

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
Psychology 360
Fall 2017

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:45 – 10:45, Thursdays 12:45 – 1:45, or by appointment

Course Description

Social psychology was defined by Gordon Allport as a discipline that attempts "to understand and explain how the thoughts, feeling, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others." This course is designed to introduce some of the major theoretical and empirical areas of interest to social psychologists. We will survey a variety of theories and concepts within social psychology and examine evidence pertaining to social psychological theory. Among the topics we will consider are: the self, attitudes and attitude change, social perception and social influence, aggression, prejudice, and prosocial behavior. Course material will be conveyed through lectures, films, and reading, as well as group exercises and discussions.

Educational Goals

It is the goal of Grand Valley to provide students with the opportunity for a liberal education. According to the Grand Valley Vision, Mission, and Values Statement, students who are pursuing a liberal education "learn to think for themselves as they develop the skills of inquiry, reflection, critical analysis, dialogue, and expression." Through your coursework in Social Psychology (PSY 360), you can, in particular, develop your ability to think critically and to question what you see and hear within the academic environment and in everyday life. You will also have opportunities to engage in dialogue in the classroom, to express yourself in writing in short papers and essay exam questions, to reflect on what you've read and learned in class, and to apply what you are learning to life outside the classroom. Thus, in addition to learning about social psychological theory and research findings, taking this course provides multiple ways to enhance your learning experience from a liberal education perspective.

Learning is not easy work. Just as advanced physical exercise can be difficult and demanding, so can mental exercise. Studying at the university level needs to be challenging so that students have the chance to fully develop their intellectual capabilities. This does not mean that intellectual work at this level cannot also be enjoyable; the thrill of pushing beyond one's physical limits has a parallel in the intellectual realm. Learning to think more critically, to analyze, to craft an argument, and to articulate one's ideas, can be rewarding as well as challenging.

It is my expectation that students taking this class are interested in learning. You may have additional motivations for taking it; however, your experience in this class will be much more rewarding if learning is one of your primary goals. I am committed to making this an interesting, challenging, and informative course that should stimulate thought, questions, and discussion.

Reading

Required: Kassin, S. M., Fein, S., & Markus, H. (2016). Social Psychology, Tenth Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

You will benefit if you have completed the required reading before the first class of the week. Some familiarity with the reading material will be assumed during lectures and discussions. A schedule of topics and associated readings is included in this syllabus.

Course Requirements, Evaluation, and Grades

Students are expected to do all of the assigned reading and to attend all class sessions. Detailed notes should be taken during lectures and, **if absence is unavoidable, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from another student.** I strongly suggest you attempt to obtain notes from two or three individuals. Films, group exercises and discussion are intended to facilitate learning in this course, and summary notes should also be taken on these activities. Exams will cover all sources of information in the course. Students are generally expected to invest approximately 3 hours outside the classroom for every hour spent inside the classroom, and necessary additional time studying for exams.

Exams during the semester

All exams for this course will be a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer/short essay questions. There will be three exams during the semester. The exams will be held during regular, scheduled class meetings. The dates for each exam appear below and also on the attached schedule of topics. Each of these exams will be worth 50 points; however, the lowest of these three exam scores will be dropped. **If you must miss an exam, the score for the missed exam is the one that will be dropped.** There will be **no make up exams**. Thus, your final grade will be based in part on the two highest of your three exam scores (for a total of 100 possible points).

Exam 1: Thursday, September 28

Exam 2: Thursday, October 26

Exam 3: Thursday, December 30

Final exam (cumulative and mandatory)

There will be a final exam for this course that will take place at the scheduled time during the final exam period. This exam will cover the last topic on the syllabus, as well as material from across the semester. This exam will also be a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer/short essay questions. It will be worth 60 points toward your final grade.

Writing Assignment

There will also be **one** short writing assignment required during the semester. More information on this assignment will be provided in the coming weeks. Although you will **turn in only one assignment**, there will be **several options** from which you can choose. Two of these will be announced in class and will be due one week after the announcement. A third will be announced earlier in the semester and the due date for that paper will be open-ended, with an absolute deadline of the last Tuesday of regular classes. A **hard copy** of your paper must be turned in by the beginning of class on the due date. The writing assignment will be worth 40 points toward your final grade. If you request to turn in a late paper, and I agree to accept it, three points per day will be deducted from your score. Whichever assignment you choose to do, the papers will be very short in length; however, they are expected to be **very high quality**. Each option will provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to apply the concepts you are learning in the class, to think critically

about what you are learning, and to effectively and succinctly communicate your ideas in a well-crafted essay.

Plagiarism

Working together with other students is very much encouraged in this class. It is often beneficial to study with others (after having reviewed the material independently). It can also be useful to talk with others about your paper; however, your paper must represent **your own independent work**. Any sources on which you base your ideas, including lecture material and the textbook, should be **cited in the text of your paper**. It is not necessary to supply references for lectures or the textbook; however, if you choose to use any other sources, you must include a Reference page with your paper. If you use a direct quote, you must use **quotation marks** and cite the source. **Plagiarism will result in a score of zero for the assignment and likely failure of the course, and all incidents of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students.**

Final grades

It is possible to receive a total of 200 points on the exams and the paper for this course. The grading scale will be as follows:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>
93 - 100	A	80 - 82	B-	68 - 69	D+
90 - 92	A-	78 - 79	C+	60 - 67	D
88 - 89	B+	73 - 77	C	below 60	F
83 - 87	B	70 - 72	C-		

Classroom Etiquette

Out of consideration for everyone who is part of this class, please do everything in your power to **arrive at class on time**. Late arrivals are often disruptive to other students, as well as to me. Moreover, coming late to class may mean you miss out on important announcements. You may also miss overviews and introductions to the day's topic, and this may make it difficult for you to follow lecture or to get the most out of it. Finally, please do not begin packing up to go until it is clear that class is done for the day. Just as arriving late is disruptive, so is packing up to leave.

One of the most frequent complaints that students have about their classes is that other students talk during lecture, making it difficult for people around them to hear. In my experience, the vast majority of students are very considerate this way. However, it only takes a couple of students to annoy many others. Please refrain from talking with others during lecture, including when I am responding to student questions. Also, please demonstrate respect for one another during class; it is often productive to express differences of opinion, but please do so in a civil and respectful way.

I strongly encourage people to ask questions in class, but **please raise your hand** or otherwise indicate that you have a question rather than calling it out. If you must bring your cell phone to class, please make sure it is turned off **before** class begins. I currently allow computers in the classroom, but **only** for note-taking. Any other activities (e.g., surfing the web, checking your e-mail) are distracting to other students, and if you do anything other than note-taking, you will no longer be able to bring your computer to class. Computers will be banned for everyone if there are three breaches of this "note-taking only" policy.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

WEEK OF:	TOPIC & CHAPTER
August 29:	Introduction to course; What is Social Psychology? (Chapter 1)
September 5:	Methods in Social Psychology (Chapter 2; no class on Tuesday due to Labor Day)
September 12:	The Self (Chapter 3)
September 19:	Social Perception (Chapter 4)
September 26:	Social Cognition (Chapter 4); Exam on Thursday, September 28
October 3:	Attitudes (Chapter 6)
October 10:	Persuasion and Attitude Change (Chapter 6)
October 17:	Social Influence (Chapter 7)
October 24:	Groups (Chapter 8); Exam on Thursday, October 26
October 31:	Gender (Chapter 5)
November 7:	Prejudice and Discrimination (Chapter 5)
November 14:	Prejudice and Discrimination, continued, and Aggression (Chapter 11)
November 21:	Aggression, continued (no class on Thursday due to Thanksgiving)
November 28:	Prosocial Behavior (Chapter 10); Exam on Thursday, November 30
December 5:	Close Relationships (Chapter 9)

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, DECEMBER 11 from 10:00 – 11:50 AM

Please check your calendar NOW and make sure you will be able to make your assigned exam time. If you have conflicts with other final exams, you must try to make alternate arrangements with me immediately, not just prior to final exams.