully prepared. If each of us is present, prepared, and engaged, our seminar will be an intellectually enriching and gratifying experience for all of us. To provide you with the proper incentive, I propose the following:

- You can earn a maximum of 10 points for each of 24 class meetings. The number of points you earn will depend on the degree to which you demonstrate mastery of the material and make thoughtful contributions to our discussions. I'll give you feedback during midterm break about your performance in class discussions.

- At the beginning of each class meeting, I'll draw 2-3 names from a hat. If your name is drawn, it will be your responsibility to (a) summarize succinctly one of the readings assigned for that week and (b) jump start our conversation by posing a thought-provoking question. (I'll also prepare a few questions and comments.) If your name is drawn and you fulfill your duties, you'll earn at least 9 points for that class meeting. If your name is drawn and you're not prepared, you'll earn only 5 points. If your name is not drawn, you'll earn between 6 and 10 points, depending on your contributions to that afternoon's seminar.
- If you miss a class, you'll earn no points for that class meeting.
- At the end of the semester, you'll be able to drop your two lowest participation scores. This effectively means you can miss two classes or be unprepared on two occasions without jeopardizing your course grade. You can earn a maximum of 220 points for your contributions to class discussions.

Let's strive to maximize productive discussion and minimize unproductive discussion. It's easy to distinguish between the two. In a productive discussion, everyone is prepared, everyone participates, people think before speaking, comments build on earlier comments, and differences of opinion are respected. In an unproductive discussion, a few individuals monopolize the discussion and people who are unprepared speak anyway. Also, please respect the fact that this classroom is a "No Phone Zone."

An Intervention Project: You and a partner will design and implement a socially-useful *behavior change project* and evaluate its success (i.e., effectiveness). Here are some examples of potential goals for an on-campus intervention: less littering, better attendance at club meetings, more smiling on campus, fewer instances of wasteful printing in the library, less food wasted in Commons, fewer arguments in intramural games, decreased water usage in the residence halls, and fewer instances of excessive drinking.

Think of this intervention project as a pilot project. As Ross & Nisbett note (1991/2011, p. 17), "Situations are highly complex, and so are people's interpretations of them. Social remedies normally should first be tried out on a small scale." Tim Wilson (2011, p. 238) also has some valuable advice: "In order to change people's behavior, we have to see the world through their eyes. These interpretations are not always set in stone, and in fact can be redirected with just the right approach. Small changes in interpretations can have self-sustaining effects, leading to long-lasting changes in behavior."

You and your partner will collaborate to write a 2-page project proposal (worth 30 points) in which you tell me (a) what your intervention is, (b) why you think it will work, explained in social psychological terms, and (c) how you will know if it works (i.e., a small evaluation study). Your proposal is due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, February 20**.

You and your partner will tell the rest of us about your intervention project in a 7-8 minute presentation (worth 20 points) on **Tuesday, February 18**. (The presentation will be organized around the same three points as the proposal. It is scheduled in advance of the written proposal so you can incorporate feedback from the class into your proposal.)

After collecting and analyzing the data, you and your partner will construct a research poster that describes the highlights of your intervention project (worth 40 points) for a “Social Psychology in Action” poster session that will be open to the public. The poster session will take place during class on **Tuesday, April 22**. Your poster will be evaluated in terms of criteria listed in an evaluation sheet that I will distribute separately.

At the conclusion of your intervention project, you’ll write an APA-style research report (worth 100 points) that describes your project and its results. (Your partner will write his or her own report.) As you know, APA-style research reports include a title page, abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion, references, and tables/figures. Your report is due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, May 1**. Late papers will be docked 10 points for each day. Your paper will be evaluated in terms of criteria listed in a grading rubric that I will distribute separately.

This challenging project will occupy a lot of your time and energy this semester. Your classmates and I will help you brainstorm ideas, devise an intervention, and design a way to evaluate the effectiveness of your intervention.

Midterm and Final Exams: These exams will give you an opportunity to organize and review what you have learned and think carefully about important issues. The exams will be 5/3/2 essay exams (worth 60 points each). Here are some questions you can expect to see on either the midterm or the final exam.

- A. What lessons for the future of social psychology can be learned by a careful consideration of social psychology’s history?
- B. Where do social psychological ideas come from? What can be done to increase the number and quality of ideas in social psychology?
- C. In your opinion, what are social psychology’s most valuable contributions to psychology-at-large and to humankind? Defend your answer.

The midterm exam is scheduled for **Thursday, March 6, at 2:00 p.m.** The final exam is scheduled for **Saturday, May 10, at 10:00 a.m.**

There are 530 possible points in this course. If you earn 90% or more of the points (i.e., 477+), you’ll receive at least an A-. If you earn 80% or more (424+), you’ll receive at least a B- and so forth.

To perform well in this course, you’ll need to be a *deep* learner rather than a *surface* learner (someone who tries to remember as many details as possible) or a *strategic* learner (someone who is primarily concerned with making good grades). Deep learners think about conclusions and evidence when they read a book or listen to a lecture; they identify key concepts, mull over assumptions, and consider implications and applications.

The success of our seminar depends on YOU more than it depends on me. I thank you in advance for your positive contributions to our course.

Spring 2014