



SOCIOLOGY 401: Social Psychology

Course Description and Objectives:

Social Psychology reveals just how vulnerable human beings are to social influence. Given this, the question is not whether or not others influence our actions but rather to what degree and under what conditions. This course borrows from both Sociology and Psychology as a means of gaining a better understanding of the variables (factors) that trigger human action. Particular focus is lent to the study of human conformity, persuasion, social cognition, self-justification, human aggression, prejudice and interpersonal relationships.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Contrast micro and macro sociology
- Recognize the basic tenants of symbolic interactionism
- Examine the power of the situation in determining human behavior
- Classify perspectives on impression management and persuasion
- Apply principles of sociologically oriented Social Psychology to personal and professional life
- Understand the ethical principles relevant to doing research in Social Psychology
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of terms used in Social Psychology
- Develop effective writing skills.

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Adams State University
Department of Sociology
Fall 2015
TR 9:30 am - 10:45 am
MCD, 316

Textbooks:

Aronson, Elliot. (2012). *The Social Animal*. NY: Worth Publishers. *ELEVENTH EDITION*.

Exams (30%): You will take two exams throughout the semester, each worth 15% of your final grade. Exam questions will mainly test your knowledge of key concepts from the assigned readings but they will also include questions based on supplemental information provided in the classroom discussions and lectures.

Quizzes (20%): Four unannounced quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. Quizzes will address material covered in the class periods following the previous quiz plus the material assigned for that particular day.

Final Essay (30%):

Option 1: This essay is your opportunity to apply the key concepts that we explore throughout this course to a particular social setting. Your final essay should be at least 8 pages (double-spaced). The paper is to be based off of your observations of a specific social setting that you find intriguing. This assignment is due, in class, on the 1st of December. Please see the additional handout labeled “Ethnographic Analysis of Social Setting” for more information. (Available on website.)

Option 2: This option allows you to develop an original experiment or repeat a traditional experiment to see if you are able to replicate the study’s results. You may work in groups of up to 3 for this option but you will be required to work in close conjunction with me as you move forward. Please talk with me early in the semester if you would like to consider this option.

Final Presentation (10%): At the end of the semester you will be expected to present the observations/findings from your final essay to the rest of the class. You may present your work in the way that you are most comfortable with so as long as your presentation clearly and concisely conveys your work to the rest of the class. I will pass around a sign up sheet towards the middle of the semester. You must send a copy of your presentation to me at least 7 days before you are scheduled to present.

Participation (10%): Social Psychology is primarily concerned with social interaction. As a result, most Thursdays (marked in course schedule below) I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss and analyze a particular newspaper article through the lens of the particular concept that we are discussing that week (i.e., conformity, persuasion, social cognition, etc.). For this assignment I expect you to: (1) regularly read *The New York Times* (you’ll be paying for it!) as well as other professional news source such as *The Economist*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The BBC*, etc., (2) each week choose an article that fits with the core theme for the class that week, (3) print the article and read it and (4) after reading the article, jot down several discussion questions for the class to consider. In class I will expect each of you to provide a brief review of your article and then we will all discuss the questions that you have come up with. At the end of class you will turn in your article with your discussion questions (be sure to write your name on your article!).

Note: This class will include both lecture and discussion. For this reason it is expected that students *read* the assigned material *before class* so that they can actively participate in classroom

discussions. It should go without saying but active participation requires students to be present in the classroom. If a student misses an extensive amount of class (more than 3 classes), his/her *overall* grade for the course will drop by one letter grade (from A to B, B to C, etc.) for each absence beyond 3. Please note, anyone that arrives to class more than 5 minutes late is considered absent for that particular class period.

Written work: All written work must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font (Garamond or Times New Roman preferred), with 1" margins on all sides. Papers *may not* be turned in via e-mail unless I request a digital copy. Late papers will be penalized with a 10 point deduction for each day after the deadline.

Extra Credit: For each essay (in this case the final essay), if you utilize the writing lab I will increase your final grade, for that particular assignment, by 5 percent (you will need to provide edited drafts with your final essay).

Persons with Disabilities: If you have any sort of disability or personal problem that prevents the fullest expression of your abilities please let me know as soon as possible during the semester; ideally, before it interferes with your work, so that I can make a reasonable accommodation to your needs.

Academic Misconduct: Taking the easy way out will have real consequences in this class (check out turnitin.com). Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty will be dropped from the course and formal charges will be brought before the Department Chair.

Date	Topic	Reading
08/25	-Review syllabus	-Syllabus available on benjaminjameswaddell.com; password for course: soc401.
08/27	-Introduction to Social Psychology	-Ch. 1 in <i>Social Animal</i> (pg. 1-11) -Watch, "What Language Habits Reveal." http://www.ted.com/talks/steven_pinker_on_language_and_thought *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
09/01	-Introduction to Social Psychology as a Science	Ch. 9 in <i>Social Animal</i> (pg. 405-429) *Methodology (should be a review for most). *Bring example of "questionable statistic" to class on Thursday.
09/03	-Introduction to Social Psychology as a Science	-"Telling the Truth About Damned Lies and Statistics," by Joel Best (available on website in PDF labeled <i>Readings in Sociology</i> (Garth Massey)) -Mueller, Pam A. and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. "The Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard." (Website.) -Discuss "questionable statistics." *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
09/08	-Conformity	-Ch. 2 in <i>Social Animal</i> (13-35)
09/10	-Just following orders?	Ch. 5 "The My Lai Massacre: A Crime of Obedience?" by Herbert C. Kelman and V. Lee Hamilton (available on website in PDF labeled <i>Readings in Sociology</i> (Garth Massey))

		*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
09/15	-Conformity, cont.	-Ch. 2 in <i>Social Animal</i> (35-57) -Ch. 7 "Making Sense of the Nonsensical" in <i>Readings</i> (80-97)
09/17	-Jonestown	*Watch documentary: <i>Witness to Jonestown</i> .
09/22	-Mass Communication	- Ch. 3 in <i>Social Animal</i> (59-84)
09/24	-The Social Psychology of Politics	-Ch. 8 "Effects of Varying the Recommendations in a Fear-Arousing Communication" in <i>Readings</i> (101-111) and Miller, C. B. (2009). "Yes we did! Basking in reflected glory and cutting off reflected failure in the 2008 presidential election" (available on website) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
09/29	-Mass Communication, cont.	- Ch. 2 in <i>Social Animal</i> (84-115)
10/01	-Violence and the Media	- Ch. 4 "The Impact of Mass Media Violence on U.S. Homicides" in <i>Readings</i> (132-146) -Watch, "The Surprising Decline in Violence." http://www.ted.com/talks/steven_pinker_on_the_myth_of_violence *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. *In-class review for midterm!
10/06	-MIDTERM EXAM!!!	-Midterm Exam!
10/08	-Fall Break	-No class. *Write up a description of your final project. Explain what you plan to observe/study and discuss any pertinent literature that you believe might help you understand the phenomenon you will be observing. (Due in class Thursday, October 13 th .)
10/13	-The Social Psychology of News	-Start documentary: <i>Super Columbine Massacre RPG</i>
10/15	-Guest Speaker	-Finish documentary: <i>Super Columbine Massacre RPG</i> . -Guest speaker: Danny Ledonne. -Description of final project due!
10/20	-Social Cognition	-Ch. 4 in <i>Social Animal</i> (113-147)
10/22	-The Social Psychology of Attraction	-Ch. 11 "Contrast Effects and Judgments of Physical Attractiveness" in <i>Readings</i> (149-163) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
10/27	-Self-Justification	-Ch. 5 in <i>Social Animal</i> (177-220)
10/29	-The Social Psychology of Common Spaces	-Ch. 20 "Using Cognitive Dissonance to Encourage Water Conservation" in <i>Readings</i> (275-287) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
11/03	-The Social Psychology of Capitalism	-Kross, Ethan et al. "Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults." (Website.) -Piff, Paul K. et al. "Higher Social Class Predicts Increased Unethical Behavior." (Website.)

11/05	-Is more better?	-Iyengar, Sheena S. and Mark R. Lepper. "When Choice is Demotivating." (Website.) *Discuss final papers in class! *Start Drafting Final Paper!
11/10	-Sustainable Psychology?	-Sexton, Steven E. and Alison L. Sexton. (2011.) "Conspicuous Conservation: The Prius Effect and Willingness to Pay for Environmental Bona Fides." -Watch, "Paper Beats Plastic?" http://www.ted.com/talks/leyla_acaroglu_paper_beats_plastic_how_to_rethink_environmental_folklore
11/12	-Going green	-Weber, Christopher L. and H. Scott Matthews. (2008.) "Food-miles and the Relative Climate Impact of Food Choices in the United States." *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
11/17	-Aroused decision making.	-Ariely, Dan. <i>Predictably Irrational</i> . Read, "Chapter 5: The Influence of Arousal: Why Hot is Much Hotter Than We Realize." (Website.) -Watch, "Are We in Control of Our Own Decisions?" http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_asks_are_we_in_control_of_our_own_decisions
11/19	-Bilingual Education?	-Carter, Phillip M. "Why this bilingual education ban should have repealed long ago." (Website.) -Willis, Judy. "Radical Teaching." (Website.) -"The Benefits of Being Bilingual." (Website.) -Kovacs, Agnes Melinda and Jacques Mehler. "Cognitive gains in 7-month-old bilingual infants." (Website.) -Review. "Raising Children Bilingual." (Website.) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
11/24	-Pres. skills	-Outline of how to put together a great presentation.
11/26	-Thanksgiving	-No class!
12/01	-Final Presentations	-10-15 min per presenter -Final Papers due!
12/03	-Final Presentations	-10-15 min per presenter
12/08	-Final Presentations	-10-15 min per presenter
12/10	-Final Presentations	-10-15 min per presenter
12/15	Final Exam	-Tuesday, December 15 th from 10:00-11:50am.