



Department of Psychology
Psychology 627 (01) - Advanced Topics in Social/Personality Psychology
Fall 2009

Instructor:	Dr. John Ellard	Seminar Location:	Admin 248
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Office:	A 231A		
Office Hours:	Thursday and Friday, 3:00 – 4:00		

Textbooks: Ross, L., & Nisbett, R.E. (1991). *The person and the situation: Perspectives of Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill (out of print: available as a PDF document through course Blackboard site)

Readings: Additional assigned readings will be made available at the course Blackboard site as PDF documents

Prerequisite: Undergraduate social psychology course or equivalent

Course Description and Goals

An advanced survey of major topics in contemporary experimental social psychology including but not limited to: evolution, social neuroscience, social cognition, attitudes, emotions, and motivation. For each topic, critical analysis of relevant theory and research will form the basis of written and oral work in the course.

Course Objectives

- To become familiar and conversant with the social psychological perspective on human behaviour
- Develop critical knowledge and understanding of major areas of research in contemporary experimental social psychology
- Develop critical knowledge and understanding of critical issues in contemporary social psychology
- Achieve familiarity with methodological issues in experimental social psychology
- Develop oral and written skills in the communication of social psychological concepts
- Experience with the design of social psychological research projects

Course Requirements

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Proportion of Final Grade</i>	<i>Due</i>
Weekly "thought pieces"	25%	Beginning of each seminar
Seminar participation	15%	
Seminar leader/co-leader	20%	As assigned during first seminar
Research proposal	40%	December 7

Assignment Descriptions

Readings

Each week you will be responsible for approximately 100 - 150 pages of reading. As this is a senior seminar course and it is assumed that you are a serious scholar interested in getting as much as possible out of the course, it is expected that you will have done all the reading and have thought about it before each seminar. Like most things, what you get out of the course will depend on what you put in.

Thought Pieces

In no more than two to three double spaced pages, you will communicate ideas that occurred to you in connection with each week's readings. Your focus could be on a critical flaw you noticed, the outline of a research idea the reading inspired, or a conceptual extension of ideas in the readings. The general idea is to create a weekly opportunity for you to demonstrate your conceptual, critical, and insight abilities. Each thought piece will be graded out of five but the lowest grade assigned to a thought piece will not be included in the calculation of your final grade. Things that should not appear in thought pieces:

- citations or references; these are thought pieces not literature reviews or research papers
- summaries of the reading material
- personal anecdotes
- low-level application of ideas to applied problems (e.g., schemas might affect recall biases in performance appraisals) but analysis of how conceptual issues of concern to applied researchers might be addressed through things you read will be of great interest

Thought pieces may be submitted electronically (indeed this is preferred) to the course Blackboard site drop box or as a hard copy. *Submitting thought pieces by email is not permitted.* The due date 4:00 p.m. Monday. You will lose 20% for each work day from that time. It is your responsibility to ensure that the assignment is received.

Seminar participation

The primary emphasis here will be on the quality of contributions, not quantity, but you *must* participate. Attendance every week will be assumed. Quality contributions will be easy to make if you've given yourself time to read and think about the material before class. As a result, recurring evidence of not doing the reading will unavoidably have an effect on the seminar

participation portion of the final grade. At this level, thoughtful (but fair) criticism of ideas and research and proposals for new ideas and research are particularly valuable. Seminar participation will be graded for *each* seminar as follows: unexcused absence = 0, show but no participation = 1, nominal participation = 2, substantive participation = 3, excellent contribution = 4. Elaboration of these criteria will be provided during the first seminar.

Seminar Leader/Co-leader

Each student will be responsible for leading seminar sessions on agreed upon topics over the course of the term. As seminar leader, you will identify two or three empirical reports relevant to the week's readings and make sure the papers are available to everyone in the seminar *one week prior to your seminar*. Please present a copy of the first page of your chosen articles, including the abstract, to the instructor for approval before circulating the articles. These empirical reports may be ones cited in the assigned reading or closely related papers published since 2002. Papers must be chosen from the following journals:

- The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP)
- Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin (PSPB)
- Journal of Experimental Social Psychology (JESP)

Everyone in the seminar will be expected to have read the assigned textbook reading but not the selected empirical reports. Your presentation will be constituted of a) a critical overview of the textbook material, and b) a presentation of the research papers. The presentation of research papers should include a brief overview of what the research was about followed by a critical analysis that addresses such issues as:

- what contribution does the research make?
- weaknesses in the logic, design, or execution of the study
- limitations of the research (particularly at the conceptual level)
- possible extensions or new directions to take the research including ideas about possible studies

Evaluation of seminar presentations will be out of 20 and based heavily on the extent to which the presentation goes beyond a simple oral report of what is in the reading material. Effort invested in integrating the readings and developing a sophisticated critical analysis will be most likely to yield a top grade.

Research Proposal

Submit an SSHRC type research proposal (minus detailed budget) of a study or series of studies designed to yield a JPSP like research report. The evaluation criteria will be the same as for grant competitions. Although the proposal will not include a budget, the proposed research must realistically fit a budget of no more than \$5,000 per year over a three-year period. Proposals will be no more than 15 pages (double spaced), exclusive of references. Students must arrange to meet with the instructor to discuss their proposal plans no later than November 1. This assignment will be graded out of 100 and the paper must no more than 25 pages exclusive of references and appendices. A separate document describing this assignment in greater detail will be provided.

Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades.

To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

Class Schedule

Note: Topics and dates, subject to change.

DATE Week of	TOPIC
Sept. 7	Course Overview & Intro
Sept. 14	Orientation to social psychology, culture and social psychology
Sept. 21	Personality and social behaviour
Sept. 28	Self
Oct. 5	Social development and gender
Oct. 12	Attachment and interdependence
Oct. 19	Attraction and interpersonal communication
Oct. 26	Conflict and Aggression
Nov. 2	Social Influence and attitude change
Nov. 9	No seminar – Reading Days
Nov. 16	Social identification and group norms
Nov. 23	Social comparison, relative deprivation, and social justice
Nov. 30	Prejudice and discrimination
Dec. 7	Intergroup relations and conflict

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with

any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course and still receive a fee refund is **September 21, 2009**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **December 8, 2009**.