

SOC.335I: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spring 2012 (Honors Section)

PSY-203 (6:30 - 9:15 p.m.) Tuesday

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Tuesday: 12:30 -1:30 p.m. and 4:25-6:25 p.m.

Thursday: 12:30 -1:30 p.m.

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TEXT (required): **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**, 7th Edition, Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2011
(DeLamater and Myers)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course deals with what happens when human beings come into contact with one another. Human contact can, of course, have not only immediate effects but also enduring consequences, and we will be concerned with both. Collectively, these short-term and long-term contacts shape our perceptions of others and the way we view the world, our attitudes, and our behavior.

In our attempts to understand major processes and outcomes of social interaction in an organized way we will have several major objectives:

- (1) To help you learn to observe social behavior in an analytical, theoretical, and systematic manner. It is virtually impossible for humans to view or participate in social interaction without having some underlying explanation for the behavior that occurs. These "explanations", however, are often based on common sense, stereotypical thinking, or unfounded assumptions, and are usually not very systematically applied to the situation in question. In this course we will hopefully be able to channel your natural tendency to explain why people behave the way they do in each other's presence into more explicit, systematic, and objective frameworks for understanding social interaction.
- (2) To introduce you to a number of major theoretical orientations and differing disciplinary methodologies used by social psychologists in their studies of social behavior, and to help you see the practical applications of these orientations and methodologies in your everyday life.
- (3) To familiarize you with basic findings about how interaction works in a variety of social settings and, again, to help you apply this information in your day-to-day relations with others. The field of social psychology deals with all aspects of your day-to-day relations with your family, friends, lovers, co-workers, and employers. In a multicultural society like ours, you may interact frequently with others whose cultural background may be quite different from your own. Different cultures vary considerably in how they perceive and deal with phenomena like interactional spacing, language and other symbols, and the use of time. We will explore these differences in both Western and non-Western contexts. Understanding these cultural differences can promote understanding and more effective interaction between groups. If you translate the ideas of this course into the situations you encounter daily, it can be one of the most useful and practical courses you will take during your college career.

TEACHING/LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

In any class I teach I would like to create an atmosphere which allows the student to learn and retain as much of the course content and perspective as possible. I personally feel that such an atmosphere is more likely when instructor/student interaction is as informal and nonthreatening as we can make it and still meet the basic requirements I have set for the course. I also invite you to ask questions in class and/or discuss the course content and its practical implications for your life after class or whenever else we have the opportunity. If you do this I believe the course can be a more meaningful experience for both of us.

EVALUATION AND ATTENDANCE

- (1) **Exams** - We will have 3 exams. Each exam will each be worth 100 points. The first 2 exams will have both objective and essay questions. I will provide review materials prior to each exam. All assignments for the course will total approximately 525 points, making each exam worth about 19.0% of the total.
- (2) **Exercises** - Throughout the course we will have discussion questions or exercises based on the text and/or lecture material. There will be about 16 of these, with satisfactory completion of each worth 5 points.
NOTE: The purpose of the exercises is to encourage you to keep up with your reading and allow you to

share your information and observations with others in the class. Although some make-ups of exercises will be permitted, make-ups are strongly discouraged because they defeat both aspects of their basic purpose. The combined total for exercise points will be about 15.2% of the total.

- (3) **Empirical Observation of Social Groups** - You will conduct a structured observation of group behavior on 2 occasions during the course, after which you will write-up and submit your findings. Since you will have had very little exposure to the course reading material before your first observation session, performance expectations will be more limited, and the observation paper will be worth a possible 15 points. For your second observation paper you will observe a group that you believe to be significantly different from the first group you studied. This time your write-up will: (a) summarize your findings for the second group; (b) compare the patterned behavior of the 2 groups you observed; and (c) discuss these behavior patterns and group differences in terms of the concepts and processes covered in discussion and reading materials. This written summary will be worth a possible 30 points. The first observation paper will be due Week #4, and the second paper due Week #10. The combined points for the observation papers will be about 8.6% of the total.
- (4) **Team Research Project and Oral Presentation** - Teams of 3-4 members will conduct a research study on an expansion of one of the topics we cover in the course or an original topic of their choosing that relates to the field of social psychology. Each team will write a paper summarizing their research and do an oral presentation of their work. This paper for this assignment will be due Week #14, and the oral presentations will be conducted on Weeks #14 and #15. I will provide a handout describing the requirements of this assignment. The paper and oral presentation will be worth a total of 100 points, which would be about 19.0% of the total possible points.

Note: Any papers you submit in the class should be typed, double-spaced, and written at a level of competence that demonstrates "college level writing skills." The written assignments are designed to fulfill the Upper Division General Education Interdisciplinary Courses requirement stating that such courses "...will integrate into the course a substantial writing component" which demonstrates college-level writing skills and are evaluated "...not only on content but also on organized coherence and integration of disciplinary perspectives."

Your overall grade will depend on your ranking on a final cumulative percentage of points for all course requirements. However, so you will know where you stand at any particular point in the course, I will try to work up a running cumulative distribution of scores after each exam. Cutoff points for letter grades are: A=90-100% B=80-89% C=65-79% D=50-64% F=49% and below.

You will not be graded on attendance per se. But since lectures, class discussions, and handouts which may be distributed during class will be an integral part of the course, it is your responsibility to arrange to obtain notes and course-related materials and information for any class you have to miss. In this regard, it would be a very good idea to get to know at least one or two other students in the class and exchange phone numbers so you will know what information or materials you will be responsible for if you are absent.

EXAM MAKE-UP POLICY

For completely unavoidable situations I will try to work something out. However, as a minimum you should:

- (1) Have a very serious and valid reason for missing an exam
- (2) Contact me (not the Sociology Department secretary) by phone before the scheduled exam. My home number is on the front sheet of this syllabus. Feel free to call this number any time night or day.
- (3) Make up the missed exam by our next class meeting.

PLAGIARISM AND COURSE WITHDRAWAL

Plagiarism - Any assignments you turn in for this class should be the products of your own academic efforts. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and should not happen - ever. If you have any question about what constitutes plagiarism, see the explanation at <http://www.csulb.edu/library/subj/plagiarism/>. Also see the CSULB policy on plagiarism and cheating in the online catalog.

Withdrawal - Sometimes emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances make it necessary for you to withdraw from a course. If so, make sure you do so in a timely manner that will be the least costly to you and your academic career. Check this semester's deadlines for two particularly important deadlines: (1) the deadline to drop without receiving a "W" for the course; and the deadline to drop without the Dean's permission. Also see the full description of CSULB withdrawal policy in the online catalog.

Specific week-by-week reading assignments will be distributed separately for each exam.