

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
(Summer 2008)

Course: ANSO/PSYC 3600.01

Instructor: Michael Hulsizer

Location & Time: Tuesday 5:30-9:30, 322 WEBH

Office Hours: 5:00-5:30 Tuesday; or by appointment.

Office: 308 WEBH; (314) 968-5912; hulsizer@webster.edu

Website:

e-reserves: <http://ereserves.webster.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1592> (password = social)

Text: <http://www.mhhe.com/myersesp4>

Prerequisite: PSYC 1100 or ANSO 1010 or ANSO 1070 and 6 hours of social science or permission of instructor.

Text:

Required: Myers, D. G. (2007). Exploring Social Psychology (4th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

A packet of outside readings will also be required (available via e-reserves)

Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this course is to acquaint you with the many essential features, principles, facts, theories, and applications of social psychology. The focus of the course will be on application.

Mechanics of the Course:

Quizzes: After week one, we will have a quiz at the beginning of every class period. I am giving quizzes each class to guard against the possibility that one poor showing on an exam will have a profound effect on your final grade. The more opportunities to demonstrate your ability, the better your grade will be in the long run – assuming you study appropriately. The format of these quizzes will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay. Each quiz will tend to cover only the material presented since the previous quiz. Each quiz is worth 30 points. All of the quizzes will cover material presented in your text as well as material available only through class notes. Your presence in class will facilitate your performance on these quizzes.

Tentative quiz dates are listed on the syllabus. Should any changes in these quiz dates become necessary, I will inform the class in advance. Quizzes must be taken on the date scheduled. Make-up quizzes will only be administered in emergency cases (e.g., medical). The instructor must be notified in advance of the situations that exist. No make up quiz will be given if the student fails to notify and discuss the situation with the instructor before the quiz. Quizzes must be made up prior to the next quiz. If a quiz is missed and no make-up is taken, a zero will be given for the grade. It is in your best interest to take the quizzes as scheduled.

Quiz Questions: At the beginning of each class period (except 6/10 & 7/29), students are to turn in two quiz questions that they have composed based on that week's readings assigned from the e-reserve web site. For example, on June 17th, students should turn in a total of two quiz questions based on the readings from that week (Week 2). Questions should be multiple choice (with four options) or essay. Do not submit True/False questions. Questions should be typed *with the answers* provided. Handwritten questions will NOT be accepted. Students will receive one point for each question they turn in. Those questions that the instructor deems as not suitable will be rejected. Questions will NOT be returned – so I recommend keeping a copy. Quiz questions are due at the beginning of class on those dates listed in the syllabus. They will not be accepted if they are turned in late. Turn them in early if you anticipate missing a class.

The purpose of this assignment is twofold. First, it will reward those students that read the chapters. This will also have the added effect of increasing the likelihood that you will do well on the quizzes. Secondly, good questions may appear on the relevant quizzes (although the format may be changed somewhat). This will give you an opportunity to have a say in what types of questions will be on the quiz.

Participation: Because this class is a seminar and not a traditional lecture class, your active participation is required. Your participation will be evaluated not on the amount of talking you do in class, but rather the quality of what you bring to the class discussion. I will provide you with feedback throughout the course. Class participation will be worth 25 points. Participation will be assessed in the following manner:

22.5 - 25.0 points (A)

Always volunteers. Always prepared when called upon. Verbalizes concepts in own words. Demonstrates excellent understanding of the subject. Is ready to help clarify concepts so that other students may comprehend.

20.0 - 22.4 points (B)

Often (occasionally) volunteers. Always prepared when called upon. Has a better than average verbal understanding of the subject. Can be prompted to understand applications.

17.5 - 19.9 points (C)

Seldom volunteers. Usually prepared when called upon. Demonstrates a good (average) understanding of the subject. Cannot understand applications of concepts.

15.0 - 17.4 points (D)

Usually prepared when called upon. Occasionally "absent" when called upon. Demonstrates understanding by reading from book or memorization. Usually has to be prompted.

below 14.9 points (F)

Usually unprepared or "absent". Difficult to determine understanding of subject from student's class participation. Instructor is unaware of who the student is by the end of the term.

Film Analysis: In addition to entertaining us, movies offer detailed portrayals of human social behavior. Your task in this assignment (worth 75 points) is to analyze – from a social-psychological perspective – the behaviors and events depicted in one of the films listed below. You are not being asked to critique the film in terms of its value as a work of art or as entertainment. Rather, you should think carefully about the human actions and events portrayed in the film. Then, to make sense of this material, apply what you've learned this semester regarding the factors that predict and explain human social behavior. This assignment is comprehensive: I urge you to bring any/all concepts encountered in this course that relate to the issues, interactions, and behaviors portrayed. Additional information is at the end of the syllabus.

Application Assignments: During the semester you will be given the opportunity to complete three application assignments. Each assignment is worth 15 points. These projects require you to take material we are discussing in class and apply it to your everyday experiences. Projects include creating self-portraits, breaking social norms, and experiencing aggressive sales tactics. More information will follow. You will not be able to get an extension if you miss an assignment due to class absence unless you have a valid (approved) excuse.

Final Grade: Your final grade will be based on the seven quizzes (210 possible points; 57.2% of final grade), application assignments (45 possible points; 12.3% of final grade), film analysis paper (75 possible points; 20.4% of final grade), quiz questions (12 possible points; 3.3% of final grade), and participation scores (25 possible points; 6.8% of final grade). My grading scale is as followed:

90% - 100%	A, A-	Superior work
80% - 89%	B+, B, B-	Good work
70% - 79%	C+, C, C-	Satisfactory work
63% - 69%	D+, D	Passing, but less than satisfactory
Less than 63%	F	Unsatisfactory

Any changes in this scale will be towards the lenient side.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is not acceptable and will result in a grade of zero for the entire assignment and may result in an F grade for the course. In addition, the case will be turned over to the proper University source for disciplinary action. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to: claiming someone else's work as your, turning in a paper for which someone else did the work, turning in a paper previously turned in for another class, quoting from another person without acknowledging the original source, copying from another student's paper or exam, allowing another person to copy your exam or paper. Please consult with the instructor if you are in doubt as to whether you are plagiarizing a source. Ignorance or sloppiness is not an excuse for plagiarism.

Late Withdraws: No late withdraws will be approved on the basis of poor performance. They will only be granted in cases of emergency situations discussed with the instructor.

Miscellaneous:

Please respect others in the class by turning off all cell phones and pagers before entering the room.

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations contact the Director of the Academic Resource Center, Dr. Barbara Stewart, at (314) 961-2660 x7620. Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Academic Resource Center as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.

This syllabus is subject to change at any time at the instructor's discretion. Changes in exam dates may be verbally communicated to the class. It is understood that remaining in the course constitutes an agreement to abide by the terms outlined in this syllabus and acceptance of the requirements of this course.

Multiple Choice Question TIPS (Adapted from Scout Plous):

The best exam items are those that test how well people understand the course material. Accordingly, your items should go beyond rote learning, definitions, and terminology.

- Don't submit items that you yourself would regard as picky. Instead, get test takers to apply the material to new situations. Test them on the social and societal implications of the material. Draw novel connections. In short, think **BIG** and think **CREATIVELY**.
- Jazzing up items to make them interesting is fine, but don't get so carried away that the context becomes distracting or the item turns into a mini-essay. Also, make sure that references to TV characters and campus life will be understandable to all test takers, including international and transfer students.
- Items should be difficult for people who don't know the material, but they should be straightforward for those who do. If an item is difficult because of complicated wording (e.g., double negatives) or vocabulary, you will be testing verbal ability rather than a command of social psychology.
- Ask yourself whether each decoy (i.e., incorrect answer) in a multiple-choice question:
 - is plausible enough to be chosen
 - could possibly be argued as correct
- Each decoy should stand a reasonable chance of being selected by someone who does not know the material, but at the same time, decoys should never be correct, even under remote circumstances.

Sample:

1. Julia is about to go on a first date with LaVon, whom she has emailed through a singles web site but has never met in person. If Julia fears rejection, she might exhibit self-handicapping behavior by:
 - A. Talking about her high salary to impress LaVon
 - B. Pretending that she has a broken arm to get sympathy
 - C. Arriving late so that she has an excuse if LaVon doesn't like her
 - D. Bringing LaVon an expensive box of chocolatesANSWER: C

Essay Question TIPS:

- Create an essay that tests a major point in the readings
- Provide the answer you would give if responding to the essay on an exam. In other words, don't just provide a sentence response. You should devise an essay question that requires several paragraphs to answer.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF COURSE EVENTS

(M=Myers (2004) text; R=Readings text)

June	10	Introduction/Methodology	M1/2	RI
	17	Self Concept and Social Cognition <i>Two Quiz Questions due based on RII Quiz 1 (Week 1 Material)</i>	M3/4/7/8	RII
	24	Attributions/Applications <i>Two Quiz Questions due based on RIII Quiz 2 (Week 2 Material) Application Assignment #1 Due</i>	M6/10/11	RIII
July	1	Conformity/Obedience <i>Two Quiz Questions due based on RIV Quiz 3 (Week 3 Material)</i>	M9/14	RIV
	8	Persuasion/Cults <i>Two Quiz Questions due based on RV Quiz 4 (Week 4 Material) Application Assignment #2 Due</i>	M15/16	RV
	15	Groups <i>Two Quiz Questions due based on RVI Quiz 5 (Week 5 Material) Application Assignment #3 Due</i>	M17/18/19/20	RVI
	22	Attraction/Aggression <i>Two Quiz Questions due based on RVII Quiz 6 (Week 6 Material)</i>	M26/27/24/25	RVII
	29	Prejudice/Altruism <i>Quiz 7 (Week 7 Material) Film Analysis Due 7/31 @ noon (electronic copy via email attachment)</i>	M22/23//30	RVIII

FILM ANALYSIS PAPER

You are to choose one of the following films listed below. However, I will only allow up to two people to analyze any one film (i.e., 4 people could not analyze “Fight Club”). So you need to clear your choice with me before you begin your analysis. You will receive a zero if you go ahead and analyze a film that has not been personally approved by me ahead of time. Bottom line: Choose a film as soon as possible. It doesn’t matter if you have seen the film or not. You will have to watch it several times to do a good job so start this project early. Keep in mind some films are easier to analyze than others. So, don’t just choose a film because you like it... Those films marked with an asterisk are available from the Eden-Webster Library and can be viewed at the library. All films can be rented from Blockbuster/Hollywood video. You will need to view the films several times to do a good job.

- *American History X (1998; Dir. David McKenna, 119 min.)
- *Apocalypse Now Redux (1979/2001; Dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 202 min.)
- *As Good As It Gets (1997; Dir. James Brooks, 139 min.)
- A Simple Plan (1998; Dir. Sam Raimi, 121 min.)
- Atonement (2007; Dir. Joe Wright, 130 min.)
- Before the Devil Knows You're Dead (2007; Dir. Sidney Lumet, 117 min.)
- *Do The Right Thing (1989; Dir. Spike Lee, 120 min.)
- Gone Baby Gone (2007, Dir. Ben Affleck, 114 min.)
- In Good Company (2005; Dir. Chris Weitz, 110 min.)
- Match Point (2006; Dir. Woody Allen, 124 min.)
- Million Dollar Baby (2005; Dir. Clint Eastwood, 132 min.)
- Monster (2003; Dir. Patty Jenkins, 109 min.)
- Monster's Ball (2001; Dir. Marc Forester, 112 min.)
- *Philadelphia (1993; Dir. Jonathan Demme, 125 min.)
- Pieces of April (2003; Dir. Peter Hedges, 80 min.)
- Shawshank Redemption (1994; Frank Darabont, 142 min.)
- Sideways (2005; Dir. Alexander Payne, 123 min.)
- The Lives of Others (2006; Dir. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 137 min.)
- The Squid and the Whale (2005; Dir. Noah Baumbach, 81min)
- *Thirteen (2003; Dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 100 min.)
- *To Kill A Mockingbird (1962; Dir. Robert Mulligan, 130 min.)
- *Twelve Angry Men (1957; Dir. Sidney Lumet, 97 min.)
- When Harry Met Sally (1989; Dir. Rob Reiner, 96 min.)

View the film you choose at least twice. (Several viewings may offer a distinct advantage). Then, after reviewing your notes and readings, identify 5 social-psychological principles that appear to be operating in the events or individuals depicted in the film (e.g., cognitive dissonance, schemas, self-fulfilling prophecies, group think, deindividuation, realistic conflict theory, modern racism, etc.). Selecting a theory that is non-obvious will result in a better grade than a theory that is readily apparent. For example, suggesting “Monster’s Ball” provides a good example of prejudice is not nearly as impressive as discussing the importance of realistic group conflict theory. In other words, you should cite theories that you would only understand if you had taken this class. For each principle that you identify:

- Briefly describe the relevant scene (you may assume that your reader has seen the film).
- Describe in detail the relevant social-psychological principle(s), *bringing in research findings as much as possible (see the supplied example)*. Make sure you properly cite your sources.
- Elaborate on how the selected scene conforms and/or fails to conform to the social-psychological principle you have identified, as well as to the research findings that support the principle (for example, describe how the scene is similar to or different from relevant experiments).

Your written analysis should be succinct and well written (12 – 15 pages of actual text double-spaced with one inch margins and Times New Roman 12pt font). Be sure to include an introduction to orient the reader, as well as a discussion to tie things together. You are expected to have a title page and a reference page (in APA style). I expect that you will use primary sources for your references. Consequently, you may not use Web pages or textbooks – only journal articles and topical books.

The following excerpt was taken from a past student. The student was writing about the movie Schindler's List (which is not one of your options). This is provided to you so that you get an idea of the depth of analysis that I expect for an A paper. This is just an excerpt that shows one of the concepts (cognitive dissonance) that this student used. Remember that you need to analyze the film using 5 concepts, and that you should have a brief introduction and conclusion.

The attitude change that Oscar Schindler underwent is dramatic. At the beginning of the film, he behaved in the same way as other Nazi German officials and had no pity for the Jews, but this attitude was completely reversed at the end of the movie. Many factors might have led to this gradual yet drastic attitude change, and I will analyze the role of cognitive dissonance in causing this change. Initially, Oscar Schindler recruited Jews to his factory because he thought that the Jews provide him with cheap labor. He appointed Isaac Stern to recruit able-bodied Jews but Stern exploited his power and started to recruit the weak and elderly Jews that would have otherwise been sent to concentration camps. Eventually, Schindler became aware that his factory was nicknamed the "safe haven" for Jews.

I argue that this situation aroused cognitive dissonance—an aversive feeling that is aroused by holding two or more inconsistent cognitions (Festinger, 1957). According to Festinger, people are motivated by a desire for cognitive consistency and therefore, when discrepancies arise, people are motivated to reduce it. For example, in an experiment by Festinger and Carlsmith (1959), participants were asked to lie to a confederate that the upcoming experiment was extremely interesting. They were paid either a small or large sum of money. Participants who were paid a small sum of money experience cognitive dissonance because they hold the inconsistent cognitions of "I just said that the experiment was interesting" and "I really think the experiment was boring." They did not have sufficient external justification because they were only paid \$1 for telling the lie. To reduce the dissonance, they changed their original attitude toward the experiment and subsequently rated it as quite interesting. In contrast, participants paid a large sum of money did not experience dissonance because there was sufficient external justification (\$20) for engaging in the dishonest behavior. Therefore they could add the new cognition "It is OK to tell a small lie for a lot of money" to resolve the dissonance.

Schindler's initial behavior of employing young and able-bodied Jews did not lead to cognitive dissonance because his cognitions "Jews are inferior" and "I employ Jews" were supplemented by a third cognition "I am employing Jews to maximize my own profit". The third cognition provided sufficient external justification, similar to what was experienced by participants in the \$20 condition of Festinger and Carlsmith's (1959) study. However, when Schindler found out that Stern had recruited the weak and the elderly into the factory to offer them shelter and protection, dissonance arose because the external justification of profit maximization no longer applied. This dissonance was made especially prominent when an one-armed elderly man went to Schindler's office to thank Schindler for giving him a chance in the factory. Schindler was enraged and reprimanded Stern for his recruitment of handicapped and invalid "workers". In this situation, his dissonant cognitions of "my factory houses disabled and weak Jews", and "Jews are inferior people" were in direct confrontation. This dissonance would cause an aversive state of arousal, which could be a possible source of his anger.

When people are in a state of dissonance, the cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) suggests that people are motivated to reduce the dissonance in three ways. They could change their attitude discrepant behavior, change their original cognitions, or add consonant cognitions. To reduce the dissonance that he felt, Schindler thus could have fired all the weak employees (change behavior), reduce his prejudice toward Jews (change attitude), or find some other way to justify why housing the unproductive Jews could still be profitable (add consonant cognition). After his encounter with the one-armed elderly man, Schindler warned Stern that he should stop making the factory into a safe haven, but yet he neither fired the elderly man, nor made an effort to screen all his employees for competence and fire the unproductive ones. He might have initially tried to justify his behavior by adding the consonant cognitions that these weaker members of his workforce was still productive and profit making, as demonstrated by his exchange with Nazi officers after they have killed the one-arm elderly man, emphasizing that this man was his "essential skilled worker".

However, to claim that the disabled and slow workers were "essential" was not a strong external justification because Schindler was probably aware that the productivity of these workers could not have rivaled the younger and able-bodied workers. With the weakened external justification, Schindler ultimately resolved his dissonance by gradual attitude change. Many scenes in the film showed how he started to show more concern for the lives of the Jews. For example, he was visibly emotionally disturbed when he observed the emptying of the ghetto. Eventually, he started to use his personal wealth, such as his gold lighter and watch to "buy" lives of more Jews. At this point, it was clear that he no longer justified employing Jews as cheap labor to maximize his own profit because he was intentionally engaging in behaviors that would reduce his profit. The only motivation behind his behavior was that his prejudiced attitudes were changed and that he became genuinely concerned about the welfare of the Jews.

