

# Grand Valley State University

## Psychology 360: Social Psychology

**Professor:** Todd Williams

**Office:** 1307 Au Sable Hall

**E-mail:** todd\_williams@gvsu.edu

**Office Hours:** TR 1:30 – 2:30 (and by appointment)

Appointments are encouraged and can be made via email. Students with appointments will be given priority during office hours. Please indicate the reason for your visit in the email.

**6:00 – 8:50 pm Au Sable Hall 2302**

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**Course Description:** A general introduction to a branch of psychology that uses scientific methods to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings.

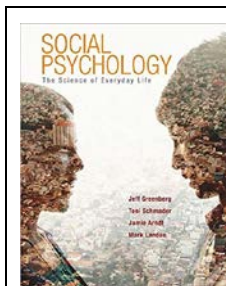
This course is subject to standard GVSU course policies. <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>

**Objectives:** Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to: 1. Describe social psychological theories and concepts. 2. Evaluate and think critically about the theories and major findings in social psychology. 3. Explain the scientific method as it applies to social psychological phenomenon. 4. Explain how social psychological theories and concepts apply to people's experiences in everyday social life.

### Course Prerequisites:

Prerequisite(s): PSY101 (Introductory Psychology) OR HNR234 (Society and Self: Psychological Perspective) OR SOC201 (Introduction to Sociology)

### Required Text:



Greenberg, J., Schmader, T., Arndt, J. & Landau, M. (2015). *Social Psychology: The Science of Everyday Life* (1st ed). Worth Publishers

Research articles, supplemental readings, and lecture notes will be posted on BlackBoard.

**Grade Evaluation:**

	Description	Weight
Exams	There will be 3 exams evenly dispersed throughout the course. They may be multiple choice, short or long answer depending on the material being tested.  While exams will be focused on the material covered since the last exam, material covered earlier in the course generally serves as a basis for those covered later.	25% per exam  75% of total grade.
Term Paper	You will write a 6 page paper that uses social psychological theory to describe a time in which you or someone close to you was a target of persuasion.	25%

**Grades will be determined by adjusting the class average to 73% (B-) and assigning letter grades based on the below distribution. Thus, your grade in this class is based on your performance relative to the rest of the class.** Notice that the grading distribution below is much more lenient than what most of you are used to. (this is to avoid ceiling effects in the grading distribution)

**This is a *tentative* grade distribution**

Rating	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage Grades
Excellent	A	4.0	90-100%
Excellent	A-	3.7	85-89%
Good	B+	3.3	80-84%
Good	B	3.0	75-79%
Good	B-	2.7	70-74%
Satisfactory	C+	2.3	65-69%
Satisfactory	C	2.0	60-65%
Satisfactory	C-	1.7	55-59%
Poor	D+	1.3	50-54%
Minimal Pass	D	1.0	45-49%
Failure	F	0	0-44%

**Missed Exam:**

As many of you do not have adequate health coverage I do not require health certificates for absences for missed classes. However, if you miss more than 1 scheduled exam or homework I may require that you to provide a certificate from a certified health professional. *If you miss an exam, you must report your illness to me within 48 hours of the exam/assignment due date.* In the case of a missed exam or assignment, I will either give an extension or have the weight of the missed examination/assignment added to the remaining assignments/exams.

In the case that you are notifying me about a medical condition, absence, or other important aspect of the course, please do so via email. I will always provide a confirmation note that I have received these types of email within 24 hours. If I have not done so, assume that I have not received your email and send another.

### **Missed Class:**

If you miss class for a legitimate reason I recommend that you ask a peer for their notes, complete the assigned readings. After you've done this, feel free to schedule a meeting with me to explain any concepts that you are struggling with.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Grand Valley State University is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of GVSU in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the *Code of Student Behaviour* (online at <http://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/index.cfm>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from GVSU. No student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as their own. Furthermore, no student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has been obtained by the student or which has previously been or is being submitted by the student in another course or program of study at GVSU or elsewhere. All forms of dishonesty are unacceptable at GVSU. Cheating, plagiarism and misrepresentation of facts are serious offenses. Anyone who engages in these practices will receive a grade of zero for the exam or paper in question and no opportunity will be given to replace the grade or redistribute the weights. Any offense will be reported to the Dean of the CLAS who will determine the disciplinary action to be taken.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact me and Disability Support Services (Room 200 STU; 616 331 2490). Furthermore, if you have a physical disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency, please make me aware so that I can develop a plan to assist you.

**ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTRE:** Students who require additional help in developing strategies for better time management, writing, study or examination skills should contact the Advising Resource Centre (200 STU).

**Disclaimer:** *This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class.*

### ***Tentative Lecture Schedule & Assigned Readings:***

<i>Week 1</i>		
<b>August 28</b>	<b><i>Course Introduction</i></b>  Syllabus Review  An Introduction to the ideas of Ernest Becker	
	<b><i>Philosophy to Everyday Life</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existential Philosophy</li> <li>• The Psychoanalytic movement</li> </ul>	
<i>Week 2</i>		
<b>September 6</b>	<b><i>Ernest Becker</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Role of Theory in Science</li> <li>• Ernest Becker</li> <li>• Terror Management Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mortality Salience</li> <li>○ Anxiety Buffer</li> <li>○ Death Thought Accessibility</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Assigned Reading:</b>  Course Reader – An introduction to Ernest Becker
<i>Week 3</i>		
<b>September 13</b>	<b><i>Methods</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of science</li> <li>• Correlation/causation</li> <li>• Randomization/control</li> </ul> <b><i>Social Psychology</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History</li> <li>• Assumptions</li> <li>• Perspectives</li> </ul>	<b>Assigned Reading:</b>  Chapter 1 – Greenberg   <b>Assigned Reading:</b>  Burke, Martens & Faucher, 2010
<i>Week 4</i>		
<b>September 20</b>	<b><i>Fundamentals of Social Behavior</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evolution</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Social Environment</li> </ul>	Chapter 2 - Greenberg

	<b><i>Culture and Emotion</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Emotion and Culture</i></li> <li>• <i>Theories of Emotion</i></li> <li>• <i>Confirmation Bias</i></li> <li>• <i>Excitation Transfer</i></li> <li>• <i>Micro-expressions</i></li> </ul>	Chapter 3 - Greenberg
<b><i>Week 5</i></b>		
<b>September 26</b>	Exam 1	
	<b><i>Social Cognition</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gestalt Movement</li> <li>• Schemas</li> <li>• Dual Process Theories</li> <li>• Implicit/Explicit Attitudes</li> <li>• Lay Epistemics</li> </ul>	Chapter 3 - Greenberg
<b><i>Week 6</i></b>		
<b>October 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associative Networks</li> <li>• Biases</li> <li>• Priming &amp; Metaphors</li> <li>• Contrast effects</li> <li>• Confirmation Bias</li> <li>• Labelling effects</li> <li>• Automaticity</li> <li>• Metaphors</li> <li>• Cognitive Dissonance</li> <li>• Festinger &amp; Carlsmith</li> </ul>	Chapter 4 - Greenberg
<b><i>Week 7</i></b>		
<b>October 11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attribution and Biases</li> <li>• Heuristics</li> <li>• Halo Effect</li> <li>• The Self</li> <li>• Will Power</li> </ul>	Chapter 5 - Greenberg

	<b><i>Social Influence</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Conformity</i></li> <li>• <i>Obedience</i></li> </ul>	Chapter 7 - Greenberg
<b>Week 8</b>		
<b>October 18</b>	<b><i>Persuasion, Attitudes &amp; Behavior</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routes to persuasion</li> <li>• Reactance</li> <li>• Limiting conditions</li> </ul>	Chapter 8 - Greenberg
<b>Week 9</b>		
<b>October 25</b>	<b><i>Exam #2</i></b>  <b><i>Group Processes</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Group identity</i></li> <li>• <i>Cooperation</i></li> <li>• <i>Performance</i></li> </ul>	Chapter 9 - Greenberg
	<b>Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination</b>	Chapter 10 - Greenberg
<b>Week 10</b>		
<b>November 1</b>	<b>Responding to Prejudice and Racism</b>	Chapter 11 – Greenberg
<b>December 6</b>	<b>TBA</b>	
<b>November 15</b>	<b>TBA</b>	
<b>November 29</b>	<b>TBA</b>	
<b>December 13</b>	<b>Exam #3</b>  Please submit <b>PAPER</b> copies of <b>your term papers at the final exam</b>	<b>Final Exam</b> <b>6:00-7:50</b> <b>Regular Classroom</b>

*\* You are responsible for understanding the content of the assigned readings, regardless of whether this content is discussed in class.*

## Term Paper: “Being a Target of Persuasion”

At many points in our lives we encounter other people who try to alter our thoughts, attitudes, and/or behaviors. You will write a paper documenting such an instance that was *successful*: meaning that someone else succeeded in persuading you to do something, to believe something, or to think in a certain way. For example, perhaps a salesperson got you to buy something which you hadn't otherwise intended to buy; perhaps some friends persuaded you to do something risky; perhaps your parents persuaded you to date (or not to date) someone, or to support a political candidate or adopt a religious belief. The list of potential topics goes on and on because there are so many contexts in which you may have found yourself targeted by and succumbing to others' persuasive efforts.

The goals of this assignment are for you to clearly identify this instance, and most importantly, to thoughtfully identify specific persuasion tactics/strategies/principles that were used on you in that instance. Doing so will require you to understand and apply course material from our class sessions on Persuasion.

### Assignment Parameters

- 1) Write a 6-page paper (no more, no less), double-spaced, stapled, with 1” margins, in 12-point Times New Roman font (the 6 pages *do not include* the title page and reference section)
- 2) Hand in a hard-copy of your paper in class on the due date. Papers submitted via email will not be accepted unless I have given explicit consent for you to do so.
- 3) Your paper must be formatted to include the following components of APA style:
  - a. Title page with a unique and descriptive title, your full name, course title, date of paper submission, as well as a Running Head; see here for general guidelines on title page formatting: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
  - b. You do not need to include an abstract
  - c. You should divide the body of your paper into different sections corresponding to sections listed in the “Paper Sections” portion of these instructions (see below)
  - d. The last page of your paper should be References (see here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/07/>). There are several important rules for your Reference section:
    - i. It must be formatted correctly (see page 9 of this sample paper: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090212013008\\_560.pdf](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090212013008_560.pdf))
    - ii. You must include a minimum of 3 references
    - iii. All of your references must be appropriately cited within the body of the paper (see here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/> and here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/06/>)
    - iv. Your Reference section must only include references that fit the guidelines specified in the next section of these instructions, titled “Resources”

### Resources

- 1) You are required to include at least three references to source material that are either:
  - a. A book or a book chapter: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/08/>
  - b. An article from a periodical: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/07/>
- 2) Providing reference/citation for any of the following will NOT get you credit toward your three required references:
  - a. The recommended course text (Social Psychology)
  - b. Any online recourse, such as a website or newspaper article
  - c. Personal correspondence



- 3) Tips on finding resources:
- Professor Williams will post a chapter corresponding to the assignment on Blackboard. That chapter, in addition to the the assigned text and lectures, will provide you with tons of information on persuasion strategies, including theories, technical terminology, and specific empirical findings. You should comb through all of that information, identify appropriate search terms, then search through an appropriate database via the university library website (the best database will be PsychInfo) to identify appropriate resources.
  - Note that when you find and reference/cite a resource, that requires more than simply inserting information into a Reference section. You will need to demonstrate, in the body of the paper, a thorough application of the content of the resource information to your experience of being a target of persuasion. For instance, if you were to cite/reference an empirical study of a particular persuasive process, then in the body of the paper you should briefly name and define that process, provide a brief and accurate description of the applicable idea or research finding from your resource (“For instance, Kosloff, Cesario, and Landau (2013) observed that...”), and then proceed to identify parallels between your situation and the research finding or theoretical stance in question.
  - In addition to identifying resources through PsychInfo searches, you should consider consulting the following excellent book on persuasion, which should be available at the library or cheaply from online bookstores like Amazon.com:  
Cialdini, Robert (2008). *Influence: Science and Practice*. Englewood Cliggs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

## Paper Sections

The body of the paper should have the following 6 sections, in the following order:

1) **The Situation I Experienced**  
*length: 3/4 of a page or less*

Your paper begins directly with this section. Since it is inappropriate to put a section heading at the beginning of a paper, this section does not require a heading. Just start the paper with a sentence that launches into an overview of the persuasion situation you experienced. For instance, you might begin with something like: “About three years ago, I had an intense encounter with a car salesman. I was purchasing my first car...”, and then proceed to summarize the persuasive situation.

2) **How I Presented Myself**  
*length: 3/4 of a page or less*

For this section (and all those that follow), use the appropriate given section heading (so for *this* section you should center the words How I Presented Myself to indicate the start of the section). This section has to do with how others saw you in the persuasion context, and how you saw yourself. Did others see you as a naïve young person that could be exploited? What aspects of your appearance, mood, demeanor, speech, etc., might have signaled to others that you were someone they should target with a persuasive appeal?

3) **The Physical and Social Nature of the Persuasion Setting**  
*length: 3/4 of a page or less*

(As with the previous section and all sections to follow, start with the centered section heading; in this case: The Physical and Social Nature of the Persuasion Setting) In this section, provide a clear, colorful description of the physical environment and social environment in which the persuasion experience took place. For example, if you were at a car dealership, you might describe the colorful, shiny cars all around you, new car smells, the sights and sounds, the complimentary fresh coffee and donuts that

could scintillate your senses etc. But also describe the social environment: were you alone, surrounded by tons of people at the mall, with a small group of friends, etc.? Paint a compelling picture that transports your reader to the time, place, and social context of the experience.

**4) The Persuasion Tactics Used on Me**

*length: 2 to 3 pages or more*

This is the most important section of the paper. Here is where your Resources come in to play. Your goal here is to thoroughly identify the persuasion strategies/tactics/principles that were used upon you in the situation. This involves more than simply naming strategies/tactics/principles. As noted earlier in these instructions (see the Resources section above, particularly section 3b), you must apply of the content of Resource information to your experience of being a target of persuasion. This means that you will: 1) identify and define persuasion strategies/tactics/principles used upon you; 2) cite/reference and summarize theory and/or research findings from resources to which you refer; 3) draw clear, explicit parallels between elements of your persuasion experience and the ideas or research findings illustrated by your resources; and 4) identify which strategies/tactics/ principles were most effectively used on you. Keep in mind that you are required to provide references/citations for at least three resources in this section. In writing this section, your primary aim is to demonstrate that you have studied the psychology of persuasion and developed the ability to apply specific research and theory to your personal experience as a target of persuasion.

**5) How I Felt While in the Setting**

*length: 3/4 of a page or less*

You may have experienced a variety of emotions while others were trying to persuade you. Describe how you felt.

**6) What I Learned from This Experience**

*length: 3/4 of a page or less*

Hopefully this assignment has helped you learn something about yourself and what makes you susceptible to social influence. In this section, describe what you have learned. Do you think that, in the future, you are more (or perhaps less) vulnerable to the sort of persuasive strategies/tactics/principles that were used upon in you the past? How can you arm yourself against such influence going forward?

**Term Paper Grading Rubric**

There are a total of 109 potential points in this rubric. Your term paper grade will be the percentage of those points obtained using the scaled categories below.

<b><u>BASIC PAPER ELEMENTS</u></b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Is the paper 6 pages long (not including title page and reference page)?	+1	+0
Is the paper double-spaced?	+1	+0
Is the paper cleanly stapled in the upper left corner?	+1	+0
Are all margins 1-inch in size?	+1	+0
Is the font 12-point Times New Roman?	+1	+0

Does your title page follow all APA guidelines?	+2	+0
Did you divide the paper into the "Paper Sections" as instructed?	+2	+0

<b><u>TECHNIQUE OF WRITING AND PAPER CONSTRUCTION</u></b>	Perfect	Minor mistake(s)	Major mistake(s) or many minor ones
Grammar	+5	+2.5	+0
Spelling	+5	+2.5	+0
Punctuation	+5	+2.5	+0
Formatting (e.g., mistakenly adding unnecessary spaces between sections or words)	+5	+2.5	+0
Overall clarity of the entire paper	+5	+2.5	+0

<b><u>REFERENCES AND CITATIONS</u></b>	Perfect	Minor mistake(s)	Major mistake(s) or many minor ones
Does your Reference section follow all instructions (including the Resources guidelines)?	+5	+2.5	+0
Are all referenced sources properly cited in the body of the paper?	+5	+2.5	+0
In the section titled "The Persuasion Tactics Used on Me," are your cited works meaningfully and thoroughly integrated into the flow of your writing, as specified in section 3b of the Resources portion of this assignment?	+5	+2.5	+0

<b><u>PAPER SECTIONS</u></b>	Excellent	Very good	Fair	Poor
The Situation I Experienced	+9	+6	+3	+0
How I Presented Myself	+9	+6	+3	+0
The Physical and Social Nature of the Persuasion Setting	+9	+6	+3	+0
The Persuasion Tactics Used on Me	+15	+10	+5	+0
How I Felt While in the Setting	+9	+6	+3	+0
What I Learned from This Experience	+9	+6	+3	+0