

## PSY360-03 – Social Psychology, Winter 2025

T/Th, 4-5:15pm

2310 ASH

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### Instructor

Dr. Ellen Shupe  
Pronouns: she/her/hers  
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### Office hours

2218 ASH; T/Th, 2-3:30pm

**Textbook** (made available through GVSU Course Save): Myers, D.G. & Twenge, J.M. (2022). Social Psychology (14<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

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### Welcome & Course Overview

PSY360 provides an introduction to the field of Social Psychology, the scientific study of how our social context influences our behavior, thoughts, and emotions. Welcome to the course!

During the semester we'll discuss a number of psychological theories and areas of research, such as how individuals use social information in understanding themselves, the behavior and decision making of people working in groups, causes and consequences of discrimination, and social explanations for aggressive behavior. In addition to developing an understanding of the foundations of social psychology, you will be encouraged to think critically about and discuss issues directly related to social psychology, such as the application of psychological research to social issues. We are by nature social animals, so many of the topics we discuss will be very familiar. Although this familiarity generally makes the course more interesting and relevant, it may also make the material we cover seem deceptively easy. **You should be prepared to spend a considerable amount of time (5-6 hours) outside of class on course-related work.**

Some social psychological topics, such as prejudice and discrimination, can be difficult to discuss in large group settings. Please know that my intent in covering the content is not to make you feel targeted or to invite conflict, but to introduce and critically discuss important psychological theory and research. I will do my best to make the classroom a space for everyone to engage with the material in a safe and intellectually challenging way.

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### Contacting Prof. Shupe

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. The best way to contact me is with email ([shupree@gvsu.edu](mailto:shupree@gvsu.edu)), since I check it regularly and usually try to respond within 24 hours. If for some reason you don't receive a response from me within 48 hours, feel free to email a follow-up message.

I always encourage students to meet with me outside of class because it helps me to get to know them and provides a good way to ask questions or get clarifications. So please plan to meet with me – I'm here to help and I look forward to getting to know you!

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### Class Format & Technology Requirements

While this is an in-person, classroom-based course, the format is non-traditional in two important ways.

First, many class sessions will be activity and discussion-based. I'll do some "lecturing" to introduce topics and cover more difficult concepts, but you'll need to **read the chapters and watch short, narrated Powerpoint videos before coming to class**. During class we'll discuss material covered in the chapters and videos and do activities designed to provide a deeper understanding of the material and help you remember and apply important concepts.

Second, the course incorporates **collaborative online international learning (COIL)**, a platform that allows students to work with international peers on projects related to their courses. For this course, you'll participate in a COIL with engineering students in a psychology course at the Universidad del Caribe (UniCaribe) in Mexico. COIL exchanges are ideal for courses like Social Psychology that focus on understanding cultural, contextual, and social influences. The collaboration will provide a valuable (and fun!) intercultural experience - an opportunity to learn from international peers and build intercultural communication skills in a safe, informal setting. And because graduate schools and employers value communication and intercultural competency, the COIL experience will be a good addition to your resume. We'll discuss details about the COIL in the first few weeks of class, but here are the main points:

- You'll be assigned to work in an 8-person team (4 students from GVSU and 4 from UniCaribe), based on times you're available. Teams will meet outside of class 5-6 times, using Zoom or Google Meet. The UniCaribe students can speak Spanish and English, so the team meetings will be conducted in English.
- There are 3 phases of the COIL: preparation, exchange, and culmination. In the Preparation phase, we will discuss what to expect and how to prepare for the meetings, and you and your GVSU teammates will create a short video introducing yourselves for your UniCaribe partners. The Exchange phase is the main part of the COIL. Over the course of several weeks your team will meet 5 times to discuss specific topics related to social psychology, based on a set of guiding questions. After each meeting, your team will submit a recording of the meeting, and each person will submit a reflection describing the meeting and what you learned. In the Culmination phase you will collaborate as a team to create a presentation about your work together to share with other teams.
- In addition to the virtual meetings your team will need to communicate asynchronously, using WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, Discord, or another platform that works for your team. Because the success of your team depends on the participation of everyone, it is **essential that you attend every meeting and actively contribute to team communications and plans.**

**Technology requirements.** Course materials will be available through the Blackboard Ultra online course management system, accessible through the main content area of our class Blackboard site. To log in to Blackboard, open your web browser and go to <http://mybb.gvsu.edu>. Given your need to participate in virtual meetings and access Blackboard and other online materials, I highly recommend that you have dependable access to high speed internet; a computer with a sound card and speakers; and an operating system that meets current Blackboard requirements. If you run into problems accessing Blackboard or have questions about using it, please contact me, see [GVSU's Student Guide to Blackboard](#) or contact [GVSU's Information Technology Office](#).

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## Course Objectives

By the end of the semester you should have a good understanding of the following:

- Influences of culture and role of norms and social roles in social behavior
- Social influences on the self-concept, self-esteem, and self-presentation
- Cognitive heuristics and biases used in self-perception and social perception
- Types and manifestations of racism and sexism, and their consequences
- Types of prejudice and social, motivational, and cognitive factors related to prejudice and discrimination
- Psychological processes involved in persuasion; the relation between attitudes & behavior
- Theory and research related to social influence, obedience, and moral disengagement
- Intergroup conflict & modes of conflict resolution
- Social influences on aggression & evidence-based interventions for aggression
- Theory and research related to the need to belong and factors affecting friendship & close relationships
- Factors predicting helping behavior and evidence-based ways to increase prosocial tendencies

In addition, by the end of the semester you should have further developed the following:

- The ability to think critically, especially as related to interpreting and applying theory and research
  - The ability to make links between theoretical assumptions and social behavior
  - The ability to identify possible explanations for social behavior based on established theory and research
  - Cultural awareness and understanding of the cultural impact on identity, cognitions, and social behavior
  - Efficacy for engaging in intercultural discussions
  - Group-based problem-solving and collaboration abilities
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## Class Policies & Expectations

**Professionalism & respect.** To learn at our potential, we all need to feel like we're heard and respected in and outside of the classroom. Thus, maintaining a climate that is inclusive and respectful is not only socially responsible and ethical, it's key to a successful learning experience. We live in a time of incredible divisiveness, stress, and loss, when personal attacks and the public expression of strong emotions have become more and more commonplace. It is particularly important, therefore, that we use considerate language and behavior toward one another, and that we make a conscious effort to affirm the contributions of all. We have different beliefs, values, and opinions, but we are all members of the same GVSU community. While you obviously don't have to agree with everyone in the class or with me, you need to treat everyone with respect. This includes communicating in a way that acknowledges and validates others.

**Academic integrity.** At GVSU we believe that “academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to a community of scholars” and that academic dishonesty “compromises the integrity of university grades, and scholarship and research” ([GVSU Policy, STU 4.0](#)). Thus, in PSY360 you are expected to do your own work and to not engage in any form of academic dishonesty, including taking or receiving help from others during exams or quizzes; attempting to pass off someone else’s work as your own; using generative AI without acknowledging it; and using ideas, sentences, or phrases from a source without proper citation. Cheating and plagiarism are likely to result in a zero on the relevant exam, quiz or assignment, and reported to the Chair of the Psychology Department. If you’re not sure if a specific action constitutes a breach of academic integrity, please discuss it with me. If you want more information about what is considered academic dishonesty at GVSU, see [GVSU's guidelines](#).

**The use of electronic devices during class.** Research suggests that using electronic devices to text, browse social media, or do other activities not related to the course is distracting and interferes with learning of others in the class. Therefore, during class please use your phone, tablet, or laptop, only for purposes directly related to this course.

**Accessibility and disability support.** Your success in PSY360 is important, and I want to ensure that students with a diverse range of abilities are provided with a positive learning environment that provides them with the same opportunity to learn. If you require formal accommodations, please contact me early in the term so we can work together to make appropriate arrangements. If you encounter difficulties in the course that interfere with your learning, please let me know, and if you think you may benefit from formal accommodations, contact GVSU’s Office of [Student Accessibility Resources](#) ([gvsu.edu/dsr/](mailto:gvsu.edu/dsr/)) at (616) 331-2490 or [access@gvsu.edu](mailto:access@gvsu.edu).

**Other university policies.** In addition to the policies described above, you’ll be expected to comply with other course-related policies at GVSU (<http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>).

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## Course Requirements & Evaluation

Semester grades will be based on quizzes, exams, and COIL-related assignments.

**Quizzes & exams.** You’ll have seven 20-point quizzes and two 40-point exams. The quizzes and exams will cover material discussed in class and in the readings and will generally consist of multiple choice and free response (short answer/essay) questions. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

**COIL Requirements.** As described above, the COIL collaboration will include three phases and include a number of requirements and responsibilities. Specifically, there will be a team-based introduction video worth 5 points; your own individual reflections on the team meetings (10 points x 5 reflections); a team-based presentation (15 points); and your own individual final reflection about the COIL experience (10 points).

**Flexibility.** One thing we all learned from life during a pandemic is that we must be flexible and expect some unpredictability and bumps along the way. While attending class and keeping up with assignments is important, I recognize that life is full of unexpected difficulties. If at some point during the semester you experience something that’s particularly stressful and has a significant effect on your ability to do well in this class, please let me know. I sincerely want everyone to learn and to maintain good well-being. I aim to be compassionate and fair, so I’m usually able to make accommodations for students facing significant challenges.

It’s possible that our schedule and course topics or requirements will be modified if we need more time to cover important concepts and/or in response to social events in our nation or larger community, weather issues, newly published research, and/or technological problems or other issues related to the class. I will only make a change to the schedule or requirements if there is a good reason to do so, and I will provide plenty of time for you to adjust your schedule to accommodate the change. It’s unlikely the changes would increase or decrease the overall number of possible points by more than 10%.

**Course grades.** Approximate weightings and the grading scale used to determine final grades are given below.

	Points	Weighting
Quizzes (6 x 15 points)	90 pts	36%
Exams (2 x 40 points)	80 pts	32%
COIL team intro. video	5 pts	2%
COIL individual reflections (5 x 10pts)	50 pts	20%
COIL team presentation	15 pts	6%
COIL final individual reflection	10 pts	4%

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	92.5-100%	B+	87.5-89.5%	C+	77.5-79.5%	D+	67.5-69.5%
A-	90-92%	B	82.5-87%	C	72.5-77%	D	60-67%
		B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	F	0-59.5%

## Tentative Semester Schedule

Week 1 (1/6 – 1/10)		
1/7	Topic:	Introduction to Social Psychology; Theories and motives
1/9	Topic: Preparation:	Norms, Roles, & Culture Read Ch. 1
Week 2 (1/13 – 1/17)		
1/14	Topic: Preparation:	Culture; Intro. to COIL; Working in teams Read Ch. 1
1/16	Topic: Preparation:	The self in a social world; QUIZ over Ch. 1 and norms, roles, culture Review for quiz
Week 3 (1/20 – 1/24)		
1/21	Topic: Preparation:	The self in a social world Read Ch. 2
1/23	Topic: Preparation:	Social beliefs and judgment; QUIZ over Ch. 2 Review for quiz
Create and post group video for U. Caribe partners by Sunday night, Jan. 26		
Week 4 (1/27 – 1/31)		
1/28	Topic: Preparation:	Social beliefs and judgment Read Ch. 3
1/30	Topic: Preparation:	Social beliefs and judgment Read Ch. 3
Meet with U. Caribe partners & post reflections by Sunday night, Feb. 2		
Week 5 (2/3 – 2/7)		
2/4		No Class Meeting – Release time for COIL work
2/6	Topic: Preparation:	Prejudice; QUIZ over Ch. 3 Review for quiz
Meet with U. Caribe partners & post reflections by Sunday night, Feb. 9		
Week 6 (2/9 – 2/14)		
2/11	Topic: Preparation:	Prejudice Read Ch. 9
2/13	Topic: Preparation:	Prejudice Read Ch. 9
Meet with U. Caribe partners & post reflections by Sunday night, Feb. 16		
Week 7 (2/17 – 2/21)		
2/18	Topic: Preparation:	Peacemaking; Addressing inter-group conflict Read Ch. 13, pp. 386-404
2/20	Topic: Preparation:	Behavior & Attitudes; QUIZ over Ch. 9 & Ch. 13, pp. 386-404 Review for quiz
Week 8 (2/24 – 2/28)		
2/25	Topic: Preparation:	Behavior & Attitudes Read Ch. 4
2/27	Topic: Preparation:	EXAM over Chs. 2, 3, 4, & 9 Review for exam
Spring Break – No Class		

Week 9 (3/10 – 3/14)		
3/11	Topic: Preparation:	Conformity & Obedience Read Ch. 6
3/13	Topic: Preparation:	Conformity & Obedience Read Ch. 6
Meet with U. Caribe partners & post reflections by Sunday night, March 16		
Week 10 (3/17 – 3/21)		
3/18	Topic: Preparation:	Conformity & Obedience Read Ch. 6
3/20	Topic: Preparation:	Aggression; QUIZ over Ch. 6 Review for quiz
Week 11 (3/24 – 3/28)		
3/25	Topic: Preparation:	Aggression Read Ch. 10
3/27	Topic: Preparation:	Moral disengagement; QUIZ over Ch. 10 Review for quiz
Meet with U. Caribe partners & post reflections by Sunday night, March 30		
Week 12 (3/31 – 4/4)		
4/1	Topic: Preparation:	Helping Behavior Read Ch. 12
4/3	No Class Meeting – Release time for COIL work	
Week 13 (4/7 – 4/11)		
4/8	Topic: Preparation:	Helping Behavior Read Ch. 12
4/10	Topic: Preparation:	Class Choice; QUIZ over Ch. 12 Review for quiz
Meet with U. Caribe partners; create & post final project by Sunday night, April 13		
Week 14 (4/14 – 4/18)		
4/15	Topic: Preparation:	Class Choice Reading TBD
4/17	Topic: Preparation:	Class Choice Reading TBD
Finals Week		
Th, 4/22	EXAM over Chs. 6, 10, 11, 12, & 13	