

4020 3.0 ADVANCED SEMINAR IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Instructor: Regina Schuller
245 BSB – 736- x 33190
Office Hrs: Wed: 10:00 - 12:00

Time: Tuesday & Thursday -- 9:00 - 12:00

Location: 120 CB

Reading

A reading list of theoretical and empirical articles will be provided in class.

Course Objectives

This seminar will explore some selected topics of law from a social psychological perspective. We will look critically at the trial process – both centre stage and behind the scenes. Many of the legal assumptions about human nature that underlie legal procedures and practices will be scrutinized from a social psychological perspective. That is, the law's informal theories of human behaviour will be compared to what social psychologists know on the basis of theory and research. We will explore the application and usefulness of social psychological research and theory in the practice of law, while at the same time critically examining the problems and pitfalls of using such information. Students will read assigned theoretical and empirical articles, present summaries and critiques of these articles, discuss key issues in class, present a research proposal, and submit a written research proposal.

Class Format

The format of the course is comprised of three-hour meetings twice a week. 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 goals is highly dependent on our preparation and participation in class. To ensure active and full participation, it is expected that you will attend all classes and critically read all of the assigned materials prior to class.

Requirements:

(1) **In-class participation: (15%)** 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. Students also should be familiar with all assigned readings each week, and come to class prepared to discuss their thoughts on the material.

(2) **Trial court visit or current event analysis (TBA): (15%)** Whether this will involve a written submission and/or an oral presentation will be depend upon the numbers in the class.

(3) **Research Proposal: this involves both an Oral Presentation (30%) and a Written Submission (40%)**

A central goal of this course is to identify areas in which the current state of theorizing and research in social psychology and law interface. The topic for the research proposal will focus on issues associated with the topic of the course. Consistent with this approach, each student will be required to provide an oral presentation of the proposal as well as an extensive paper (approx. 12 pages) in which social psychological research is used to address some unresolved or applied question in law. This paper will take the form of a research proposal: a problem is identified and a study is proposed that addresses this problem. The papers must be type written in APA style. The final quarter of the course will be devoted to student presentations of their research proposal, with approximately 6 students presenting each day.