PSYX 550.01: Advanced Social Psychology

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Psychology 550 Syllabus

Advanced Social Psychology: Spring 2015

Course Information
Scheduled Time: 8:10 – 9:30 MW
Location:

Instructor Information
Instructor: Dr. Luke Conway
Office: 239 Skaggs Building; ext. 4821 (but don’t call me! Email me.)
E-mail: luke.conway@umontana.edu
Office hours: TBA
Readings: listed below

Course Guidelines and Policies

Disability Modifications
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Academic Misconduct
You are expected to adhere to the university’s student conduct code with regard to academic integrity. Academic misconduct in this course will result in an academic penalty commensurate with the offense as well as possible disciplinary action by the university.

Incompletes
Departmental and university policies regarding incompletes do not allow changing “incomplete” grades after one year has passed since the “I” was granted.

Pass/No Pass
For students taking this course P/NP, a P is a grade of A, B, or C. A NP is a grade of D or F.

Pre-requisite
The pre-requisite is an undergraduate course in social psychology or consent of instructor.

Academic Integrity
All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code.
My Goals for This Class

A. Provide an overview of major theories and research in Social Psychology
   I want you to get a sense of research and theory relevant to how humans think about, influence, and are influenced by other people. A true broad overview of Social Psychology would take 4 semesters, so you’ll of necessity get only a selection of what’s out there. We’ll be doing this by reading both “classic” and recent research in social psychology across core areas/controversies within the field. Along the way, you should get some information about the history and systems associated with social psychology, as well as normal emotion.

B. Hone thinking/analysis/writing skills through discussion, debate, and tests
   So much of being a good psychologist involves learning to critically analyze the stuff we read and hear for ourselves. So a lot of this class is designed to help facilitate the development of your own thinking skills by forcing you to interact with other like-minded folks about research and theory, as well as complete two take-home tests that focus on your writing and thinking abilities.

What I Expect of You

There are a few basic things that I expect out of you in this course. The percentage of your grade that each portion accounts for is indicated in parentheses:

A. Reading/Class Participation (50.32346%)
   Class participation contains several elements. As long as you make a good-faith effort to accomplish these elements, you’ll get high marks for this category:

   1. Be in class. Class attendance is mandatory. Every person gets one “free” weeks’ worth of skips (so, if we meet twice a week, two skips; if we meet once a week, one skip). After that, if you must miss class, you must clear it with me beforehand and turn in a short critique of every article you were assigned for that day. Failure to do so will lead to an automatic reduction in your grade.

   2. Do the readings. We will spend a substantial portion of class time discussing the articles we read. Thus, I expect each of you to read the assigned article prior to the class period for which it is assigned.

   3. Have stuff to say about the readings. I will supplement the readings with additional information, but I don’t want to talk too much. So: You should make notes as you read the articles so that you will have lots of things to say about them during class.

   4. Be alert and prepared to interact with others during class. Think about what others are saying, and be prepared to add to (or respond to) their comments in an orderly fashion.

   5. Be extremely nice...but say what you think! When others are talking, be quiet and polite. Don’t interrupt (unruly behavior, talking while others are talking, or being rude to others will not be tolerated), but when it is your turn – say what you think! Do not be afraid of disagreements, as long as they are within the bounds of good taste (e.g., I won’t tolerate racist comments in any degree, but we can have disagreements about “culture” and what that means, etc.).

   6. Learn from the lectures and the papers. When I lecture, you are expected to learn something. To ensure that you do, I’ll be expecting you to incorporate some of what you’ve learned into your test answers (discussed below). It would probably be a good idea to take notes, but I’m not going to check up on your method – just the result.
B. “Open-book” Take-home tests (49.67456%)

You will be required to complete two “open-book” take-home tests in the form of short, APA-style papers:

1. Test dates:
   a) Take-home test #1. Questions will be given on March 11; the test will be due March 28.
   b) Take-home test #2. Questions will be given on April 20; the test will be due May 8.

2. What will the tests be like:
   You will be given a single large question on which you will be expected to write a short, APA-style paper, and on which you will be allowed to use the notes and readings from class as you work. The question will force you to take a position on a large topic (e.g., “do humans have free will?”). The test is designed to make you think broadly and integratively about the research you have been presented to that point in the term. You will be required to use a specified number of citations from class presentations and from class readings (thus, you should take good notes and read the papers). I will expect you to write about 5-7 pages, double-spaced, in APA format. You will be allowed to use your notes and the papers we have read as you take the test (i.e., it is “open-book”). You will also be allowed to discuss the test with me, and (should you choose) turn the test in early for feedback and then re-write it to improve your grade (as long as you give me two business days of lead time). However, you may not discuss the test with any classmates, nor can you use any resources other than those just specified.

3. Grading the tests:
   In marking the test, I'll be looking for evidence of (a) comprehension of the empirical and conceptual material that we've covered, and (b) effective and thoughtful use of that material in defending the statement/position/proposal you are choosing to defend, and (c) careful, integrative, logical, and creative thought. I like essays that push the envelope in a creative way more than I like just a sheer recitation of what we have already talked about (and part of the grade I assign will be based on how much you attempted a creative essay). So your job will be to do that within the admittedly limited boundaries of the research we discuss in class. (I understand that this can be a difficult assignment and sometimes feel “forced” or “artificial,” and as a result I grade them with that difficulty in mind – that is, I have lower expectations because the assignment is rather difficult.)

4. Do not be constrained by your own opinion.
   You are free to write your actual opinion, but these tests are a sense an intellectual exercise designed to force you to integrate and use the research for the class, to both demonstrate your comprehension of the material and to increase your comprehension. In the past, some students have been confused about this. So let me be clear: If you just want to treat this as an intellectual exercise, that is fine with me. I will not assume that the opinion you express is necessarily your actual opinion. But I do want you to develop a stream of thought or an idea – I do not want you to simply regurgitate the information in a “summary” sort of fashion. (If I was going to do that, I would not make the test open-book).
What You Should (and Shouldn’t) Expect of Me

A. I’m going to lecture quite a bit.
   Because the nature of the class is an overview, I am going to do some formal lecturing. However, I do want this lecturing to be more interactive than a typical “lecture-format” class.

B. I’m going to treat you with respect.
   I want you to treat me and others with respect, and in return I’m going to treat you that way. I may disagree with you or try to push the envelope for the purposes of discussion, but you should never feel disrespected in this class.

C. I’m going to be available outside of class to help with tests, etc.
   Should you want help with the class, I’ll try within reason to make myself available for you to help. If you’re feeling stressed, or if my expectations are unclear, then don’t hesitate to come by my office. I’ll do what I can to help. I am high in need for structure myself, so I don’t want any of you to feel like you do not understand what is expected of you for this class.

How Your Grade will be Determined

Grades will be based on the usual norms that decide such things:
A: 90% or higher
B+: 85-89%
B: 80-84%
C+: 75-79%
C: 70-74%
D+: 65-69%
D: 60-64%
F: 59% and below

Course Calendar and Reading List

Week 1 (January 26). History and Systems I: Historical Perspectives and Methods
Monday: (No readings for Monday)

Wednesday:

Week 2 (Feb. 2). The Social Self and Normal Emotion
Monday:

Wednesday (consequences of thinking positively about oneself):
Week 3 (Feb 9). Attribution Processes
Monday (causes of attributions):

Wednesday (consequences of attributions on normal emotions):

Week 4 (February 16). Stereotyping
Monday (causes/reduction):
NO CLASS – PRESIDENT’S DAY

Wednesday (stereotype accuracy/perseverance):

Week 5 (February 23). Prejudice
Monday (origins and normal emotion):


Wednesday (consequences of prejudice/stereotyping):
NO CLASS – LUKE AT SPSP

Week 6 (March 2). Social Reasoning: Processes and Motivation
Monday (Social Reasoning Processes):

Wednesday (motivated social cognition):

Week 7 (March 9). Attitudes
Monday (attitudes):

Wednesday (attitudes: origins):

**Week 8 (March 16). Attitudes/Well-being and Normal Emotion**

**Monday (Attitudes):**

**Wednesday (well-being and normal emotion):**

**Week 9 (March 23). Social Influence, Group Processes, and Cultural Evolution**

**Monday (Social Influence):**

**Wednesday (Group Processes):**

**Week 10 (March 30)**
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

**Week 11 (April 6) Cultural Evolution; Automatic/Implicit versus Controlled/Explicit Processes**

**Monday (cultural evolution):**

**Wednesday (Automatic vs. Controlled processes):**

**Week 12 (April 13). Automatic/Implicit versus Controlled/Explicit Processes; Interpersonal Attraction and Normal Emotion**

**Monday (Automatic/Implicit versus Controlled explicit processes):**

**Wednesday (attraction and normal emotion):**

**Week 13 (April 20). Relationships and Normal Emotion**

**Monday (gender controversy):**

Wednesday (close relationships):

**Week 14 (April 27) Prosocial/Antisocial behavior and Normal Emotion**

Monday (Aggression):

Wednesday (helping):

**Week 15 (May 4). History and Systems II: Current Controversies and Critical Reflections**

Monday:

Wednesday:
Papers to be Discussed IN CLASS by Luke

Before April 1:

Methods/History:

Self:


Attribution:


**Stereotyping/Prejudice:**


**Motivated Social Reasoning:**


**Attitudes:**


**Well-being:**


**Obedience/Conformity/Modeling:**


**After April 1:**


**Automaticity/Implicit Attitudes:**


**Relationships:**


**Aggression/Helping:**

Cialdini, R. B., Darby, B. L., & Vincent, J. E. (1973). Transgression and altruism: A case for hedonism. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 9*(6), 502-516. (Note: I think I left off the “et al.” when I presented this in class)

**Culture and Critical Reflections:**


