

PSY 340. Social Psychology

Thierry Devos

SDSU – Spring 2008

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM or by appointment

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is, quite simply, to introduce you to the field of social psychology. As such, there are three major sub-goals:

- (1) To introduce you to the **ways in which social psychologists think about and approach their world.**
- (2) To introduce you to the body of **knowledge, research findings, and underlying principles** that currently exists in the field.
- (3) To stimulate you to think about the **implications** of this research **for situations we encounter daily.**

By the end of this course, you should be able to answer questions such as... How do people explain their successes and failures? How do we justify our decisions? Why do people stick to their stereotypes even when they face disconfirming information? How do advertisements or political campaigns change our attitudes? Do we perform better (or worse) in front of other people than when we are alone? Why do people sometimes fail to help others in an emergency situation? Does exposure to TV violence trigger aggressive behaviors? In sum, you should gain from this course a better understanding of the processes shaping how individuals think, feel, and behave in social situations.

Format

Each class meeting will be devoted to a different topic (see *Schedule of Topics and Examinations*). We will learn about these topics in several ways. Class meetings will include lectures, demonstrations, exercises, discussions, videotapes, and examinations.

Blackboard

You can access the course website on Blackboard:

- <https://blackboard.sdsu.edu> [Course: PSY340-03-Spring2008]

Slide shows presented in class will be made available on line **before the lecture** ("Course Documents" menu). In addition, you will find important announcements and useful resources on the website. You should log on to Blackboard at least twice a week.

Readings

The following **textbook** is **required** for this course:

- Myers, D. G. (2008). *Social psychology* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

The textbook can be purchased at the SDSU Bookstore (Aztec Shops). Complements (CD-ROM, Study Guide) are optional.

Students are strongly encouraged to visit the textbook website regularly:

- <http://www.mhhe.com/myers9>

On this website, you will find useful **tools and resources to learn the material** covered in class and in the textbook (activities, exercises, quizzes, etc.). This website can be accessed through Blackboard as well ("External Links" menu).

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

Tests & final exam (80% = 4 x 20 pts)

Four tests will be given in class (see *Schedule of Topics and Examinations*). Each test covers about 5 lectures and 3 chapters. The final exam covers all the lectures and chapters (comprehensive exam). The tests and final exam are worth 20 pts each and will consist of 40 multiple choice questions (1 correct answer = ½ pt). Only the 4 best scores will be taken into account for the final grade. No make-up tests or exams will be given. If you miss a test, your grade will be based on the 3 remaining tests and the final exam. For each test, a review sheet with key concepts will be provided (the week prior to the test). If you took the 4 tests, the final exam is optional.

Class activities (20% = 20 pts maximum)

You will be asked to complete class activities (demonstrations, exercises, discussions, etc.). These activities will either be individual or group assignments. These activities will be worth 1 or 2 points and will be graded using a Credit / Non Credit scale. There will be approximately 10 activities worth 1 pt and 10 activities worth 2 pts. If you earn 20 pts or more (adding those up), you will receive the maximum for this component of the grading (20 pts).

Grading Scale

In line with University Policies, grades are defined as follows: A (outstanding achievement; available for the highest accomplishment); B (praiseworthy performance; definitely above average); C (average; awarded for satisfactory performance; the most common undergraduate grade); D (minimally passing; less than the typical undergraduate achievement); F (failing). Plus/minus grading is utilized at the discretion of the instructor.

Final grades will be based on an absolute scale (not a curve). Thus your grade will not be affected by how well (or how poorly) other students perform in the course. To compute your percentage grade, you will apply the following formula:

Pct grade = score1 + score2 + score3 + score4 + class participation (20 pts maximum)

The grading scale will be provided mid-way through the semester.

Attendance

The class will meet on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 12:30 PM to 1:45 PM in room AL 105. Each student is expected to attend all classes. **Class attendance is essential to learning the material of this course.** Lectures will often cover material not discussed in the textbook.

Classroom Atmosphere

We should work together to create a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. I strongly encourage **active participation** in the classroom; you should feel comfortable asking questions and contributing to class discussions. I expect everyone to show **respect** for each other and to **refrain from actions that might reduce the quality of students' learning experiences**. Beepers and cell phones should be turned off.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating on examinations will result in disciplinary actions. **Claiming credit** for a class activity that you did not complete is also a form of academic dishonesty and will result in disciplinary actions.

Specific Accommodations

Students who need accommodation of their disabilities should **contact me privately** to discuss specific accommodations for which they have received authorization. If you have a disability, but have not contacted **Disabled Student Services** at 619-594-6473 (Calpulli Center - Suite 3100), please do so before making an appointment to see me.

Schedule of Topics and Examinations

January	22	Introduction: What is social psychology? (1)
	24	Asking & answering research questions (2)
	29	Impression formation (3)
	31	Attribution: Lay explanations (4)
February	5	The self in a social world (5)
	7	Class meeting cancelled
	12	Self & social identity: Motivational aspects (6)
	14	TEST 1 (Lectures 1-6; Chapters 1-3)
	19	Cognitive dissonance: Changing attitudes with actions (7)
	21	A new look at cognitive dissonance theory (8)
	26	Gender differences: Culture vs. evolution (9)
	28	Conformity (10)
March	4	Obedience to authority (11)
	6	TEST 2 (Lectures 7-11; Chapters 4-6)
	11	Persuasion by communication (12)
	13	Minority influence (13)
	18	Compliance: The art of making requests (14)
	20	Group processes (15)
	25	The roots of prejudice & discrimination (16)
	27	Stereotyping (17)
		SPRING BREAK (No class meeting)
	April	8
10		TEST 3 (Lectures 12-18; Chapters 7-9)
15		Aggression (19)
17		Violence (20)
22		Attraction and close relationship (21)
24		Helping others (22)
29		Bystander apathy (23)
May	1	TEST 4 (Lectures 19-23; Chapters 10-12)
	6	Conclusion + Review
	8	FINAL EXAM