

Sociology 245: Individual and Society
Fall 1998, Tuesday and Thursday 11:30am to 12:45

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Professor's Office Hours: 10:30 to 11:30am (Tuesday and Thursday) or by appointment.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This course is an introduction to the science of Social Psychology. This branch of social science systematically examines how the actual, imagined or the implied presence of other people influences a person's thoughts, feelings and behavior. You will learn about the processes within and between individuals that are influenced by society and, in turn, how society (e.g., groups) affects processes within and between individuals. Because Social Psychology is interdisciplinary, the content of this course includes Psychological and Sociological theory and research.

When you have completed this course of study, you will better understand how social scientists conduct research, the social problems addressed by social science, and the content of specific theories and scientific results. You will also be asked to apply practical and critical thinking skills, working alone and in groups. Moreover, social science can promote a better understanding of human nature and, thereby, yourself and the society of which you are a part.

The course is divided into three sections:

I. From Thinking to Action

- A. How do we perceive other people and the world around us (Social Perception)?
- B. How do we perceive and understand who we are as individuals (Self-Concept)?
- C. How do our social perceptions and self-conceptions affect our personal lives?
- D. How is thinking translated into action?

II. Social Influence

- A. How individuals are often unaware and "mindless" of being influenced by others.
- B. Persuasion and how it, and influence in general, seems to work.
- C. How society influences our emotional life and how we try to look and feel.
- D. How society and our emotions influence who we like and who we love.

III. Social "Reality" and Society

- A. How individuals create the reality that influences them (expectations and prophecies).
- B. How individuals actively attempt to manage their images and appearances.
- C. How individuals collectively create their lives in groups
- D. Lastly, and if time permits, the social psychological nature of growing older (aging).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Grading Scale

93 > % A	80-82% B-	60-69% D
90-92% A-	78-79% C+	0-59% F
88-89% B+	73-77% C	
83-87% B	70-72% C-	

(1) **EXAMS = 60% of final grade.** You will complete 3 exams, each worth 20% toward your final grade. All exams involve a mixture of multiple-choice, short answer, and sometimes short answer (essay-type) questions. The dates of examinations are firm and are posted in the course schedule, so write down the test dates and times in your calendars as soon as possible. Students who score below 70% on any exam should see me right away. We can review your exam, and we can consider creating an extra-credit assignment that could raise your grade to at least 70%. I will only allow extra-credit in cases when a student's exam falls below 70%.

Examination and Make-Up Policy: First, the *Emory College Honor Code* is activated during all examinations. Science and education are governed by ethics and trust, and this is especially the case when you enter the classroom on the day of an exam. Second, if you are unable to take an exam at the scheduled time, you must arrange to take a make-up exam prior to the day of the exam. Make-up exams are allowed only when a student provides documented evidence of an illness or family emergency (by “documentation” I mean that you must arrange to have the doctor call me or to have a letter delivered to me before the exam).

(2) **Group Presentation = 20% of final grade.** I will randomly assign students to a small group (about 4 people) to present novel perspectives on ongoing topics and initiate and lead an in-class discussion. Members of the group are strongly encouraged to meet and discuss your presentation ideas and strategies with your TA (David Bell) as well as with Dr. Keyes. You should schedule to meet with us early during the week of your presentation, because you will be expected to focus on some aspect of the current material that is being presented in-class and in readings.

(3) **Short Analysis or Research Paper = 20% of final grade.** You must choose to do either Option 1 (the Analysis) or Option 2 (the Research) paper. Each option involves writing a brief paper that is no more than 5 pages (double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font).

Option 1: You will be assigned the task of watching and analyzing a movie. The professor will choose the movie, and you will be asked to watch the movie and then analyze key sequences in the movie by applying 1 or more theories that have been discussed in class. You will identify the process (for example, was the key sequence about “conformity”?), and then attempt to explain how or why this process occurred, according to “Theory X.” You may then be asked to predict, according to another theory, another outcome in the movie (in other words, act as the director and use another theory to predict a different plot or different ending to the movie).

Option 2: You will choose a Social Psychological (for example, conformity). Then, you will be asked to choose at least one theory that has been used to understand your topic. You will

describe the theory and its relevance, and then describe how the theory can be applied to a practical problem in the “real world” (e.g., anorexia or gang violence). **An outline of your paper is due November 12th. The final draft of your paper is due no later than 5:00pm on December 8th.** Your grade for the paper will be reduced by one full letter grade (e.g., from a possible A to a B) for each day that the paper is handed-in late.

Required textbook (abbreviated MD in the course outline): *Social Psychology* by Michener and DeLamater, 1994, Third Edition, and is available at the Emory Bookstore.

(2) I will assign outside readings, which will be announced and placed in a reserve folder in the Department of Sociology (Room 225 in Tarbutton Hall). You will be responsible for making copies of all readings.

Course Outline and Tentative Schedule (exam dates are firm)

Aug 27	Course and class introduction.
Sept 1	The nature and science of social psychology <u>Readings:</u> MD Ch. 1
Sept 3	Social Perception <u>Readings:</u> MD Ch. 5
Sept. 8, 10	Social Cognition <u>Outside Reading:</u> Pace of Life • Sept 10: Group Presentation
Sept. 15, 17	Self-Conception: Thinking About Our”selves” <u>Readings:</u> MD Ch. 4 (pp. 80-top of p.100) • Sept 17: Group Presentation
Sept. 22, 24	Motivation and Self-Regulation • Sept. 24: Group Presentation
Sept. 29	Attitudes and Behavior <u>Readings:</u> MD Ch. 6 (skip section on “Attitude Organization and Change” and skip the section on “The Reasoned Action Model”)
Oct. 1	The Irony of Thinking about Our Attitudes.
Oct. 6	EXAMINATION 1
Oct. 8	Social Influence: Subtle Forms

- Oct. 13 **FALL BREAK.**
- Oct. 15 Subtle Influence Continued: Mindlessness and Social Facilitation
•Oct 15: Group Presentation
- Oct. 20, 22 Persuasion and the “Weapons” (Mechanisms) of Social Influence
Readings: MD Ch. 8 (pp. 206-216)
•Oct 20: Group Presentation
- Oct. 27, 29 Emotion
Outside Reading: Self-objectification
Readings: MD Ch. 12 (pp. 312-325 and pp.330-333)
•Oct 29: Group Presentation
- Nov. 3 Finish Emotion and Social Relationships
- Nov. 5 **EXAMINATION 2**
- Nov. 10 The Social Construction of “Reality”: Expectations, Prophecies, and Optimism
Outside Reading: Self-Fulfilling Prophecies
- Nov. 12 Presentation of Oneself and Identity
Readings: MD Ch. 9 (pp. 236-241)
•Nov. 12: Group Presentation
Nov. 12 : Outline of the Option 2 Research Paper Due.
- Nov. 17,19 Tactical Behavior and Interaction
Readings: MD Ch. 9 (pp. 242-255)
•Nov. 19: Group Presentation
- Nov. 24 Wrap-up Tactical Interaction and/or Begin Groups
- Nov. 26 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**
- Dec. 1 “Minimal Grouping” and Social Identity
•Dec. 1: Group Presentation
- Dec. 3 Groups: The Organization of Life in Groups
Readings: MD Ch.14 (pp. 368-382)
- Dec. 8 The Impact of Group Life: Conformity and Influence
•Dec. 8: Group Presentation
- Dec. 10 **FINAL EXAMINATION, 4:30-7:00, Room 105, Tarbutton Hall.**