



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 our actions are influenced by others 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:

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- 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 College

Department of Sociology

Fall 2011

TR 9:30 am - 10:45 am

Evans Building, 111

Textbooks:

Aronson, Elliot. (2008). *The Social Animal*. NY: Worth Publishers

Aronson, Joshua and Elliot Aronson (2012). *Readings About the Social Animal*. NY: Worth Publishers.



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.

Ethnographic Essay (25%): 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 6-8 pages (double-spaced). The paper is to be based off of your observations of a specific setting that is new to you (preferably an off off-campus location). Please see the additional handout labeled “Ethnographic Analysis of Social Setting” for more information.

Final Presentation (10%): At the end of the semester you will be expected to present the observations you make in 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.

Participation (35%):

Part I (15%): This class will include both lecture and discussion. That said, emphasis will be placed on the latter. For this reason, it is expected that you *read* the assigned material *before class* so that you can actively participate in classroom discussions. It should go without saying but active participation requires your presence in the classroom. If you miss an extensive amount of class (more than 4 classes), your participation grade will drop significantly.

Part I (20%): Social Psychology is primarily concerned with social interaction. As a result, each Thursday 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 a professional news source such as the New York Times, The Economist, The Los Angeles Times, The Denver Post, 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!).

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, 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 which prevents the fullest expression of your abilities, please let me know as soon as possible during the semester - 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.

Week 1: (08/23/11) Introduction

T: Review syllabus (available on benjaminjameswaddell.com; password for course: soc401)

R: Read Chap. 1 in *Social Animal* (pg. 1-11) and Chap. 1 in *Self and Society* (1-29) (Website)

*Introduction to Social Psychology

Week 2: (08/30/11) Introduction to Social Psychology as a Science

T: Read Chap. 9 in *Social Animal* (pg. 405-429)

*Methodology (should be a review for most)

*Bring example of “questionable statistic” to class on Thursday

R: Read “Telling the Truth About Damned Lies and Statistics,” by Joel Best (available on website in PDF labeled *Readings in Sociology* (Garth Massey))

*Review of Statistics in Social Sciences

Week 3: (09/06/11) Conformity

T: Read Chap. 2 in *Social Animal* (13-35)

R: Read Chap. 5 “The My Lai Massacre: A Crime of Obedience?” by Herbert C. Kelman and V. Lee Hamilton (available on website in PDF labeled *Readings in Sociology* (Garth Massey))

Week 4: (09/13/11) Conformity

T: Read Chap. 2 in *Social Animal* (35-57)

R: Read Chap. 7 “Making Sense of the Nonsensical” in *Readings* (80-97)

*Discuss students’ analysis of newspaper articles.

Week 5: (09/20/11) Mass Communication, Media Effects, Contagion, Politics

T: Read Chap. 3 in *Social Animal* (59-84)

R: Read Chap. 8 “Effects of Varying the Recommendations in a Fear-Arousing Communication” in *Readings* (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.

Week 6: (09/27/11) Mass Communication, Media Effects, Contagion, Politics

T: Read Chap. 2 in *Social Animal* (84-115)

R: Read Chap. 4 "The Impact of Mass Media Violence on U.S. Homicides" in *Readings* (132-146)

*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.

Week 7: (10/04/11)

*T: MIDTERM EXAM!!

*R: No Class Thursday, October 6th (Fall Break)

Week 8: (10/11/11) Social Cognition

T: Watch movie: American Experience: Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple

R: Read Chap. 4 in *Social Animal* (117-147)

Week 9: (10/18/2011) Social Cognition

(Remember: Conduct Observation for Final Paper!)

T: Read Chap. 2 in *Social Animal* (147-179)

R: Read Chap. 11 "Contrast Effects and Judgments of Physical Attractiveness" in *Readings* (149-163)

*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles

Week 10: (10/25/11) Self-Justification

(Remember: Conduct Observation for Final Paper!)

T: Read Chap. 5 in *Social Animal* (181-220)

R: Read Chap. 20 "Using Cognitive Dissonance to Encourage Water Conservation" in *Readings* (275-287)

*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles

Week 11: (11/01/11) Human Aggression

T: Read Chap. 6 in *Social Animal* (253-279)

R: Read Chap. 22 "The Effects of Observing Violence" in *Readings* (303-314)

*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles

Week 12: (11/08/11) Human Aggression

Start Drafting Final Paper

T: Read Chap. 6 in *Social Animal* (279-299)



R: Read Chap. 24 "Peacetime Casualties" in *Readings* (329-340)

*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles

Week 13: (11/15/11) Prejudice

T: Read Chap. 7 in *Social Animal* (301-324)

R: Read Massey, Douglas. "The Psychology of Social Stratification", pg. 387-396
(Available on website)

*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles

Week 14: (11/22/11) Liking, Loving, and Interpersonal Sensitivity

Begin Working on Final Presentations/Finish Final Essays!!

T: Read Chap. 37 "Some Evidence for Heightened Sexual Attraction Under Conditions of High Anxiety" in *Readings* (536-549)

R: Thanksgiving Break, No Class

Week 15: (11/29/11) Liking, Loving, and Interpersonal Sensitivity

T: Read Chap. 8 in *Social Animal* (357-381)

R: Read Chap. 39 "Arbitrary Social Norms Influence Sex Differences in Romantic Selectivity" in *Readings* (568-579)

*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles

Week 16: (12/06/11) Final Presentations in Class

T: No Class: Use class time to proofread your essay and prepare for final presentations!

***Final Essays Due Today by Midnight (e-mail to benjaminjameswaddell@gmail.com)**

R: Final Presentations in Class (10-15 minutes per presenter)

Week 17: (12/13/11)

Final Exam (Time and place TBA)