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PSYX 360.02: Social Psychology

Nicole McCray

University of Montana - Missoula, nicole.mccray@umontana.edu

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Social Psychology
Psychology 360 (Section 2)- Autumn 2013

Instructor: Nicole McCray, Ph.D.	Day/Time: M,W,F 1:10-2:00
Office: Skaggs 203	Classroom: CHEM 123
Telephone: 243-4527	Office hours: MWF 11 to 1
Email: nicole.mccray@umontana.edu (the best way to contact me)	

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The primary purpose of this course is to provide students with an overview of social psychology – the branch of psychology that is concerned with the effect of others on our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Throughout the course of the semester, we will examine many topics ranging from attitudes, to attraction, to aggression, to prejudice as well as the research underlying the body of knowledge in the field. It is likely that students will gain insight into the situational factors influencing the thoughts, behaviors, and feelings of themselves and others on a daily basis. The format of the course will rely on both lecture and discussion.

In order to accomplish these objectives, it is expected that students will exhibit professional behavior throughout the course. This includes, for example, student attendance, preparedness, and active participation and involvement in class. Students not exhibiting professional behavior may be asked to leave.

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Baumeister, R.F., & Bushman, B.J. (2014). *Social psychology and human nature, 3rd edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

GRADING:

Your final course grade will be based upon 260 total possible points that will be distributed as follows:

4 Exams (50 points each)	200
1 Assignment (50 points)	50
In-class Activities	10

Course grading will be based on the following point scale:

A=	234-260	(90-100%)
B=	208-233	(80- 89%)
C=	182-207	(70-79%)
D=	156-181	(60-69%)
F=	0-155	(0-59%)

EXAMS:

Four exams will be given during the semester, each worth 50 points. The exams will test your knowledge of topics covered by the course text and information from lecture.

Exam format:	Multiple choice. (NCS 50/50 blue/green scantron forms are needed for tests)
Exam make-up policy:	When possible, give prior notice of a missed exam. Be prepared to provide reasonable evidence and documentation for missing an exam. Make-up exams may be in a different format than the original exam.
Missed exam:	If you miss an exam and do not make arrangements for a make-up exam, you will receive a zero as your grade for that exam.

ASSIGNMENTS:

There will be an assortment of individual assignments of which you are to pick 1. These assignments are designed to increase your understanding of a theory/topic. Assignments handed in after the due date will have ten points deducted for each day late (including weekend days). This assignment will contribute 50 points to your final course grade.

NOTES:

1. **Students with disabilities** have the responsibility to disclose their disability to the instructor at the beginning of the course if they require accommodations. Students have the responsibility to arrange for such accommodations with Disability Services for Students (DSS). The instructor will work collaboratively with the student and with DSS to ensure that the student's needs are accommodated.
2. **Attendance** is not mandatory and role will not be taken. However, your course grade is mostly determined by exams (which will include material from lecture as well as the text).
Course notes are not posted – if you miss class, you are responsible for the material covered.
3. **Cell phones** are to be turned off during class, please.
4. **Courtesy** is expected. Come to class on time and stay for the entire session. If you have an emergency and must come in late or early, please do so quietly. Be respectful of the instructor and classmates, do not be a distraction to others.
5. **The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus if necessary.**
6. **The last day to drop classes with an add/drop form is October 28. After that date, no petitions to drop the course will be signed and no Incompletes will be given except in documentable emergency situations.**

Class Schedule: Autumn 2013

Date	Topic	Material
Aug. 26	Course Overview	
Aug. 28	Introduction	Chapter 1
Aug. 30 – Sept. 4	Culture and Nature	Chapter 2
Sept. 2	No Class – Labor Day	
Sept. 6-11	The Self	Chapter 3
Sept. 13-16	The Self in Control	Chapter 4
Wednesday, Sept. 18	Exam 1	Chapters 1-4
Sept. 20 – 23	Social Cognition	Chapter 5
Sept. 25-27	Emotion and Affect	Chapter 6
Sept. 30- Oct. 4	Attitudes, Beliefs, Consistency	Chapter 7
Oct. 7-11	Social Influence and Persuasion	Chapter 8
Monday, Oct. 14	Exam 2	Chapters 5-8
Oct. 16-18	Prosocial Behavior	Chapter 9
Oct. 21-25	Aggression & Antisocial Behavior	Chapter 10
Oct. 28 – Nov. 1	Attraction and Exclusion	Chapter 11
Monday, Nov. 4	Exam 3	Chapters 9-11
Nov. 6-13	Close Relationships	Chapter 12
Monday, Nov. 11	Veteran's Day – No Class	
Nov. 15 – 18	Prejudice	Chapter 13
Nov. 20-25	Groups	Chapter 14
Friday, Nov. 22	Assignment due	
Nov. 27-29	Thanksgiving -- No Class	
Dec. 2-6	Applied Social Psychology	appendices
Wed. Dec. 11 (1:10 to 3:10)	Final Exam	Chapters 12 - appendices

Potential Assignments

From this list of potential topics, please choose 1 to complete as the assignment portion of this class. Independent of choice, the assignment is due on FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22 -- AT THE START OF CLASS. Late assignments will be docked 10 points each day late, including weekends. No emailed submissions will be accepted.

Please note, some of these assignments may take some planning. You must specify the number of the assignment you choose when you turn your paper in. You may also need to cite a source beyond your text book for these assignments. This source must be a peer reviewed journal. **Websites, newspapers, magazines, and other text books are not acceptable sources.**

Assignments must be well-written and complete, as grading will depend on grammar, APA style (if appropriate) and general readability. Assignments should be between 2-4 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, no weird fonts or spacing, and stapled. PAPERS EXCEEDING 4 PAGES (not including references/title page) WILL BE DOCKED 5 POINTS. As always, plagiarism will not be accepted, resulting in action from the psychology department and earning no points for the assignment.

Be sure to integrate concepts discussed in class and cite outside sources when appropriate. Do not just give your opinion on a particular issue. Failure to fully answer the question will result in a maximum grade of 25 points. PROOF READ your work – if your paper is a grammatical disaster, you will lose 10 points.

Options:

1. **Reality TV** Evaluate what is happening on one of the reality shows that involves competition (e.g., *American Idol*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *The Biggest Loser*, *America's Next Top Model*). Write a report discussing how the material in the text on self-knowledge relates to what happens on these shows. Are there illustrations of the looking glass self, social comparisons, self-appraisal, or self-perception theory? Other than the potential prize, why might people compete to be on these shows? How do the contestants react to negative feedback? Why might they react that way?
2. **Facebook** Spend some time on facebook or another social networking site. Report on the following questions: What kinds of materials do most people put on the site? What does their purpose seem to be? Who seems to be the intended audience? Do they seem to be putting on things that will portray them in a positive light or provide a complete perspective of who they are? How does what you saw on the site apply to what you read about self-presentation in the textbook?

3. Realistic Group Conflict Theory Think about groups that hold prejudicial attitudes toward one another and discuss how the realistic group conflict theory helps explain that prejudice. Describe each group and what it is that the groups are in conflict over and how that illustrates the realistic group conflict theory. There are many groups all over the world to choose from, e.g., Israelis and Palestinians, Kurds and either the Turkish or Iraqi people of other ethnicities, Protestant and Catholics in Northern Ireland, or rival groups on your own campus.

4. Naturalistic observation Pretend you are a researcher interested in a particular social psychological phenomenon discussed in class. Do a detailed naturalistic observation of this phenomenon and write a summary of what you have found. Be sure to specify the phenomenon, where you observed, who you observed (group, age, male/female, etc.), and how your results support or challenge the phenomenon in question.

5. Age/Culture comparison Choose a research article describing a social psychological phenomenon of interest. This original study should either be a Western or a college student sample (as is typical of research in social psychology). Next find an article on the same phenomenon with a different sample – non-western, non-collegiate. Summarize the research and compare and contrast methods, participants, results, implications. Address whether your studies support or refute the idea that college students/Western samples are largely representative of people in general.

6. Participate in a **day of Nonconformity**. The challenge is to spend 1 day in a way that is as uninfluenced as possible by conformity pressures to appear cool, fit in, or be liked or accepted. Examine all behaviors throughout the day – be your own person, literally. Don't tell others that you are doing this to minimize the effects of their reactions. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU BEHAVE IN A WAY THAT IS HARMFUL TO YOURSELF OR OTHERS, OR ILLEGAL.** Step 2 is to write about your experience addressing the following questions and anything else you think might be relevant:

- How did you define nonconformity, and what did you focus your efforts on?
- If your behavior was different than normal, which person did you like more: the "Day of Nonconformity you" or the "normal you"? If you preferred the "Day of Nonconformity you," what are the psychological factors that prevent this "you" from coming out?
- What are the psychological costs and benefits of living authentically? In your view, do the benefits outweigh the costs?
- How did others respond to your nonconformity? Do you think they noticed a difference in your behavior? What attributions did people make for your behavior, and why?

7. Choose your own assignment. Must be approved by the instructor in order to receive credit.