

PSYCHOLOGY 461a
The Social Psychology of Attitudes
Spring, 2011; TTR 3:30-4:45pm, ILC 145

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Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to examine one of the oldest and most important topics in social psychology: The study of attitudes. The impact of social influence and persuasion on our attitudes is an everyday affair—we influence, and are influenced by, the people we observe and interact with on a daily basis. I designed this course with four goals in mind: First, I want to improve your understanding of how attitudes influence your day-to-day life. Second, I want you to experience first hand how social psychologists generate and test hypotheses about attitudes and attitude-change processes. Third, I want to introduce you to some possible career directions that will utilize your knowledge of social psychology and/or research methodology. The fourth goal of this course is to have a lot of fun and stimulating discourse along the way to the first three objectives.

The course material will focus broadly on how social context determines the relationship between attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. We will consider the following questions: What is an attitude? How can the topic of attitudes be studied scientifically? How do we form attitudes and are they conscious or unconscious? Are you always thoughtful and rational when you form an attitude? When do you take shortcuts that cause you to change your attitudes? Does your behavior always reflect your attitudes and values? What are prejudiced attitudes and can they be changed? Can subliminal messages affect your attitudes and beliefs? How can you avoid being taken by a skillful salesperson or roommate? Answers to these and other questions will be addressed in the readings, lectures, assignments and the discussions we will have in class.

The course is divided into thirds. In the first and second third, we will examine classic and contemporary theories of attitudes, social influence and persuasion. As a result, the reading in the first 2/3's is somewhat heavy. The last third of the course will turn to examine the role of attitudes, social influence and persuasion in our understanding of prejudice and prejudice reduction. Along the way we will also examine how attitudes and attitude change processes play a role in advertising, consumer behavior, health and other prosocial action.

Course Format

This course is designed to be a lecture/seminar for Advanced Psychology Majors who have had a lower division Social Psychology, Research Methods and Statistics course. It will differ from the lower division courses in two important ways. First, because it is an advanced course, I will only lecture each class meeting to reinforce the major points of the readings. I hope we will spend much of each class meeting discussing the material. To facilitate discussion, you need to come to each class with questions, comments, or criticisms of the readings. We are going to cover a fair amount of material in a short amount of time. It may be difficult to do well in this course if you do not keep up with the reading.

Another difference between this course and the lower division courses is that you will be asked to do more than simply memorize the material. I believe psychology students at the 400 level should be able to integrate theory and research with real world experiences and phenomena. Really, what good is an education in psychology if you can't use it to investigate and understand your world in some way? Thus, in addition to demonstrating your knowledge of the reading material, you will also be required to develop a project that uses the course material in a creative but rigorous manner.

Course pre-requisites: Because of the advanced and heavy emphasis on research in social psychology, to take this course you must have already completed the following courses: INDV 101 or Introduction to Psychology, Research Methods (Psych 290A and B), Statistics and Measurement (Psych 230), and Introduction to Social

Psychology (Psych 360). It will be difficult to earn a letter grade of A in this course without having passed these courses. See me if you are taking any of these courses concurrently.

Course Requirements

Your grade in this course will be a function of your performance on midterm exams, paper assignments, participation in group presentations, and involvement in class assignments and discussions.

The exams are designed to measure how well you have learned the principles and concepts covered in the readings. The exams are open-book/open note and they will be completed online using the course D2L site. The format will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Whereas you can access the course materials during the exam, you are expected to complete the exams without assistance from another person, i.e., do you own work.

Completion of homework, participation in class assignments and discussion will also be assessed. As will be detailed below, your presentations and papers will be based on a group project.

Grade Summary: Your final course grade will be a function of performance on the following:

<u>Paper Assignments (50 pts total)</u>	<u>Exams (90 pts total)</u>
The Project Proposal Draft (10pts)	3 D2L Midterms (30pts Each)
The Project Final Paper (40pts)	
<u>Group Project Assignments (30 pts total)</u>	<u>Class Assignments (30 pts total)</u>
2 Group Presentations (10pts Each)	Homework Assignments (20pts)
2 Group Participation Evals (5 Pts Each)	Class participation (10pts)

The total points possible are 200. I will distribute grades based on the percentage of total points earned (i.e., everyone can get an A!):

A => 180 or 90% of the total pts	C => 140 or 70% of the total pts	E =< 119 or 59% of the total pts
B => 160 or 80% of the total pts	D => 120 or 60% of the total pts	

Absences and makeups: ** Please note that there will be no extra credit, make-up exams or paper extensions offered in this course. Be sure you are available on the date for each exam, group presentation, and paper assignment before you decide to take this course.

Weekly Readings: The core readings for the course will come from one textbook and from book chapters and articles available online at the course D2L site.

Required Textbook: *The Dynamics of Persuasion* by Perloff (2010) 4th edition (in the UA bookstore)

Course D2L Website: The course D2L website provides several resources to help you in this class. Most importantly, you will find many of the electronic copies of the readings, and you will also take the exams online. You will also find the syllabus, test scores, outlines for lectures, and materials to use for the research project. For those unfamiliar with D2L:

How do I log in to D2L?

1. Open up an Internet browser (i.e., Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari)
2. Go to <http://d2l.arizona.edu>
3. Click on the NetID button in the upper left corner of the screen
4. Log in using the same information you use for UA Webmail

How do I see my courses in D2L?

1. Once you successfully accessed the D2L MyHome page by Logging In with your NetID, look for the box labeled My Academic Courses at the bottom of the screen.
2. Click on the plus sign (+) beside the current semester.
3. Click on the plus sign (+) beside the department name, and then
4. Click on our course name (e.g., **PSYC461A SP11 001 Stone**)
5. You should now be at your D2L Course Home page.
6. Click on the "Content" tab to access the readings

What if I can't log into D2L?

Click on the Report a Problem tab on <http://help.d2l.arizona.edu> and complete the form with as much detail as possible, explaining the problem you are having.

A few additional issues:

All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Also, all absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored.

Policies regarding expected classroom behavior: Please turn off your cell phone when in class. Laptops are encouraged for note taking but must be silenced during class.

Classroom policies against plagiarism will be covered in a separate handout. However, students are encouraged to review the University Student Code of Academic Integrity policies against plagiarism found at <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/tipsforavoidingacademicdishonesty>

Students are also encouraged to review the policies against threatening behavior by students: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policiesandcodes/studentcodeofconduct>

You are hereby notified that some students may deem some course content offensive. I will always try to warn you when I think this is possible, but I may not always know when a topic or other material is offensive to you. Please let me know if that was the case.

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

All information contained in this course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by me.

Group Research Project

The class will be divided randomly into small groups to accomplish a collaborative research project. The purpose of the project is to design a social influence or persuasion experiment that will convince people to believe or do something. The study must be based on the psychological principles of social influence and persuasion covered in the course. Each group will present their study to the class, collect data to test the effectiveness of their idea, and write papers about their project. Aspects of the project will be graded collectively (e.g., the group presentations) and individually (e.g., contribution to the project, the paper assignments).

The research groups are intended to function like a research lab. They will be formed sometime during the first month of class and should meet outside of class in addition to the scheduled in-class meeting times. You should take time to become acquainted, choose a name for your group, and begin discussing ideas for your persuasion project.

The project should be ambitious but feasible within the scope of this class. Your group should attempt to study attitudes, persuasion or social influence on a topic of substance and importance that benefits participants, such as the promotion of prosocial behavior (e.g., health or volunteerism). I would encourage the groups to pick a topic that all members find interesting. This may take a few meetings to negotiate--welcome to life in an organization!

Once each group has a topic and a hypothesis, the next task will be to give the first presentation to the rest of the class. The presentations will provide an opportunity for everyone to hear and discuss the various projects. Each group member is expected to present some aspect of the project. The presentations will demonstrate how well your group, as a whole, understands the course material and is able to apply it to your topic. Most groups will modify their project after they receive "helpful" comments from the class and me. As is often the case in the real world, each group member will receive a grade based on the overall group's presentation. The groups tend to be as strong as their weakest link, so I strongly recommend you prepare and practice as a group before the presentation.

For the proposal draft writing assignment, each group member will write a **4-page double-spaced summary** of his or her group's project. The paper will be written as a research proposal and should include a brief review of the theory and research relevant to your topic, a clear statement of the hypothesized results, and a brief description of the methods and procedures. The proposal draft will be due one week after the first group presentations and it will be evaluated individually.

The group's next goal will be to conduct the experiment to test the hypothesis. You will collect data and then analyze and interpret the results of the study. Each group will present their final project and results of their research to the class during the final weeks of the semester. As before, each group member will receive points based on the entire group's presentation.

Finally, each group member will write his or her own final paper describing the theoretical background, hypothesis, methods, results, and a discussion of what the results mean. This paper will be written in APA style and should include tables and/or figures to illustrate the results of the study. The length of this paper must be **10 pages minimum to 15 pages maximum** (including everything!) and will be due during finals week. It will be evaluated individually.

Social Loafing: To discourage social loafing you will have the opportunity to tell me how much effort each person in your group has put forth toward the group project. You will get to rate the effort of each group member after each group presentation. This provides some individual accountability in that if one or more members are not helping the group carry out the project, the group will be allowed to impact the social loafer's course grade.

After the groups are formed I will distribute handouts that detail what to focus on in your papers and presentations and some guidelines to follow in your research (e.g., ethics).

Projected Course Calendar**Note: P = Perloff text; D2L = pdf or doc file on the D2L website**

Date	Lecture#	Topic	Readings & Assignments
Jan 14	---	Course Overview And Introduction.	---
1/18	1	The Psychology of Attitude Change	P: Chpt 1
1/20	2	The nature of attitudes **Get homework assignment due 2/1	P: Chpt 2 P: Chpt 3 pp 80-88
1/25	3	How do we investigate attitudes and attitude change?	P Chpt 4
1/27	---	SPSP conference—NO CLASS	---
Feb 1	---	Research methodology exercise	D2L: Appendix A by Z & L **Methodology homework due in class (no electronic copies will be accepted)
2/3	4	Attitude-Behavior Relationship	P: Chpt 3 pp 88-106
2/8	5	Conformity And Norms	D2L: Schultz et al. (2008) paper
2/10	6	Interpersonal Influence Strategies	P: Chpt 10
2/15	---	Midterm 1 on D2L	---
2/17	7	Self-Persuasion I: Cognitive Dissonance	P: Chpt 9
2/22	8	Self-Persuasion II: Cognitive Dissonance **Get homework assignment due 3/3	D2L: Stone & Focella (2010) paper
2/24	9	Dual Process Models Of Persuasion	P: Chpt 5
Mar 1	10	Source & message factors in persuasion	P: Chpts 6 & 7 (ignore the 'boxes')
3/3	---	In class exercise	**Research homework due in class (no electronic copies will be accepted)
3/8	11	Unconscious processes in persuasion	P: Chpt 11 D2L: Dijksterhuis et al. (2005) paper
3/10	---	Midterm 2 on D2L	---
3/15-17	---	Spring Break!!	---
3/22-24	---	Mandatory Group Meetings (There will be in-class assignments to complete)	Finish designing your class project Brief report on your project to me

3/29-3/31	---	Group Proposal Presentations	Prepare & participate
4/5	12	Prejudice And Discrimination I	D2L: Nelson intro chapter D2L: Fiske currents paper **proposal draft paper and group evals due for groups that presented on 3/29
4/7	13	Prejudice And Discrimination II	D2L: Nelson origins chapter D2L: Dovidio et al. (1991) paper on implicit/explicit biases **proposal draft paper and group evals due for groups that presented on 3/31
4/12	14	Reducing P&D I	D2L: Paluck & Green (2009) review paper
4/14	15	Reducing P&D II	D2L: Stone et al. (2010) paper
4/19	---	Midterm 3 on D2L	---
4/21	---	Mandatory Group Meetings (There will be in-class assignments to complete)	Finish collecting data for project Brief report on your results to me
4/26-4/28	---	Final Project Presentations	Prepare & participate
5/3	---	Last class: Summary & course evals	---
5/10	---	Final paper & group evals due by 4pm	---