

**Psychology 231- 001**  
**Social Psychology**

**Instructor:** Jeffrey Volkman  
**Location:** Lecture Hall 2  
**Tuesday Thursday 9:30-10:20 am**

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**Office Hours:** Friday 1-3

**Required Textbook:** *Social Psychology*. Baron, R.A., Byrne, D. & Branscombe, N.R.  
11<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**Course Overview:**

Social Psychology is a topic of significant interest in today's society. The curriculum for this course has been designed to capture important aspects of this area and the course is designed to be interesting, fun, and informative. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, and group/class activities. In order to understand and benefit from the course's lectures/discussions, students must be prepared for class. In general, reading assignments will generally be outlined in the course schedule.

**Course Objective:**

The realm of social psychology is far-reaching, including such topics as self-presentation, persuasion, social influence, friendship, romantic attraction, helping, aggression, stereotyping and prejudice, group performance, and leadership. In this course, we explore the causes and consequences of such social thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, focusing on how social forces interact with "who we are" to shape our encounters with others.

Our objective will be a *scientific* investigation of social forces and their impact. A second goal of this course is to teach you how to understand, appreciate, and critically evaluate, as an intelligent lay person, empirical studies in the behavioral sciences.

**Grades:**

- Three exams worth 50 points each.
  - There are no make-up exams with the exception of an emergency. If an emergency should arise, the instructor must be contacted ahead of time. Documentation also must be provided in order to gauge the authenticity of the emergency. Please note the exam dates on the above course schedule.
  - The mid-term exams are not cumulative. The final exam *will* be cumulative.
  - Each exam will be composed of multiple-choice questions and a few short answers.
  
- Two reaction papers worth 30 points each.
  - Papers are due at the beginning of class on the dates specified in the above course schedule. Late papers will not be accepted.
  - These reaction papers will be short (minimum of 3 and maximum of 4 typed pages) and should be just that – your reaction. My reaction to *what?* It can be your reaction to something we have discussed in class that surprised you. It

can be your reaction to a movie or TV show you have seen in which you recognized a social psychology concept. Or, it can be your reaction to an event in your own life in which you realized that something we have discussed in class was relevant or helpful.

- Reaction papers will be evaluated on: spelling, grammar, clarity, extent to which you demonstrate understanding of the concept you are discussing, extent to which the story/experience you are describing is related the concept, and the extent to which you have integrated your own thoughts and ideas.
  - Late assignments will not be accepted. All assignments must be stapled.
  - There may be in class assignments if attendance drops. They will be worth 10 points each and will be factored into the final grade.
- One group presentation worth 50 points.
- You will work in small groups to design an experiment that involves social psychology. The experiment is to be conducted by the group members and then presented in class. The experiments must adhere to the ethical guidelines set by the American Psychological Association.
  - Group presentations will be evaluated on: enthusiasm, extent to which all group members are actively participating, extent to which you demonstrate an understanding of the concept/experiment and your ability to answer questions about the concept/experiment.

**Extra Credit:** You may participate in psychology research projects for up to 5 hours of extra credit. Each hour will be worth 1 pt. I will need to be notified by the researcher at the end of the semester of your participation and you will need to write one short paragraph about each project and turn it in to me, no later than December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The paragraph needs to identify the study, and comment on the mechanics of the study – e.g., Experimenter acting professionally? Instructions clear? Environment conducive to participation? Recording of responses not disruptive?

To sign up for an experiment, you must follow the following instructions:

1. log on to [www.experimetrix.com/gmu](http://www.experimetrix.com/gmu) and click on new user link
2. enter all the required information
  - a. don't include dashes in your SSN
  - b. use your GMU e-mail account (your password will be sent to this account). If you do not know your GMU e-mail account, log on to <http://www.gmu.edu/mlnavbar/finder/index.html> and enter your last name to find your GMU e-mail account
3. click on register

Your login and password will be sent to your GMU e-mail account. You will need to log on to the site to activate your account within 3 days or else you will need to re-register. Click 'log in' to access your account. You will need to select your course by clicking on the 'Edit your course Selection link' (Psyc 231 001). You can also edit your information (change your password, add an additional e-mail account, etc.).

**University Honor Code Statement:**

The University has established a clear Honor Code. The bottom line is: do NOT cheat, do NOT plagiarize, do NOT lie and do NOT steal. Any academic dishonesty including plagiarism will result in severe consequences. Under no circumstances are students to collectively write papers or complete homework assignments. If you have questions about any aspect of proper conduct, please ask me.

**Special Needs:** I will do all I can to accommodate students with special needs. "If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office."

**The add and drop deadlines for classes.**

**Last day to add – February 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Last day to drop – February 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Technology Use:** Most lectures will be delivered using a chalkboard or whiteboard. When appropriate and depending on the technology available in the classroom, PowerPoint-type presentations and computer-based demonstrations will be used. The majority of communication will take place through campus email and WebCT. Please check it regularly. You can access Webct by using the following link <https://webct41.gmu.edu/webct/public/home.pl>.

## COURSE TENTATIVE OUTLINE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Jan 23, 25, 27	Introduction to Social Psychology		Ch 1
Jan 30 & Feb 1, 3	Social Cognition		Ch 2
Feb 6, 8 & 10	Social Perceptions		Ch 3
Feb 13, 15 & 17	Attitudes		Ch 4
Feb 20	<b>Exam 1</b>		Ch 1-4
Feb 22, 24 & 27	The Self	Reaction Paper 1 Feb 27	Ch 5
March 1, 3 & 6	Prejudice		Ch 6
March 8, 10, 13 &	Interpersonal attraction		Ch 7
March 15, 17	to be announced*		
March 20, 22 & 24	<b>Spring Break</b>		
March 27, 29 & 31	Close relationships	Reaction Paper 2 March 30	Ch 8
April 3	<b>Exam 2</b>		Ch 5-8
April 5, 7 & 10	Social Influence	Begin Final Project	Ch 9
April 12, 14 & 17	Prosocial Behavior		Ch 10
April 19, 21 & 24	Aggression		Ch 11
April 26, 28 & May 1	Groups and individuals (and wrap up)		Ch 12
May 3 & 5	Group Presentations		
May 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Final Exam</b>		7:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

### Grades:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A+	97 – 100	B+	87 – 89.9	C+	77 – 79.9	D+	67 – 69.9
A	93 – 96.9	B	83 – 86.9	C	73 – 76.9	D	63 – 66.9
A-	90 – 92.9	B-	80 – 82.9	C-	70 – 72.9	D-	60 – 62.9
						F	0 – 59.9

*The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus.*