

Las Positas College  
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**Course Outline for PSYC 3**  
**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Effective: Fall 2018**

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

PSYC 3 — INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY — 3.00 units

This course will introduce theories and concepts that explain individual behavior in social settings. The topics include research methods, social perception, social cognition, beliefs, prejudice/discrimination, interpersonal relationships, aggression, and group behavior.

3.00 Units Lecture

**Strongly Recommended**

PSYC 1 - General Psychology  
with a minimum grade of C

**Grading Methods:**

Letter or P/NP

**Discipline:**

- Psychology

	<b>MIN</b>
<b>Lecture Hours:</b>	54.00
<b>Expected Outside of Class Hours:</b>	108.00
<b>Total Hours:</b>	162.00

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1**

**III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:**

**Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:**

**A. PSYC1**

1. distinguish between the goals of scientific psychology and common sense
2. evaluate the various psychological research methods
3. discuss the importance of ethical principles in research
4. discuss the situational influences on behavior
5. describe psychological differences and similarities between groups based on gender, sexuality, social, or cultural grouping
6. apply concepts and theories to personal development

**IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:**

**Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:**

- A. Define social psychology and apply the principles of social psychology to real life situations
- B. Explain the role of nonverbal communication and impression formation in social perception
- C. Describe the role of explicit and implicit processing in schemas, attributions, and other cognitions
- D. Explain attitude formation, cognitive dissonance, and ways to change attitudes
- E. Evaluate the personal and cultural factors that alter self-concept, self-esteem, and perceived self-control
- F. Discuss how gender and culture influence principles in social psychology, such as social roles
- G. Discuss the causes of prejudice and discrimination
- H. Summarize the causes of attraction
- I. Discuss the factors that influence the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of close relationships
- J. Synthesize research on conformity, compliance, and obedience
- K. Explain the personal and situational causes of helping behavior
- L. Evaluate the theories concerning the causes of aggression
- M. Contrast the costs and benefits of group membership

**V. CONTENT:**

- A. Introduction to social psychology
  1. Origins and development of social psychology
  2. Discuss the contributions of people that come from a variety of backgrounds

3. Research methods in social psychology
4. Review of APA ethical principles
- B. Social identity
  1. Self-concept
  2. Influences of gender and culture on social identity
  3. Self-esteem and perceived self-control
- C. Social perception
  1. Nonverbal communication
  2. Impression formation
- D. Social cognition
  1. Explicit and implicit processing
  2. Schemas and stereotypes
  3. Attribution theories and attributional errors
  4. Confirmation biases
- E. Attitudes and attitude change
  1. Components of attitudes
  2. How attitudes influence behavior
  3. Theory of cognitive dissonance
  4. Changing attitudes through persuasion
  5. Resistance to persuasion
- F. Prejudice and discrimination
  1. Origins of prejudice and discrimination
  2. Types of discrimination (i.e. sexism, racism, and ageism)
  3. Personal and institutional discrimination
  4. Reducing prejudiced attitudes
- G. Attraction and close relationships
  1. The need to belong and initial attraction
  2. Theories explaining close relationships
  3. Heterosexual, gay, and lesbian romantic relationships
  4. Dissolution of relationships
- H. Social influence
  1. Compliance
  2. Conformity
  3. Obedience
- I. Group processes
  1. Benefits and costs of belonging to groups
  2. Social facilitation, social loafing, and deindividuation
  3. Groupthink and group polarization
  4. Theories of group leadership
- J. Prosocial behavior
  1. Theoretical explanations for prosocial behavior
  2. Factors influencing prosocial behavior
  3. Responding to an emergency
- K. Aggression
  1. Types of aggression
  2. Theoretical explanations for aggression
  3. Social and personal influences of aggression
  4. Prevention and regulation of aggression
- L. Applied social psychology
  1. Psychology and the law
  2. Organizational psychology
  3. Health psychology
  4. Conflict, cooperation, and peace

## VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Application of concepts to personal experiences
- B. **Demonstration** - Demonstrations and simulations
- C. **Lecture** - Lectures on major themes and concepts
- D. **Student Presentations** -
- E. **Discussion** - Discussion and problem solving of significant or controversial issues
- F. **Written exercises and case studies** - Written assignments
- G. **Audio-visual Activity** - Video and/or CD-ROM excerpts
- H. Readings from texts, supplementary materials, primary source materials

## VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Lecture
  1. Research methods in social psychology
  2. The social self (self-concept and self-esteem)
- B. Readings
  1. Read chapter 3, The Social Self, from Gilovich, Kelnter, Chen, and Nisbett's Social Psychology, 4th edition
- C. Class discussion
  1. How do cults make use of persuasion, conformity, obedience, and other techniques to indoctrinate members? How do the social groups you belong to make use of these same techniques?
  2. Watch the video Stress: Portrait of a Killer, and be prepared to discuss how social support can help us manage stress
- D. Written assignments
  1. After finding an reading an empirical study from a peer-reviewed journal on any topic related to social psychology, write a paper that summarizes and evaluates the study
  2. Write an essay in which you discuss how key concepts from the course can be applied and used in everyday life

## VIII. EVALUATION:

- A. **Methods**
  1. Exams/Tests
  2. Quizzes
  3. Research Projects
  4. Papers
  5. Class Participation
  6. Home Work
- B. **Frequency**

1. Minimum of one midterm exam and one final exam
2. Minimum of five quizzes that cover 1-2 chapters per quiz
3. At least one research project
4. At least one major paper
5. Weekly small group discussions
6. Biweekly homework assignments that help prepare the students for class discussions

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Myers, D., & Twenge, J. (2017). *Exploring Social Psychology* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
2. Aronson, E., Wilson, T.D., Akert, R.M., & Sommers, S.R. (2016). *Social Psychology* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
3. Kassir, S., Fein, S., & Markus, H.R. (2017). *Social Psychology* (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.
4. Gilovich, T., Keltner, D., Chen, S., & Nisbett, R.E. (2016). *Social Psychology* (4th ed.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: