

YORK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF HEALTH
PSYC 4020 3.0: SEMINAR IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
2013 (S2): Mondays & Wednesdays 7:00-10:00pm, FC 110

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: Lisa Fiksenbaum, Ph.D.
Office Hours: By Appointment
E-mail: lisafix@yorku.ca

Emailing Protocol (if not, emails will be deleted unread).

- 1. use PSYC4020 in the subject line**
- 2. include your Student ID**
- 3. include your full name in your email**

Secretary: Agnes Levstik (email: alevstik@yorku.ca)
Office: BSB 281 - Phone (416) 736-5125

REQUIRED TEXT: Nier, Jason (2013), *Taking sides: Clashing views in social psychology, 4th Edition*, McGraw Hill

Course Overview

Social psychology is the scientific study of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of individuals in social situations. This advanced seminar is intended for student who have some background in social psychology and wish to gain a deeper understanding of major issues in the field.

Through a series of lectures, readings and discussions, this class will examine the major topics and theories of both classic and contemporary interest in social psychology, including multiple forms of social influence; attribution theory; cognitive dissonance theory and its relation to the self-concept; core social and self-motives; the social self; social cognition; stereotyping, prejudice, and stigma; intergroup processes; attitudes and persuasion; attraction and close relationships; and group processes. We will also consider applications of social psychology to education, health, business, and law.

Class Format

For each class, you are assigned readings from a variety of sources (mainly from the text, with additional journal articles as required). It is reasonable to expect that in a 4000 level course students will have sufficient background and be sufficiently interested in the topics to contribute to the class sessions.

Class time will be a forum for presentation and discussion, with some lecturing by the instructor

Obviously, the degree to which we are successful in attaining the above goal is highly dependent on your preparation and participation in class. 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.

Course Requirements

Exam: 30% of your final grade

July 15 based on course lectures and readings.

Presentation: 30% of your final grade

Students will select a topic/issue listed in the “Taking Sides” text. Given the compressed nature of this course, **presentations will begin on July 3.**

The purpose of the Powerpoint 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. The length of the presentation will be approximately **40 minutes** (with questions).

Written Paper: 30% of your final grade

The written paper 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.** The paper should be written in APA style and should be approximately 15 pages in length.

Late Penalty

If your paper is late you will lose 10% of the mark/day for the first 24 hours. For every day after that, you lose 20% of the total mark (weekends excluded).

Class participation: 10% of your final grade

This will be an active, discussion-focused class. Class participation is a very important part of the learning process in this course. Each student must read all assigned text material and articles before each class and come to class prepared to discuss the readings. You cannot earn participation marks if you do not attend class. You will be also evaluated on the **quality** of your contributions and insights. A quality comment possesses one or more of the following properties:

- Reflects a consideration of issues addressed in assigned readings and previous class discussions and lectures
- Offers a unique, but relevant, perspective
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward

Schedule:

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC
June 24	Introduction
June 26	Brief History of Social Psychology & Research Methods
July 1	CANADA DAY – UNIVERSITY CLOSED
July 3	Issue 1: Is Deception of Human Participants Ethical? Issue 3: Can Experimental Social Psychology and Social Constructionism Coexist?
July 8	Issue 5: Does Cognitive Dissonance Explain Why Behaviour Can Change Attitudes? Issue 6: Are Self-Esteem Improvement Programs Misguided?
July 10	Issue 7: Is the Millennial Generation More Narcissistic Than Other Generations? Issue 8: Can People Accurately Detect Lies?
July 15	EXAM
July 17	Issue 9: Should Research from Social Cognitive Neuroscience Be Used to Inform Public Policy? Issue 10: Do Positive Illusions Lead to Healthy Behavior?
July 22	Issue 11: Do Millgram’s Obedience Experiments Help Explain the Nature of the Holocaust? Issue 12: Is It Possible to Truly Replicate Milgram’s Obedience Experiments?
July 24	Issue 13: Does the Stanford Prison Experiment Help Explain the Effects of Imprisonment? Issue 15: Can People Really Be Brainwashed?
July 29	Issue 16: Is Stereotyping Inevitable? Issue 18: Can Stereotypes Lead to Accurate Perceptions of Others?
July 31	Issue 19: Does True Altruism Exist? Issue 20: Does Media Violence Cause Aggression?

Last date to drop course without receiving a grade: July 19