

Psyc 202 – Introduction to Social Psychology

Instructor: Daniel J. Beal
Phone: (713) 348-3917
Office: 429E Sewall Hall

Class Meets: T-Th 10:50 AM – 12:05 PM
Location: 301 Sewall Hall
Office Hours: Th 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Teaching Assistants

Harrison Kell
(713) 348-4458
Office: 429 SH
hk4@rice.edu

Ashley Rittmayer
(713) 348-4458
Office: 429 SH
rittmayer@rice.edu

Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to provide you with a broad introduction to many of the major themes that characterize today's social psychology. It will be impossible to touch upon all of the phenomena of interest to social psychologists; however, in combination with the readings from Myers's textbook, I will try to provide you with a comprehensive view of the field. Additionally, I have supplemented several topics with readings from social psychological journals to provide both a classic and "cutting edge" view of areas not covered by Myers. Generally speaking, lectures and discussions will use the readings as a starting place for covering additional topics and studies. This should pose no problem; the readings are easy to understand, and you will be exposed to a broader array of topics this way.

Goals

As the course instructor, I have several goals for each student to accomplish this term:

1. Pursuit of knowledge concerning how social psychology is generally defined and what the major questions of interest are within the field.
2. Understanding of each of the major topics of basic social psychological research:
 - The Self
 - Social Influence
 - Social Cognition
 - Group Dynamics
 - Attitudes and Behavior
 - Interpersonal Attraction
 - Emotions
 - Aggressive Behavior
 - Evolutionary Psychology and Gender Differences
 - Helping Behavior
 - Prejudice
3. Understanding of the variety of ways that social psychology can be applied to other fields of interest.
4. Firsthand experience in reading classic and contemporary research within the field of social psychology.
5. A lasting awareness of just how widespread social psychological principles are to one's daily lives.

Class Meetings

Classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:50 AM to 12:05 PM in 309 Sewall Hall. Because class discussion and assigned readings will overlap only partially, class attendance is essential for acquiring the content of this course and will be used in determination of final grades. If you cannot attend class, I would *highly* recommend dropping the course.

Assigned Readings and Materials Needed for the Course

Myers, D. G. (2007). *Social psychology* (9th ed). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Also, there are several articles and chapters that I've put together to supplement the above readings. I'll post .pdf versions of these readings so that you can print them (or, if you are so inclined, read them off of your computer's display).

Exams (and policy for exam absences)

There will be four exams during the semester. The lowest grade of these four exams will be dropped. So, if you cannot be present for an exam, then you do not need to provide an excuse... you simply drop that exam. Note that this policy eliminates difficulties associated with whether an excuse is good enough to warrant missing an exam. *All excuses are good enough to drop one exam, but no excuse is good enough to drop a second exam.*

If you know in advance that you will miss an exam, then there is the possibility for one other option. If you have a good, verifiable reason for missing the exam, you can arrange with one of the TA's to take the exam early (no more than 2 days early). I would ask that you be extremely flexible when scheduling these exams, as the TA's will be sacrificing their time for the sake of yours. Also, you must make these arrangements at least **1 week** prior to when you are to take the exam.

The four retained exams will constitute 92% of your grade in the class, will be based on lectures, readings, and other class activities, and will likely vary in format (i.e., some multiple choice, some short answer, maybe an essay question or two, etc.). Although the exams are not meant to be cumulative, they may require that you know material from earlier topics. So, please do not learn for the exam and subsequently flush all learned information (this is something that social psychologists have studied, called the *Zeigarnik effect* after the researcher who first studied it).

Participation in Psychological Research

This course, as with all psychology courses, encourages students to gain experience with the methods and ideas underlying modern psychological research. These experiences include such things as learning about research through lectures and colloquia, serving as a participant in psychology experiments, and reading research articles. Therefore, you will be expected to complete at least **5 hours** of participation.

There are **three** ways that you can earn participation credit. The most obvious way is to actually participate in a psychology experiment. To do this, you must sign up using Experimentrix – an online experiment scheduling system (<http://www.experimentrix.com/Rice>). Different experiments take different amounts of time and so they are worth different amounts of credit. It's fairly self-explanatory, but please ask one of the TA's if you have a question.

Another way to earn participation credit is to attend psychology departmental colloquia. These usually are given by well-known psychologists from around the country who come to Rice to discuss their research. Here's a link to upcoming colloquia: <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~psyc/colloquia/index.html> (only the colloquia listed on this page will count toward participation credit). I (or one of the TA's) will almost always be at the departmental colloquia, so if you decide to attend, just find one of us before or after the talk and let us know you attended (1 hour of credit per colloquium... yes, even if it runs a little late).

A final way of earning participation credit is to read and write a 2-page summary of any journal article found in either the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin*, or *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (all of which are available online from Rice's library). Each summary is equivalent to one hour of participation credit.

You will not receive a grade for these participations, but failure to complete this requirement will result in reductions of your *final* grade at the rate of 0.5 points per deficient participation; for example, completing only 3 of the 5 required participations would result in one point being subtracted from your *final average* in the course.

Daily Experience Diaries

Much of social psychology involves understanding the daily experiences of individuals in a social world. One method by which we can all gain a better understanding of these experiences is by documenting them as close to when they occur as possible. Therefore, one of your tasks in this course will be to complete a daily survey of your experiences for a period of 3 weeks (weekends included). The class will do this during the same 3-week period, and I'll let you know exactly when we'll start. At the end of the semester, I will run some very basic analyses on the data and go over the results in class (all of which will be anonymous and in aggregate form, of course). Hopefully, this project will help you gain a little insight into the patterns and connections in your own daily lives. If not, then successful completion will at least get you an easy 10 points toward your final grade.

Honor Code

All aspects of this course are bound by the honor principle. All exam work should be your own, independent work. Also, please refrain from looking at past students' exams. Any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, inadvertently or not, will be reported directly to the honor council. The Rice University Honor Code prevents any exceptions to this rule.

Learning Disabilities

Some students with disabilities (physical, learning, or psychiatric) fail to identify themselves to the professor UNTIL a problem arises. I encourage students with such disabilities, including "invisible" disabilities like chronic diseases, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities to discuss with me at the beginning of the course, after class or during my office hours, appropriate accommodation that might be helpful to you. All discussions will remain confidential. Additionally, students should consider contacting appropriate resources such as the Disabled Student Services in the Ley Student Center.

Grading Policy

Final grades in this course will be calculated based on the following components (note that only the three best exam scores will be included in your grade):

30 pts Exam 1
30 pts Exam 2
30 pts Exam 3
30 pts Exam 4
10 pts Daily Experience Diaries

100 pts Possible Total Points

Final Letter Grades will be distributed as follows:

100 – 98 % = A+	97% – 93% = A	92% – 90% = A-
89 – 87 % = B+	86% – 83% = B	82% – 80% = B-
79 – 77 % = C+	76% – 73% = C	72% – 70% = C-
69 – 67 % = D+	66% – 63% = D	62% – 60% = D-
59 – 0% = F		

Final Disclaimer

For unforeseen reasons, it sometimes becomes necessary to adjust the syllabus and/or schedule. Although we will try to follow the format presented within this syllabus as closely as possible, I may find it necessary to make alterations throughout the semester.