Course Name: Social Psychology  
Course Code: Psyc 335  
Semester: Fall 2015  

Scheduling: Mon. & Wed. 2.00 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Instructor Data:
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Prerequisites: According to the Gonzaga Spokane requirements (check on-line)

Course Description: Social psychology is the scientific study of the way people think about, feel, and behave in social situations. It involves understanding how people influence, and are influenced by, others around them.
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the work of social psychologists. Students who develop a good grasp of the materials presented in this course should be able to understand some of the basic components underlying the behaviors and mental processes of people involved in social interaction, and the methods used to ascertain them. Students should then be able to comprehend the various discussions going on around them -- in the media and in private -- that have to do with the reasons and tendencies of human interaction and the functioning of the human mind as it is influenced by social interaction. Topics include: the role of others in shaping self-concepts, as well as the formation of person perception, attitudes, attribution theory, obedience, conformity, and social relations. We will look at the causes and methods of reducing prejudice and aggression, as well as exploring altruism, the development of gender roles, stereotypes, non-verbal behavior, and social influence.
In addition, since this course is taught in Florence, Italy, it provides a natural opportunity to compare and contrast the influence of culture on individuals. Living for even this short period in another country helps the student to see and understand the relationship between the individual (self) and society, and a chance to see the student’s own culture from a distance.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

During this course students will:

- Gain knowledge of key concepts and issues necessary to understand people and their behavior.
- Become familiar with research methodology commonly employed in the field of social psychology. Students will also become more familiar with the strengths and limitations of various research methods employed by social psychologists.
- Develop a range of presentation skills.
- Develop analytical skills essential in the field of social psychology.
- Increase awareness of how biases affect a person’s thoughts, emotions, and actions.
- Increase awareness of the factors that shape a person’s thoughts, emotions and actions.

Teaching Method

The method used in this class includes lectures; individual and group presentations of readings, group and individual in-class and out-of-class activities and data collection, class discussions, and questionnaires.
The course adopts an interdisciplinary approach. Students are also responsible for the success of the teaching method, as the pedagogical value of a method has to be enacted by each participant in the process.

**Decorum**

Cell-phones off; no food and beverages admitted, except for bottled water.

No technical devices are accepted (laptops, I pads, etc)

Disrupting behavior (doing something else during the course, engaging in private conversations, playing with electronic devices) is not accepted and if repeated it will negatively affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade or may result in removal from the course.

**Attendance Policy**

Attendance is taken at the beginning of class from the first day of the semester. The student entering class after attendance is taken has to contact the professor at the end and announce his/her presence. However, this does not mean that coming late is accepted. Two late arrivals may be excused, three turn automatically into an absence and will affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade.

**Students can miss one week’s work, irrespective of the course formula (three sessions, two sessions, one session).** It is their responsibility to make up for the missed work. If they miss a quiz or a report they are not allowed to have it at another time, unless the absence is for certified medical reasons and the professor and Dean agree.

More than one week’s work missed is going to be penalized as follows:

One extra absence:
1. by lowering the attendance and participation grade

Two extra absences
2. by lowering the final grade by a whole letter grade

Three extra absences
3. by grading the whole course F

**Assessment Criteria**

**Example:**
Attendance and participation 15 %
Brief Reaction Paper 15%
Midterm 25%
Final 25%
Research project, final paper and presentation 20%

Failure to submit or fulfill any required assessment element results in failure for the class.

Details about the various tests, papers, research projects follow.

**Example:**
- Cultural Interview report: Students will interview a person of Italian culture and write a paper (2-3 pages) on their findings. The report should focus on differences and similarities in cultural influence on psychological processes (e.g., development processes like child
rearing, cognition, attitudes, emotions, etc.) between their culture and that of the person they are interviewing. Cultural Interview Report will comprise 15% of final grade.

- Final Paper (3000 words, 8-10 pages, double-spaced, Times, 12 Font) and presentation is required for this course. The paper will count 20% of the final grade, and it will be graded according to content and organization. Students are required to make a group presentation that more closely examines a relevant issue in the area of social psychology in which the group is interested. One week after the presentation, the final paper will be due. Students should expand upon an issue in social psychology by using materials from their text as well as from outside sources. Paper should be written in APA style, and contain at least five references to relevant literature (course materials may be used, at least three of the references must be from peer-reviewed academic journals, such as Journal of Personality and Social Psychology). For help with APA style, Purdue University offers an excellent website on the basics of APA-style formatting needed for this paper: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/, or you can visit the APA website.

Essays submitted late will receive a grade penalty as follows: 1 day—1 letter grade (e.g., A to B-), 2 days—2 letter grades (e.g., A- to C-), more than 2 days—grade of 0 / F on the assignment.

The evaluation is done according to the following criteria:

Example:

- well formulated argument (rhetorical strategy)
- ability to approach an issue from various points of view and evaluate them critically
- good use of references. Sources need to be cited and listed at the end in the References. Class notes can build the frame of your argumentation, but will not be cited as primary sources.
- clarity of expression including quality of style (grammar, spelling).

Significance for the final grade of attendance and participation

A: the student has no absence, is punctual and respectful with the professors and the classmates, is always prepared for class (has done the reading and writing assignments); He/she vividly participates in class discussions and contributes with interpretations which prove fine critical sense and creativity, using a grammatically correct, semantically rich and conceptually clear language.

B: the student is respectful and punctual, is prepared for class, participates in discussions, has a good level of understanding the issues under focus and an appropriate use of language.

C: has an adequate but schematic or superficial understanding of the texts and issues under focus, is not always prepared for class, uses a simple language.

The language/art teachers will describe their own definition of grades.

Grades Significance for written assignments

Example:

Grade A: the work is an excellent synthesis of elaborated course in-puts, extensive reading and original ideas; it is well articulated in a balanced argumentation and formulated in a clear, fluent style.

Grade B: the work shows a good elaboration of the course inputs, a well-conducted discourse and a good use of bibliography; it has a good level of style.
Grade C: the work proves a basic understanding of the research issue, but does not use the bibliography properly/or does not express ideas in a persuasive clear style or lacks in discourse planning, therefore needing improvement.

Grade D: The work is acceptable, but weak in terms of formulating and discussing the question under focus and organizing the discourse. It relies on non-academic sources and does not, in general, comply with the requirements, unless in minimal way.

Grade F: The work is not acceptable in terms of the basic requirements or has not been submitted in time.

Grade 0: the work has not been submitted

Grade 0 + Main Campus Report: the work has been plagiarized.

Grades Conversion Example
Version I
A= 94-100
A - = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B= 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76
C- =70-73
D+ = 67-69
D = 65-66
F = below 65

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is essential to education and represents the bond of trust between the university, the instructor and the student.

Academic dishonesty is any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise. It includes unauthorized assistance in tests and examinations; intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person’s work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing such an editing and revision service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts.

Students who are academically dishonest will receive “0”, zero on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor.

Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty can manifest itself in plagiarism, defined as claiming intellectual property on somebody else’s work, in other words as cultural theft. Written assignments will be submitted to the plagiarism detection procedures of TurnItIn.com., activated on Blackboard.
A plagiarized assignment/paper, research project, etc will be graded 0 (zero) and sent to the Main Campus accompanied by a report.

Special Accommodation for students with learning disabilities

Documented learning disabilities or other medically certified problems that need special accommodation for any of the student's expected academic performances will be treated with the due attention.

Required Readings

Textbook:
- Journals articles assigned weekly.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Please note: all readings are to be done BEFORE the following class, but homework is listed for the following class.

Please consider that the contents of individual classes may be changed throughout the course according to progress of the class, and that additional visits/field research - whenever available and pertinent - may be included within regular class time.

1) 1st week: Introduction to the course: What is Social Psychology?

1. Introduction Professor/Students
2. Review of Syllabus
3. Clarification of students' expectations and objectives for the course.
4. In-class activities to explore the nature of social psychology
5. Review of research methods in the field of social psychology
6. Questions to think about: Are important phenomena or research findings relevant or even applicable across different groups of people? Did foundational research involve representative samples? Have the findings been replicated across gender, race, and social class? Are psychological principles universal or culture specific?

References for Today's Lecture:


Homework:

1. Get the textbook and the booklet, and bring them to class next week.
2. Complete assigned readings listed for the next class.

2) 2nd week: Impression Formation: Schemas, cognitive short-cuts, & cognitive errors

1. Readings:

2. Class discussion of readings. Questions to think about: How might the way in which we process information be affected by our culture? Do people present themselves in the same manner in every situation or does their self-presentation mode depend on the situation? Why might people choose a particular picture to represent themselves on websites such as Facebook?
3. Observational Research Technique. Depending on the weather, we may venture out into Florence to observe others' behaviors and to apply principles of attribution theory.

Homework:
1. Readings for next lecture.
2. Finalize your topic proposal for your group presentations.

3) 3rd week: Attribution Theories: How we make sense of our and others' behavior

1. **Readings:**

4. Class discussion of readings on attribution theories. Questions to think about: How might the just world belief play a role in current controversies and issues? Why do people seek to maintain or enhance the legitimacy and stability of social arrangements even if they are members of disadvantaged groups? How might attributions play a role in a person's adjustment to a new culture? How do cultural differences affect the meaning assigned to others' behaviors and to events? How much does cognitive dissonance skew our perceptions of our own behaviors?

5. **Cultural Interview Report is Due at the beginning of class.**

   **Homework:**
   3. Readings for next lecture.

4) 4th week: The shaping and maintenance of our self-concepts

1. **Readings:**

2. Discussion of the readings. Questions to think about: How does studying abroad provide opportunities for self-growth and challenge the self-concept? What changes have you noticed in your self-concept since arriving in Italy? How does culture influence the development and maintenance of our self-concepts? Is it better for us to view ourselves in an overly positive light? How do gender, ethnicity and social class affect identity formation?

3. Video: "A Girl like Me"

4. In-class activities: completing both global vs. area-specific self-concept measures, debate about whether positive illusions about oneself lead to healthy behaviors.

5. Hand in your topic proposal for your group presentations.

   **Homework:**
   Complete assigned readings.

5) 5th week: Attitudes, Prejudice, & Discrimination

1. **Readings:**

2. **Group Presentation #1:**

3. In-class activities:
   - Participation in an online study regarding attitudes (https://implicit/harvard.edu/implicit) exploring various types of attitude measurement (i.e., Implicit Association Task).
   - Responding to Prejudice: A role-playing exercise.

4. Class discussion: Is prejudice a naturally occurring phenomenon that is found in all societies? Why or why not? How does prejudice develop? How might prejudice influence an individual's adjustment to a new culture? How would you decrease prejudice?

   **Homework:**
1. All class members:
   a. Begin studying for Mid-term Exam. Have questions ready for Review
   b. Group 1: Finish your final paper.

6) 6th week: Our Need to Connect -- Romantic Relationships & Friendships

1. Readings:
   Group 1: Your final paper is due at the beginning of class.
   Group Presentation #2:
   2. Discussion of your thoughts and insights about research on attachment hierarchies and relationship structures.
   3. Discussion of issues and topics raised by student group presentation.
   4. Class discussion on readings. Questions to think about: What rules for relationships are universal and what rules are culture-specific? What makes us attracted to others? Do birds of a feather flock together, or do opposites attract? Is there one type of love or many types? What is essential for good communication? What are the effects of social rejection? What leads to social rejection?
   5. In class activity: The O Train.

Homework:
1. Study for the exam. Material from prior classes and readings will be included on the exam.

7) 7th week: Review for Mid-term

Nov. 4th : Mid-Term Exam

Homework:
1. Readings for next class.
2. Group 2: Finish your final paper.

8) 8th week: Our “Higher Self”: Prosocial behavior – what makes us want to help? What prevents us from helping?

1. Readings:
   1. Group 2: Your final paper is due at the beginning of class.
   2. Group Presentation #3
   3. Discussion of issues and topics raised by student group presentation.
   4. Class discussion of assigned readings. Questions to think about: how might prosocial behavior be affected by cultural values (e.g., role of religion, role of political ideology, such as socialism)? How much is a person’s willingness to help a function of cultural similarities? In which areas in our society do you see bystander apathy operating? Are people motivated to help others by selfish reasons or can they truly be motivated to help because they want to help others?
   6. Discussion on prisoners' conditions in Italy and Florence: their rights and their reality.

Homework:
2. Readings for next class.

7. **Readings:**

3. **Group 3:** Hand in your final paper at the beginning of class.

4. **Group Presentation #4**

5. Return and review of mid-term

6. Discussion of issues and topics raised by student group presentation

7. Video of Zimbardo’s Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE).

8. Class discussion of readings and video. Questions to think about: What similarities and differences can you see between Zimbardo’s SPE and Abu Ghraib scandal? Do you think the SPE was ethical? Why or why not? Is the rehabilitation of prisoners a realistic social policy, or is rehabilitation through the prison system a lost cause?

9. Visit to the old city Prison: Le Murate (now dedicated to Social Housing) and Santa Verdiana (now Department of Architecture, University of Florence).

**Homework:**
1. **Group 3:** Finish your final paper.
2. Readings for next class.

10) **10th week: Social Influence: Conformity and obedience**

1. **Readings:**

2. **Group 4:** Hand in your final paper at the beginning of class.

3. **Group Presentation #5**

4. Discussion of issues and topics raised by student group presentation.

5. Class discussion of assigned readings: Questions to think about: In what ways have you noticed yourself conforming to Italian society? Where does obedience come from it is a function of personality or situational variables?

6. Observational Research Technique. Depending on the weather, we may venture out into Florence to observe aspects of conformity.

**Homework:**
1. **Group 5:** Finish your final paper.
2. Readings for next class.

11) **11th week: Aggression: Is it due to personality or situations or both?**

1. **Readings:**

2. **Group 5:** Hand in your final paper at the beginning of class.

3. **Group Presentation #6**

4. Discussion of issues and topics raised by student group presentation.

5. Class discussion of assigned readings. Questions to think about: How well do the theories of aggression explain current events (e.g., shooting at Virginia Tech, Columbine)? How would you use your knowledge of social psychology to decrease
school violence? Does aggression result from situational variables or personalities? Do the theories of aggression explain equally well different types of aggression (e.g., relational aggression, psychological aggression, physical aggression, aggression against an intimate partner, aggression against strangers)?

**Homework:**
1. **Group 6:** Finish your final paper.
2. Readings for next class.

12) **12th week: Persuasion and Attitude Change: How can you influence people?**
1. **Readings:**
3. **Group 6:** Hand in your final paper at the beginning of class.
4. Class discussion of assigned readings. Questions to think about: How would you use the principles of persuasion to design a health enhancement program (i.e., increased use of suntan lotion, encouragement of responsible drinking, and increased use of sexual protection)? How can principles of persuasion be used to positively influence society? How do the principles of persuasion operate in gangs and cults’ recruitment of new members? Can people really be brainwashed? Is it always unfair for an organization to use psychologically manipulative techniques in order to influence people? Are some milder forms of psychological coercion acceptable?
5. In-class activities to explore concepts related to persuasion, persuasion techniques, and advertising.
6. Review for final exam

**Homework:**
1. Study for the exam. The material from today’s class will be included on the exam.

13) **13th week: FINAL EXAM**