

PSYC2241: Social Psychology

Fall 2019
T/Th 10:30-11:45
306 Gasson

Prof: Andrea Heberlein (andrea.heberlein@bc.edu)

McGuinn 306

Wednesday 12:30-1:30; Thursday 12:30-1:30 & by appointment

TAs:

Dylan Spets (spets@bc.edu)

Tuesday 12-1pm & by appointment; McGuinn 316

Geetanjali Vij (vijg@bc.edu)

Thursday 9:30-10:30 & by appointment; Higgins atrium

Should you trust your intuitions or question them? When is a gut feeling wise, and when might it lead you astray? How are we sometimes so good at understanding what other people are thinking and feeling, and other times so tragically bad? How can well-intentioned, thoughtful people come to drastically different conclusions about important social and moral issues? Why do people often feel so differently about people in their own social group (their “us”) relative to people in an outgroup (“them”)? This course uses the tools of experimental psychology to explore topics including the role of the mind in social life, biases and decision-making, emotion, moral judgment, prejudice and stereotyping, and the psychology of the self.

Course goals: The primary goals of this course are to explore how social psychology asks and answers questions, and in so doing to learn more both about theories and key findings from the field, and about the methods involved in coming to these findings.

These can be further understood as applying towards the following stated goals of the psychology major (listed in full here under “Learning Outcomes”: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/psychology/undergraduate.html>) 1a and/or 1b (general knowledge of theories, concepts, and findings, as well as expertise in a specific area); 2b (methodologies/research design); 2d (understanding lab techniques and procedures); 2e (ethical issues); 3a (understanding/appreciating rigor and skepticism when drawing conclusions from data); 3b (cause-and-effect thinking regarding drawing conclusions from data); 3c (evaluating scientific arguments); 4c (being able to communicate well in writing); 4d (understanding themselves and others better) and 4e (being able to better assume the responsibilities of membership in their community).

Requirements

1. There are two midterm exams, each covering a third of the class and counting for 24% of your grade. The final counts for 37%, is cumulative, but emphasizes the final third of the course. The exams each include multiple choice questions and short response questions, and cover both lecture and text.
2. Two short papers (~2.5-3pp and ~5 pp, respectively) will count for 5% (#1) and 10% (#2) of your grade.

Assignment 1: The goal of this assignment is to improve your skills in reading primary research articles. Choose one of the journal articles from the list that will be available on Canvas by 9/5/2019. There will be several articles listed, so you can choose an article that interests you specifically. Find the article online (available through BC libraries) and summarize it according to the QALMRI framework—we will practice this in class, and a handout will also be available on the course website. Note that you may work in small

groups to understand the article, but your written paper must be unique and exclusively your work.

Assignment 2: You can choose from two options for this assignment:

2A. A *commentary* on a book (chosen from the list below).

2B. A write-up of a *short observational study* that you designed and carried out.

Details on both assignments will be available on the course website by the second week of class. Please commit to one or the other Paper 2 assignment by **9/12/2019** so that we can support you and assign grading responsibilities.

OUTLINE

Date	Topic	Reading & Assignments
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OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

What is social psychology? What methods does it use, what kinds of questions can it ask, and what kinds of answers can it provide? What are some methodological concepts that will structure and inform how we think about the studies we will cover in the rest of the class?

T 8-27	1. Orientation/Syllabus/Introductions	
Th 8-29	2. Introduction	1
T 9-3	3. Intro, cont; Methods (start)	
Th 9-5	4. Methods: Social Experiments	2 + Application Module (AM) 2 pp 526-528 only <i>*9/4 is the last day to add/drop or declare P/F online</i>
T 9-10	5. Obedience (the movie)	9 (chapter introduction + pp. 296-306 only)

THE SOCIAL MIND

How do people think about themselves? Is there a single self, or is self-concept situationally variable? How do we make decisions? What influences whether we feel positively or negatively about an object, individual, or situation? What is the relationship between our attitudes (positivity/negativity) and our actions?

Th 9-12	6. The Social Self	3 <i>Commit to paper topics/ articles (assignments 1 & 2 both)</i>
T 9-17	7. Judgment, Decisions & Biases	4
Th 9-19	8. JDM continued & QALMRI in class	
T 9-24	Exam 1 Review	
Th 9-26	Exam 1	
T 10-1	9. Emotion I	6 <i>*10/1 is the last day to drop in Dean's office</i>
Th 10-3	10. Emotion II	
T 10-8	11. Attitudes	7 (pp. 205-213)
Th 10-10	12. Cognitive Dissonance	7 (pp. 214-end)

T 10-15	FALL BREAK, NO CLASS	
Th 10-17	13. Self-Perception	7 (pp 226-229) + AM 2 (pp 528-534)

SOCIAL INTERACTION: INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

*How do we think about other people? How do we know that something in the world has a mind (vs. is an object), how do we understand what is **in** other minds? What other categories (besides mind/non-mind) do we put other minds into? How does one mind change another mind, intentionally or unintentionally? How is interaction between individuals structured by the social categories that we put ourselves and others into? How can we apply experimental psychology methods to understanding moral decision-making, and does the understanding that arises from psychology change the actual moral conclusions we might draw?*

T 10-22	14. Mind perception: Understanding others	5 Assignment 1 due
Th 10-24	15. Mind perception, cont.	<i>Commit to experiment conditions (if doing experiment paper option)</i>
T 10-29	16. Social Influence I	8
Th 10-31	17. Social Influence II	9
T 11-5	Exam 2 Review	
Th 11-7	Exam 2	
T 11-12	18. Attraction/Intimate Relationships	10
Th 11-14	19. Cooperation & altruism	13 (pp TBA); 14
T 11-19	20. Prejudice and Stereotyping: Part I	11
Th 11-21	21. Prejudice and Stereotyping: Part II	
T 11-26	22. Crowds & Groups	12
Th 11-28	THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS	
T 12-3	23. Morality	pp 191-194; & Application Module 3 Assignment 2 due
Th 12-5	24. Social Psychology Rules	
TBD	Exam 3 review	
M 12-16	Exam 3/final (9-11am)	

Readings are chapters in Gilovich, Keltner, Chen & Nisbett, *Social Psychology, 5thEd.*, and should be completed before or immediately after the class for which they are assigned. **Do not buy the 4th Ed. textbook!** The textbook is available on reserve at O'Neill and will also be available at the Montserrat Center lending library. Note it is also available as an eText here for \$80, considerably less than the (new) print edition; you buy access for 360 days: <https://digital.wwnorton.com/socialpsych5>. Please note: if you have trouble accessing the textbook or commentary books for any reason, please see me for help ASAP—I have a copy of each that I'm happy to lend out.

The books for commentary papers (choose one; all will be on reserve at O'Neill and are available online, as well as e-reader editions and at bookstores):

- Eberhardt, J. L. (2019). *Biased: Uncovering the hidden prejudice that shapes what we see, think, and do*. Viking Press
- Waytz, A. (2019). *The Power of Human: How our shared humanity can help us create a better world*. Norton Press.

Course policies

Canvas: A copy of this syllabus will be posted on Canvas. Downloadable copies of the lecture slides, details on the paper assignments, and other course materials will be posted there as well.

Office hours: I am happy to go over questions from the lecture or reading, questions about assignments, or to discuss anything else at least marginally related to the course and/or to psychological research. If you can't make scheduled office hours (listed above), then please email or see me before or after class to set up an appointment. Your TAs are also excellent resources; their office hours are listed above.

Side note regarding emailing your teaching staff: <https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087-.u5qzme9ul>

Exam make-up policy: Exam make-ups may only be scheduled due to personal emergency (e.g., death of a close family member), a documented physical illness (with a doctor's note), or other documented, BC-sanctioned absence (e.g. athletic travel). These must be discussed and approved *before* the scheduled exam time. No make-ups will be given for simply missing an exam.

Late policy: Written assignments must be turned in **by the beginning of class** (i.e., 10:30 am) on the day they are due. Any assignment received after this time, unless arrangements have been made in advance, will receive a full letter grade deduction, with another letter grade deducted for each additional day late. The only exceptions to the late policy are due to documented medical emergency or other personal emergencies. If you will have a foreseeable conflict before the paper is due (athletic travel, etc.) please make alternative arrangements *beforehand*. Papers must be uploaded to Canvas. Please note that if your paper fails to upload properly, it will still be considered late. (If you are new to Canvas and not sure if you can trust your upload, you may turn in a paper copy of your paper or email it to the instructors as a back-up; if we have it in hand, it will not be counted late, but you do need to upload it to Canvas eventually.) **It is your responsibility to make sure that your paper was received on time. That said, if you are struggling, please contact the instructor so that we can work with you.**

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Students at Boston College are expected to have high standards of integrity. Any student who cheats or plagiarizes on examinations or assignments may fail the course, and a letter of explanation will be placed in their files. Students who plagiarize are subject to dismissal from the College. Note that **substantial paraphrasing**, or knowingly using the words or thoughts of another individual (from conversation, web sources, or published or unpublished material) **without citation can also be considered plagiarism**. (This means that you need to work to put things into your own words. Substantial quoting, with appropriate citation, is not plagiarism but is lazy writing, and will be marked down.) Any work that has been confirmed to be plagiarized will receive a grade of 0. For information on Boston College's Integrity Policy, see: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html>. If you are unsure of the appropriate way to give credit in a paper or about any other aspect of an assignment, please contact me.

Policy on Appropriate Use of Course Materials: The materials distributed in this class and on Canvas, including the syllabus, exams, slides, handouts, study aides, and in-class presentations, may be protected by copyright and are provided solely for the educational use of students enrolled in this course. You are not permitted to re-distribute them for purposes unapproved by the instructor; in particular you are not permitted to post course materials or notes from lectures and

discussions on commercial websites (sharing notes with your fellow students in this class is fine). Unauthorized uses of course materials may be considered academic misconduct.

Students with Documented Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities, including temporary disabilities. I will be happy to arrange accommodations but cannot do so retroactively (e.g. after an exam has already taken place). We can also add accommodations for subsequent assignments, exams, and quizzes if you receive a diagnosis or documentation at any point in the semester.

Electronic devices in the classroom: Cell phones should be turned off during class; texting during class discussion is disrespectful to everyone present. Laptop computers are not permitted except by permission of the instructor, because of the potential for misuse (IM/email/FB/etc.) during class. The only exception to this policy: if you feel that your note-taking will be significantly hindered without a laptop, you may sit in the first two rows or the last row of the classroom to take notes on your laptop.

Grade questions/grade changes/grade communication: If you have a question about a graded assignment or exam, you must contact me no later than one week after the exam/assignment was returned, detailing your concerns. Grade concerns will only be discussed in person (you may email to set up a time), and I will re-grade the entire exam or paper in question, substituting the newer grade for the original. That said, grading errors happen, so if you feel I or a TA have made a grading error, I will be happy to discuss this with you.

Extra credit: There is only one option for extra credit: after each lecture but before midnight of the same day, you may email bc.SocialPsychExtraCredit@gmail.com one or more questions about the day's lecture. These must be specific, content-ful questions (e.g., *not* "please go over slide 33" but instead "what is the dependent variable shown on the figure in slide 33?"). You may submit more than one but you will receive only **one point for each lecture** on which you ask a question, up to a total of **2 points towards each exam**, applied towards the next exam (both midterm exams are 75 points; the final is more). I will answer a small number of these questions in class and will post answers to all of the questions in the Discussions section on Canvas. In addition, any topics on which more than one student had a question will also be covered at the review session (in addition to questions submitted specifically for the review session, which will not however earn extra credit).

2 notes:

If you are feeling stressed, having challenges managing your time, sleep, or making choices around alcohol and food, the Office of Health Promotion (OHP) offers Individual and Group Health Coaching appointments with a trained Health Coach. Please reach out by going to the [OHP website](#) or walk over to Gasson 025 and talk with a staff member.

Any student who is having difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.