



INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY - PSYC 202.001 (3 credits)

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Sandra Parsons, Ph.D.
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COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The purpose of this course is to provide you with a broad introduction to the major themes that characterize today's social psychology. It will be impossible to touch upon all of the phenomena of interest to social psychologists; however, in combination with the assigned readings and Myers' textbook, I will provide you with a comprehensive view of the field

Specific learning outcomes:

- Define major theories and concepts in social psychology
- Characterize and describe the questions that social psychologists study
- Identify social psychological factors when explaining behavior
- Demonstrate understanding of concepts by applying them to everyday experiences/media
- Analyze current events from social psychological perspectives
- Evaluate theories of social psychology with respect to explaining and predicting our own and others' behaviors.

INQUIRY BASED LEARNING IN COURSE:

We are committed to improving our students' access to experiential learning and research as part of our curricula. Listed below are the elements of inquiry-based learning that will engage in this semester in this course.

- Problem-based or project-based learning (assignment focused on studying or developing a solution to a problem)
- Selecting primary and secondary sources to support arguments
- Critical reading/analysis of a text and/or media
- Selecting my own topic for an assignment/project
- Explaining or critiquing work of others (peers or scholars)
- Forming my own opinion or making my own conclusion based on information/data
- Developing open-ended questions or problems

You will practice using the following inquiry-based facets of learning:

Framing: what's our purpose?

Choose a topic/develop questions

Find a citation to support your assertion

Methodology: What do we need? How will we get it?

Source selection
Critical reading
Fieldwork - Use data collected in-class to evaluate/critique published studies

Evaluation: What do we trust? / Synthesis: What does it mean?

Find connections between concepts across several readings

Apply concepts from readings and discussion to novel situations and share findings

Discuss assignments in pairs/with the full class

Course Structure

The course will follow primarily a lecture format, with questions and comments expected and encouraged. I will also use lecture time to provide some demonstrations and hand-on experiences. The material will be organized to cover material in roughly the same order as the book chapters. However, it will not be simply a duplication of your reading. The lectures and the readings will complement each other and provide students with a comprehensive survey of the field of social psychology. Class attendance is expected.

We will cover the following major topics:

- Social thinking – how we view ourselves and others
- Social influence – the cultural sources of our attitudes and the subtle forces that affect us
- Social relations – how attitudes and behavioral elements shape our relationships
- Application – how social psychology applies to practical contexts

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Myers, D. (2012). *Social Psychology*. 11th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.

Coats, E.J., & Feldman, R. S. (2001). *Classic and Contemporary Readings in Social Psychology*. 3rd Ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Lesko, W. A. (2011). *Readings in Social Psychology: General, Classic, and Contemporary Selections*. 8th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.

Other Readings: as assigned, available on Canvas.

A note about readings and when to do them: You should have all of the reading done before class on Friday. Ideally, you are reading all week. If everyone tries to do this, we should always have some people who have done the reading I'm asking about in class. If I find that everyone is saving all the reading until Thursday night, then I will start doing reading quizzes, but I almost never have to do that.

EXAMS AND PAPERS

Activities/Assignments	Format	Points
3 Exams (25% each)	Mult. Choice /short answer	75%
"Participation"/homework Grade	Various In-class/out of class activitie	10%
"Papers"	1-2 page essays	15%

Total: 100%

Exams

There will be 3 non-cumulative exams. However, there may be some overlap in concepts, so don't just learn material for an exam and then dump what you learned. Note: Multiple choice exams can be unintentionally tricky, especially with social psychology. Your task will be to pick the BEST ANSWER ☺. If you miss an exam, you will get a '0' on the exam UNLESS you have let me know in advance (see "Absence Policies" below for more info on this).

Participation/Paper

These assignments are meant to engage you in the material and also to provide you with some feedback about your writing and your grasp of the material. We will have in-class activities as well as some short writing assignments/Paper that we will grade as unsatisfactory/satisfactory (0 or 1). The goal of any feedback on these assignments is to lead you to better performance on the papers. So, please pay attention to any comments that we make on these assignments. ☺

We may also have pop quizzes on the readings, if I have the sense that the class is not prepared to discuss the reading. There are **no make-ups** UNLESS you miss something in-class due to a University sanctioned event (travelling with your team or a job interview). If you are seriously ill and miss more than 2 days of class due to this illness, we will discuss alternative assignments. I will drop the lowest 2 “participation” grades (so, if you are sick or miss class once or twice, your grade will not be affected). To reiterate: *If you miss an in-class activity/in-class quiz, there is no make-up.*

Papers

You will write several 1-2 page essays. You will have ample time to do these, and we will discuss them in class as the due dates approach.

Research Activity

Participating in the research process is an excellent way to learn about psychology. Each student is required to participate in **5 hours** of research activity. You may choose from 2 different types of activities to fulfill this requirement.

1. *Subject Pool Participation- preferred*

Students may sign up for participation in psychology experiments using the SONA research system:

- 1) Go to rice.sona-systems.com and click “Request Account”
- 2) Read the instructions, enter Account Information, select the courses you are taking, and click “Request Account”.
- 3) Once your account is approved by the Sona Administrator, a temporary password will be sent to you. Please use the “change password” link to set that to something you will remember. Now, you can login to the Sona website and search for studies by clicking “View Available Studies”.

2. *Research Reports-not preferred*

Students may write a two-page research report on a psychological research article from *Journal of Personality and Social psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin*, or *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (all of which are available online from Rice’s Library). Each report will count at 1 hour of research credit, and I will give them a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory. All research papers must be submitted to Canvas (to the assignment folder called “Research Activity”) Report” folder under “Assignments” on Canvas before the last week of class.

You will not receive a grade for research participation, but failure to complete the research requirement will result in a 0.5% point reduction of your final grade per deficient participation. For example, if you complete 1 of 5, I will subtract 1% from your final grade. No partial credit will be granted. *Note: if you have not assigned research credit to 202 in SONA by the last day of the semester, you will not receive credit and will be penalized. Please make sure you know how to do this BEFORE the end of the semester*

GRADE POLICIES

All of the points that you earn will be scaled to 100%, and the assignment of the letter grade will be determined by the following scale (rounded to whole percentage points).

Course Grade	Percentage	Course Grade	Percentage
A+	100-98	C+	79-78

A	97-93	C.	77-73
A-	92-90	C-	72-70
B+	89-88	D+	69-68
B	87-83	D	67-63
B-	82-80	D-	62-60
		F	Below 60

ABSENCE POLICIES

1. **Class absences:** Students who miss class are responsible for getting notes, handouts, etc. from other students. I do not hand out my notes. If you miss an in-class activity, for any reason, you cannot make it up. As long as you consistently come to class, this will not be a problem and won't affect your grade (i.e. if you are really sick etc. once or twice during the semester). Please come to class on time. It's very distracting to have folks coming in and out. Also, when you are in class, I expect your full attention (no texting, talking on phones, emailing etc.). **PLEASE DO NOT INFORM ME IF YOU MISS CLASS UNLESS IT'S AN EXAM DAY.** You are responsible for coming/not coming to class. I don't need the details.
2. **Exam absences:** Exams will be taken on scheduled dates - **NO MAKEUPS**, unless your absence is considered appropriate and fair by the university's Committee on Examinations and Standing (e.g. serious illnesses, deaths, in the immediate family, required court appearances) **AND** you notify me in advance. If you notify me in advance, **AND** the absence is considered appropriate and fair, then you may take a make-up exam. Make-up exams cover the same material; however they may be in a different format. Students who do not show up for an exam will receive a grade of '0' for that exam. IF you believe you have a sanctioned reason for a makeup exam or you need special accommodations, you must notify me 1 week before the exam. I will approve the request and a TA will be in touch with you to schedule the makeup. Exams must be made up within 1 week of the scheduled exam.

****Note:** if you are an athlete, do not assume that I am looking at your competition/travel schedule. You are still responsible for following the two policies on absences.**

SUBMITTING WORK

All assignments should be turned in electronically to Canvas, unless I specify otherwise. This means that I will NOT accept papers in class. Any assignments that arrive after the end of the class period during which they are due will not be accepted. Note: if the assignments arrive in a non-readable format, you will not receive credit for them. (Don't wait until the last minute to find out if you can send e-mail attachments). Make sure you keep a copy of your work in case we have technical difficulties. If you discover that you have turned in the wrong version or a paper or a Paper, resubmit to the Canvas folder. **Do not send it to the class email account.** If you discover the mistake after the assignment closes, and the result is a lower grade than what you feel the correct version would have earned, it will just be the low grade you drop. ☺

QUESTIONS ABOUT GRADES

All questions about grades must be in person. Come see a TA or me during office hours or make an appointment. All questions *contesting* a grade must be done within 1 week of the date we release grades to you on that assignment. If you just want to talk about a grade, you may do that whenever you would like.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CONTENT OR ANYTHING NOT ABOUT GRADES: The TAs and I will monitor the class email. Please feel free to ask questions of us via email OR stop by and talk to one of us during office hours. I am always happy to talk with students. ☺

RICE HONOR CODE

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at <http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/>. This handbook outlines the

University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Support Services (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

SEVERE WEATHER

In the event that severe weather forces the university to close or to cancel classes, assignments and examinations will be due the next scheduled class period.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. I will do my best to stick to the schedule and to the scheduled readings. However, I reserve the right to make changes as needed, **including substituting readings/adding/subtracting readings**. I will give you as much notice as I can if I see that changes/additions are necessary.

EMAILS

Please note that there is a class email. Please correspond with me about class with the class email on Canvas. I may reply from another account (and then feel free to reply to that message). *But, please initiate emails with me about class with the class email.* You can also find me at svp2@rice.edu.

Example Paper

Thinking about the situation & creating hypotheses

One purpose of this activity is to encourage you to begin thinking about both “person” and “situation” variables that influence behavior. A second purpose of the activity is to give you practice in thinking about research hypotheses. When you state a hypothesis, be sure to talk about expected relationships or differences. For example, in the area of close relationships, you might expect that similarity of long-term goals influences the success of the relationship. To make this hypothesis more specific, you might hypothesize that couples who share similar long-term goals will have more successful relationships than couples who do not share similar long-term goals.

Develop hypotheses about the following issue:

An employee is instructed by someone else in the organization to destroy documents that describe the company’s illegal activities. What factors will influence the employee’s decision to obey the orders to shred the documents? Think about aspects of the situation and how individual difference variables might influence construal of the situation. State each hypothesis as a relationship between variables. You may either write a paragraph or do more of an outline/bullet points.