

Social Psychology (2700): Spring 2012 Syllabus

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Geers

Course: Social Psychology, 2700

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Email Address: Use the email function on our class home page

Class Days/Times: Distance Learning Class. No required class meetings

Course Description

Course Goals

The first goal of this course is to introduce students to classic and contemporary research in social psychology. An underlying theme to this work is that, in most cases, people do not fully appreciate the influence of situational forces on behavior. A second goal is to help students apply social psychology to their everyday lives and to see the world from a social psychological perspective. Thus, when the course has ended, I hope that it will be impossible for you to view your social world in the same way as when the course began.

Prerequisite: Psychology 1010

Required Reading Material

Aronson, Wilson, & Akert. *Social Psychology*. (7th ed.). Addison Wesley Longman Inc.: New York (ISBN number: 0-13-814478-8). If you cannot afford to buy the textbook, a copy is on reserve in the University of Toledo Carson library. The 6th edition of this book can be found cheaper at some book vendors and provides most of the same material (although there are differences between editions—the books are about 90% the same). Importantly, all exams are written based on the 7th edition and students are responsible for the information presented in the 7th edition of the textbook.

Computer Skill Requirements

All students should be comfortable and able to navigate on-line. If you do not have strong computer skills, I do not recommend taking this course. A basic level of computer skills is a prerequisite and I will not be teaching these skills in the course. If you have never taken an on-line course before I highly recommend visiting http://www.dl.utoledo.edu/help_desk/help.htm to learn how to work with the on-line course system.

Tour of Our Class Home Page

These are the areas on our home page that you need to visit and learn to use:

- How To Log On to Our Class Home Page: <https://blackboard.utdl.edu/>. Once you are there, you will see the following areas/icons in our home page:

- Course News– This is basically the homepage to our course. It should provide a calendar of events, announcements, etc. I will often post links and stories for you regarding social psychology in the current news and media.

- Start Here– This is where you are right now!

- Syllabus – This link takes you to our course syllabus.

- Lectures – This is the heart of the course. This is where the “Lectures”: take place. The material is broken up into folders based on the chapters in our textbook. Each chapter we cover will get its own folder in the lecture room. To begin with, only the first four chapters are presented as that is the section of the textbook we are examining first. The folders will contain lecture notes, audio files, video files, and newspaper articles. Let me discuss each of these in turn. First, I will give you lecture notes for each chapter. The purpose of the lecture notes is to reinforce and expand on the ideas presented in the text. Naturally, there will be overlap between the text and the lecture notes, but, there will also be material unique to each. And, as with any course, material covered in the lecture notes will be on the exams. The lecture notes assume that you have already read the relevant chapter, so your understanding of the lecture notes will be best if you have done the reading first. The lecture notes will sometimes give you addresses for web pages relevant to ideas discussed in the chapters that you can explore. For some chapters, I will add in an audio file of me discussing a topic. These audio files will be in the chapter folders. Many chapters will also include video clips that elaborate on chapter topics. Finally, the folders will often contain newspaper articles. These are genuine newspaper articles that I selected for the course because they relate to the chapter. With these I hope you will see some of the real-world implications of the research we cover in the course. It will work out best if you examine the audio, video, and newspaper files after you have read the book chapter and read over the notes. Beware! The information given in audio files, video files, and newspaper articles can appear on the exams, so you will not want to skip them.

- Discussion Room – This is where I will post discussion topics. I will post one discussion question here for each of our 4 sessions. You are required to post a minimum of one formal response to my question for each of the four discussion posts. The dates when my questions will be posted and the deadlines for your responses are given below in the timeline for the course.

- Assessment – This is the “exam room”. You will go to this section of the class page to take exam as well as practice exams. There will be 4 Exams. The dates for the exams are given below in the timeline for the course. Beware, the exams are difficult and ask students not to just know definitions. Instead, many questions require you to apply the knowledge presented in course--extrapolating from study findings and on the theories covered. This is also where I will post practice exams. I highly recommend that you take the first practice Exam by Sep 9th. The practice exams give you a good idea of how I will ask questions on the exams. In addition to showing you what the exam questions will be like, the practice exams are also useful as they show you the format that will be used for all exams.

- Email Messages – This is where you can go to contact me. I will also send out emails periodically to individual students as well as to the entire class.
 - Grade Book – This is where course grades will be given.
 - Help – This link will take you to other pages for assistance.
- Correspondence Policies & Procedures

Responding to Your E-mail: I have set aside specific times in our weekly schedule during which I will respond to student email from this class. I will try to respond to e-mails every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon.

General E-mail: When sending email to me or to the rest of the class, please identify yourself fully in the text of the email. Use the subject header to indicate if the email is a general comment, question for the entire class, or a question specifically for me. If you are responding to other message or my questions, please reply directly to that message.

Important Note: In the past, students have found this course to be quite challenging. I urge you to read and study the course material daily so you do not fall behind. Also, I recommend you read the book and notes well in advance of the exams so you have plenty of time to study the material prior to the exams.

Course Expectations

Here are some of my general expectations:

- It is expected that you will keep up in reading the textbook and the lecture note throughout the entire course
- It is expected that you will take the practice exams before the real exam to be sure you are ready
- It is expected that you will begin studying for exams at least one week in advance and that you will take practice exams when offered
- It is expected that you will explore all the multimedia materials associated with each chapter
- It is expected that you will actively think about and engage the material in the course—considering how to apply it—going beyond the definitions and studies presented.
- It is expected that you will plan appropriately so as to have your discussion postings and exams completed by the designated deadlines

Absenteeism: This is NOT a self-paced, self-timed course. This course is designed to be a successive progression from one chapter to the next. If you have a work or family emergency that interferes with your ability to participate or meet deadlines in this class, you need to notify me by phone ASAP. Such events may necessitate dropping the course. This is particularly the case with an on-line course like this which is not self-paced. I have found that, in such situations, it often works better for a student to drop a course and take it again at a later time than to miss several days and then try to catch up the rest of the semester. If you have a medical emergency, documentation is required for extra accommodations and this documentation needs to be presented to me within two weeks of the date of the missed assignment.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: Please be aware that any instances of cheating will result in an automatic "F" for the course. You will also be referred to the college Dean with the possible sanction of expulsion from the University. Please don't cheat.

Professional Courtesy: It is my expectation that you will act, perform, and conduct yourself as a true professional. This includes the content and style of your online communication and the nature of communication with me. Profanity, vulgar, or offensive words or phrases are unacceptable. I will be the judge of what is offensive as well as the penalty for such offenses.

Additional Course Support

Technical Assistance: I am not a computer expert. Therefore, if you are having technical problems, please contact the Distance Learning Department at 419-321-5130 or toll free at 866-utoledo (866-886-5336) or by FAX at 419-321-5147 or by email at UTDL@utoledo.edu. Please contact them when problems arise—they want to help.

Notification of Technical Problems: If you are having problems with your computer and you are unable to notify me of this event by email, please contact me by phone. My contact numbers are listed on the top of our syllabus. Technical problems with your computer are not a legitimate reason for failing to complete assignments or exams by posted deadlines. There are many computer options available to you, such as the many University of Toledo computer labs and the computers at public libraries. To find out the hours of the University of Toledo computer labs, you can call this number: 419-530-4636. Each student is responsible for finding their own alternative methods or locations to complete exams and assignments by the given deadlines. Please take time before exams to determine a backup location for your exam taking—in case you experience computer troubles. If you have a computer problem during an exam, immediately call DL technical assistance at 419-321-5130 or toll free at 866-utoledo (866-886-5336). They can help you resume the exam. If you call and they do not answer, leave a message, giving your name and the time and date of the call. Afterwards, e-mail me immediately to explain what happened. Before I consider re-starting an exam for a student, I always first contact the DL technical assistance to see if and when a report was made to them.

Grading

There will be a total of 280 points available for the class. Exams and discussion will be the basis for your grade. All discussion comments must be completed on time or they will not be accepted. Exams must be completed on the designated exam day.

Grading:
Points

Exams
240

Discussion
40

Total Points:
280

Letter
Points

A
280-260

A-
259-251

B+
250-243

B
242-232

B-
231-222

C+
221-216

C
215-204

C-
203-196

D+
195-189

D
188-178

D-
177-169

F
168 & below

Grades will not be curved.

Exams: There will be 4 exams (60 points each exam). Each exam will consist of 60 multiple-choice questions. The emphasis in this course will be on ideas, theories, and research. The exams will draw from the text, lectures, and the media presentations. You can expect some questions about definitions, research designs, theories, and results, but many of the questions will ask you to apply the materials of this course to some real world situation. These applied questions are crucial to achieving the goal of the course: to help you see your social world from a social psychological perspective. Practice exams located in the Assessment Room will help you better understand what the exams will be like. I highly recommend preparing for the practice exam like it is the real exam and then seeing how you do. This will help you prepare for the real exams. There will be a practice exam in the Exam Room for each of the 4 exams. Your scores on the practice exams can be viewed in the exam room. Importantly, the practice exams do NOT factor into your course grade. I should also warn you that, on an exam day last term, several students accidentally took a practice exam instead of the main exam. Please be extra careful when signing in for the exam to make sure you select the correct option.

- Time and Days: You will have 65 minutes to complete each exam. This gives you a little over 1 minute per question (the norm for internet course exams). You will not have time to use your notes or book, so you will need to prepare as you would for an in-class exam. You must take the exams on the days that are designated. In the past, I gave students only one day to take an exam. This semester, I have set up the dates so that you will have 2 consecutive days available to take each exam. You will have from 12:00 am on the first day until 11:59 pm on the second day to complete the exam (see the course calendar for specific exam dates). Having two days to take the exam should be helpful. For example, if you have an unexpected emergency on the first day you will have a second day to take the exam. I STRONGLY advise you to plan on taking the exam on the first day and to keep the 2nd day solely as a back-up. I especially urge you to not wait until the evening of the 2nd day to take the exam as this leave you no time to deal with problems that may arise. All four exams will take place in the Assessment Room.

- Bonus exam: From time-to-time, students miss scheduled exams or score much lower on an exam than they anticipate. In the past when students missed an exam or scored very poorly on an exam, I did not allow any make-up exams or extra credit points. I am now trying something different. Specifically, all students will have the opportunity to take a “bonus exam” on the last day of the course. The bonus exam can be used to replace one prior exam. Thus, the bonus exam will be worth the same points as our main exams (60 points) and should be take if you missed and exam or scored lower than you anticipated on one of our 4 main exams. The bonus exam cannot be taken to earn additional/ extra credit points—rather, it is just an opportunity to replace one existing poor or missing exam grade. The bonus exam will cover chapters not previously covered in the class (noted on the schedule below). Also, there is no possible way to loss points by taking the practice exam. If you score lower than on a different exam, the bonus exam grade will be the grade that is dropped. I strongly encourage all students to study hard for and take each of our four main exams—thus making it so the bonus exam is unnecessary. That is, I do not recommend skipping exams and relying in the bonus exam. But, if unexpected event occurs, the bonus exam is there to help (e.g., if you have an unexpected emergency). You should consider the bonus exam your safety-net. Because of the bonus exam, I will do not give make-up exams. Thus, you must take the bonus exam if you miss any exam.

Discussion: To stimulate engagement of the course material, I will post 4 discussion topics throughout the semester (see calendar for post and dues dates) in the Discussion Room. You are responsible to respond by posting at least one thoughtful, academic-style, response for each of the four topics. Your responses to the topics will be graded. Responses can be made any time between the posting of the discussion topic and the due date. Thus, you do not have to wait until the last day to post a response. Each response is worth up to 10 points (for a maximum of 40 points). To receive full credit, responses must be insightful, relevant to the topic, and be a minimum of 5 sentences in length. Thus, a response of "I agree", or anything of that nature will receive zero points. Points will also be taken off for posts that are hard to comprehend (e.g., poor grammar, spelling). Post your response under the appropriate topic # on the discussion page with your name and topic # under the subject heading. Please do not email me your discussion responses. Failure to participate in class discussions by the posted deadlines without notifying the instructor in advance will result in 0 points for that topic. Discussion posts are due by 11:59pm on the listed due date.

SESSION 1 – CHAPTERS 1-4

Discussion Topic 1- Will be posted on Jan 19 and due Jan 26.

Exam 1– This exam covers chapters 1-4 and may be taken anytime between 12:00 a.m. on Feb 2 and 11:59 p.m. on Feb 3.

Grades for Discussion Topic 1 and Exam 1 will be posted on or before Feb 17.

SESSION 2 – CHAPTERS 5-7

Discussion Topic 2 - Will be posted on Feb 16 and due Feb 23.

Exam 2 – This exam covers chapters 5-7 and may be taken anytime between 12:00 a.m. on March 1 and 11:59 p.m. on March 2.

Grades for Discussion Topic 2 and Exam 2 will be posted on or before March 16.

SESSION 3 – CHAPTERS 8-10

Discussion Topic 3 - Will be posted March 15 and due March 22.

Exam 3 – The exam covers chapters 8-10 and may be taken anytime between 12:00 a.m. on March 29 and 11:59 p.m. on March 30.

Grades for Discussion Topic 3 and Exam 3 will be posted on or before April 6.

SESSION 4 – CHAPTERS 11-13

Discussion Topic 4 - Will be posted April 5 and due April 12.

Exam 4 – The exam covers chapters 11-13 and may be taken anytime between 12:00 a.m. April 26 and 11:59 p.m. April 27.

BONUS EXAM – CHAPTERS 14-16

Grades for discussion topic 4, exam 4, and final grades will be posted on or before May 2.

Bonus Exam – The bonus exam will cover the “Social Psychology in Action” Modules 1 – 3 at the back of the book (prior to the 7th edition of the textbook these were called chapters 14-16). The Bonus Exam may be taken anytime between 12:00 a.m. on April 30 and 11:59 p.m. May 1.