

**YORK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF HEALTH
PSYC 4020 3.0 M: SEMINAR IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
W -2013**

Prerequisites: AK/AS/HH/SC/PSYC 1010 6.00 or AK/HH/PSYC 2410 6.00, with a minimum grade of C; AK/AS/HH/SC/PSYC 2030 3.00 or AK/HH/PSYC 2530 3.00; one of AK/AS/HH/SC/PSYC 2021 3.00, AK/AS/HH/SC/PSYC 2020 6.00, AK/HH/PSYC 2510 3.00; AK/AS/HH/SC/PSYC 2120 3.00 or AK/HH/PSYC 3210 3.00.

Course Director: Michele Lustman, Ph.D.
Office Hours: By Appointment
E-mail: mlustman@yorku.ca
Secretary: Agnes Levstik (email: alevstik@yorku.ca)
Office: BSB 281 - Phone (416) 736-5125
Class Meetings: Thursdays 16:00-19:00 in TEL 0004

Course Learning Objectives

We are often confronted in the media, in our community, and in our personal life with problems that deal with social psychological issues. The purpose of this course is to assist students in understanding a wide range of social psychological issues, as well as their application to everyday life. As is always the case in complex human affairs, there are no easy answers to many of the dilemmas we will investigate. Often, reality is not simply black or white, but is colored by an infinite number of subtle shades of gray. This course will examine conflicting opinions on a variety of social psychological issues and on their application to real world issues.

Course Text / Readings

Nier, Jason (2013), *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Social Psychology*, 4th Edition, McGraw Hill.

Course Kit – More details to follow.

Assignments and Course Evaluation

Presentation: 30%
Research Project 30%
Exam: 30%
Participation: 10%

Grading:

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g. A+=9, A=8, B+=7, C+=5 etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter

grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+=90 to 100, A=80 to 89, B+=75 to 79 etc.). For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – <http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/2012-2013/academic/index.htm>

Assignment Submission and Lateness Penalty:

Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Assignments are to be handed to the course director in class. **Please note** that except for documented medical reasons, failure to write the exam or present when scheduled, will count as “0” (zero) for that portion of the course. Please notify the instructor **by email** in advance if any such emergency arises so that a make-up exam or rescheduling (where possible) can be arranged. Please also note that only one make-up exam will be scheduled.

Papers received later than the due date will be penalized by taking 10% of the grade per week. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds etc., may be entertained by the Course Instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor’s letter).

1. Presentation: 30% of your final grade

Topics will be selected from the issues/articles in the “Taking Sides” text. Students are to select and submit a topic to me via email (mlustman@yorku.ca) by **January 22nd**. Your email should include your first, second and third choice. Everyone will be assigned to a topic on a 1st first come - 1st served basis. Approximately 40 minute hour Power Point Presentation (including discussion time).

Presentations will begin on January 31st

The purpose of the presentation is to give your colleagues a thorough understanding of the particular social issue and the controversy surrounding the topic and the relevance of its application to “real world” events. Your presentation must present a comprehensive explanation of the issue and of the surrounding controversies. In your presentation you must also reach a conclusion on the controversy and explain and defend your position. Students will be evaluated on the depth of their discussion and their ability to present in a manner that stimulates class discussion and debate.

Points to consider:

- What cause/effect relationships were stated or implied by the author?
- Were any of these cause/effect statements merely correlations?
- Are there any reasons to believe the writers are biased? If so, why do they have these biases?
- Did you find evidence of other logical errors on the part of the author?
 - Distortion of Information
 - Faulty Analogies
 - Oversimplification
 - Stereotyping
 - Faulty Generalization
 - Emotional Persuasion

2. Written Paper: 30% of your final grade

This will be a more formalized and detailed version of your presentation topic. In this paper you will discuss the evidence on the issue based on the readings, reach a conclusion on the controversy and explain the reasoning behind your conclusion. Your paper must include consideration of the opposing point of view and a rebuttal of the opposing arguments. External resources are required.

3. Exam: 30% of your final grade

March 7th based on course lectures and readings.

4. Participation: 10% of your final grade

Because this class is a seminar your active participation is required. Class time will be a forum for presentation and discussion, with some lecturing by the instructor. To ensure active and full participation, it is expected that you will attend all classes, critically read all of the assigned materials prior to class, and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Your participation will be evaluated, not on the quantity of what you say but on the quality of your contribution to class discussion.

General Information and Resources

Important information for students regarding University policies, including Academic Honesty/Integrity (see below as well) can be found at: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/> The University does not look favourably on cheating of any kind and the penalties for doing so are very harsh. Become familiar with the rules and regulations regarding cheating/plagiarism and academic honesty. Go to the following website <http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/> and read the section 'For Students.'

Cheating: Cheating is the attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation. Among the forms this kind of dishonesty can take are: obtaining a copy of an examination before it is officially available or learning an examination question before it is officially available; copying another person's answer to an examination question; consulting an unauthorized source during an examination; obtaining assistance by means of documentary, electronic or other aids which are not approved by the instructor; or changing a score or a record of an examination result.

Impersonation: It is a breach of academic honesty to have someone impersonate one's self in class, in a test or examination, or in connection with any other type of assignment in a course. Both the impersonator and the individual impersonated may be charged.

Plagiarism and other misappropriation of the work of another: Plagiarism is the representation of another person's ideas or writing as one's own. The most obvious form of this kind of dishonesty is the presentation of all or part of another person's published work as something one has written. However, paraphrasing another's writing without proper acknowledgment may also be

considered plagiarism. It is also a violation of academic honesty to represent another's artistic or technical work or creation as one's own. This is not to say that students should not use the work of others with the proper acknowledgment.

Sanctions for Academic Misconduct

When verified, a violation of academic honesty may lead to the following penalties:

1. Oral or written disciplinary warning or reprimand;
2. A make-up assignment or examination;
3. Lower grade or failure on assignment or examination;
4. Failure in the course;
5. Suspension from the University for a definite period;
6. Notation on transcript;
7. Withholding or rescinding a York degree, diploma or certificate

Resources

A number of important resources are available to students of York University.

Most directly relevant to this course is the Centre for Academic Writing. For details, please visit their website (<http://www.arts.yorku.ca/caw/>).

As well, the university offers both academic and crisis counselling services. For details, please visit the Counseling and Development Centre website (<http://www.yorku.ca/cds/>).

Students who feel that there are extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of any course requirements are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Course Director as possible to make appropriate arrangements.

Students with physical, learning or psychiatric disabilities who require accommodation in teaching style of evaluation methods should discuss this with the Course Director early in the year so that appropriate arrangements can be made.