

PSY 752: Seminar in Social Psychology (Fall 2024)

Syllabus

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Day(s): Tuesday
Time: 2:00–3:50
Location: Greene Hall 312
Course website: <https://canvas.wfu.edu>

Course Description

Content and methodology of social psychology examined through a critical and comparative analysis of contemporary theory and literature.

Course Overview

Most graduate students studying psychology have taken undergraduate courses in social psychology or have had exposure to this area in other courses. In most of those courses, the purpose was to provide an overview of the general area of social psychology. In your related courses you probably covered a wide variety of topics and learned what seemed to be numerous facts about social behavior. This approach is appropriate for undergraduate work but is not appropriate for graduate work in social psychology. You will see that the approach we will take in this seminar is quite different. The emphasis will be placed on developing a theoretical and conceptual understanding of social behavior at an advanced level. Essentially, the goal is to get you to think like a social psychologist and take a scientific approach to understanding social behavior and thought. In addition, you will learn about both current and classic research within the field and will gain experience discussing and presenting research at a graduate level.

Required Text

Myers, D., & Twenge, J. M. (2020). *Exploring social psychology (9th ed.)*. Mc-Graw Hill. ISBN-10: 126057072X, ISBN-13: 978-1260570724

Course Readings

The course readings consist professional journal articles (that we will select as a class) and advanced chapters from and Myers and Twenge's (2020) *Exploring Social Psychology* text. It is imperative that you do the readings before attending class! Occasionally pop-quizzes may be given on these readings if I have reason to believe that you are not carefully reviewing the course readings before class. Reading selections will be posted on Canvas. Please bring to class sessions a hard copy of the assigned course readings for the week so that you can reference the material. Your performance in this course is likely to reflect your record of attendance and the effort that you put into reviewing the course readings.

Student Responsibilities

- Attend class and be prepared to participate (individually and as a group member)
- Carefully review each of the main readings assigned for each class session
- Complete all course requirements
- Check Canvas regularly for updates on course matters

Class Discussion

The learning experience in this course will involve sharing of thoughts during class discussions (focused on the required readings). I strongly encourage you to come to class willing and prepared to voice your thoughts and opinions. Please do ask questions in class.

Grading

Your letter grade for this course is determined by the percentage of total points (100 possible) earned throughout the semester. A letter grade will be assigned on the basis of the following scale:

A+ 98 - 100% A 93 - 97% A- 90 - 92% B+ 88 - 89% B 83 - 87% B- 80 - 82%
C+ 78 - 79% C 73 - 77% C- 70 - 72% D+ 68 - 69% D 63 - 67% D- 60 - 62% F <60%

Points are earned in five ways:

- **Reaction Essays (20 points, 20% of grade):** You are assigned to write a Reaction Essay in response to the readings scheduled for each week (to be turned in on the class period in which the topic is covered). Submit a 1-page (maximum) paper (hard copy) in reaction to all of the readings for the week. Essays may be single-spaced (approx. 500 words) or double-spaced (approx. 250 words), but are not to exceed 1 page (if you have more to discuss, reduce the font and/or margins). Understand that a Reaction Essay is not a simple re-wording of the Abstract of an article, or a summarization. Reaction Essays should help prepare you for class discussion, and should reach beyond summarizing the readings to convey your own response. The Reaction Essay is intended to serve as an intellectual exercise that may take the form of an agreement, disagreement, elaboration, contrast, parallel, or critical analysis of the work selected. Your response can also be selective and could include, for instance, the most interesting idea you read or had about the topic, an example of something you have experienced that is relevant to the topic, an idea for a study, or an observation of how the readings interrelate. Divide your essay in half by providing two paragraphs and giving equal attention to both of the assigned readings for the week.

Examples of sentences to get you started:

- "I see a contradiction between Baumeister's (2010) chapter and the section we read about..."
- "I see an important experiment that could be conducted to test the hypothesis described in..."
- "The theory described in Baumeister's (2010) chapter could be used to..."
- "The theory in Smith's (2002) article helped me to analyze an experience that I once had..."
- "I disagree with the interpretation of the findings described in Smith's (2002) article..."

Provide an "additional-voice" in your essay. The assigned, student-selected, readings will likely only scratch the surface of the depth of social psychological research. Many other "voices" have something to contribute to the various debates, and the assigned readings will only partly prepare you to debate the points raised. Each week, find (and briefly review) an article (published within the last 10 years) relevant to any of the debates raised in either (or both) of the readings. Cite this voice article in your reaction essay. Sometimes you may already have an additional-voice article in mind, but PsycINFO may be especially useful in this task. At minimum, you should read the Abstract of the additional-voice article you select. Submit a hard copy of the title page of the article you select with your Reaction Essay each week.

- **Experimental Social Psychology in Action Demonstration (ESPIAD; 5 points, 5% of grade):** This exercise will provide you with some presentation experience as well as an experiential way of learning more about experimental procedures used in experimental social psychological research today. During one session of class, you will be required to conduct a relatively informal, 15-minute demonstration/presentation of an experimental procedure (paradigm) used in reported research. The paradigm must be published within an experimental social psychological journal (such as *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, or *Judgment and Decision Making*). It is your responsibility to find the article. Please run the idea and the supporting article by me at least one week prior to your Paradigm Demonstration. During your demonstration, you can use the entire class or a single volunteer (whichever is more feasible, given the time constraint). Focus on

demonstrating the method/procedure. Afterwards, describe the hypothesis used by the researchers and a bit of background information (you do not have to use PowerPoint, but it is often helpful). Then you should briefly discuss what is typically found with the paradigm (the results). If at all possible (e.g., when the method-procedures take only a few minutes), tally and present the class results. In the interest of time, the procedures used during class may be modified from what is described in the article you select. In such cases, inform the class of how the demonstration was modified from what the researchers employed. Also, be prepared to answer questions. The keys here are to see experimental social psychology in action, have fun and make the ideas memorable.

- **Class Participation (15 points, 15% of grade):** Class participation should take the form of asking questions, expressing ideas, debating positions, etc. during class sessions. Discuss your own opinion of the strengths and limitations of the research of focus and solicit the opinions of your classmates. You will be graded on your preparation, understanding of the readings, strategy for creating interesting discussion, and the quality of your contributions to the discussion.
- **Mid-Term Exam (40 points, 40% of grade):** The Mid-Term Exam will apply what you have been learning and cover any materials provided from instructor lecture notes and assigned readings.
- **TED Talk and Outline/Paper (20 points, 20% of grade):** Create your very own edited TED Talk video. Select a theoretical topic of particular interest to you and form a clear research question that is not already answered by the existing social psychological literature. Your TED Talk is limited to 8 minutes. The first half of your TED Talk should detail the problem, issue, or call to action. Briefly discuss why funding is needed for research that addresses the problem. The second half of your TED Talk should focus on how your proposed social psychological experiment speaks to the problems/issues you raise in the first half of your TED Talk. The experimental proposal should include a theoretically-drawn set of hypotheses and a brief description of methods and procedures. Your proposed study must include at least one true (i.e., directly manipulated) independent variable. A moderation design (e.g., a 2 × 2 design) and/or the mediation design are highly appropriate (encouraged) designs. Among other aspects of your presentation, such as clarity and detail, you will be graded on how well you substantiate your hypotheses with relevant theory or previously published findings and how well you utilize the existing literature to structure your proposed experiment. Your research question, hypothesis(es) and expected results should be clear. Detail the purpose of the experiment, answering: Why would the research be important to social psychology and what are its potential applications? Include a 1-page outline/paper that details your independent and dependent variables and a Figure or Table that illustrates the hypothesized findings of your experiment. Also include three sources used to create the theoretical basis of your experiment.
 - Recommended Reading: Anderson, C. (2016). *TED talks: The official TED guide to public speaking*. Mariner Books; Social Psychology in Action Chapters from Aronson et al. (2016): Social Psychology in Action 1: Using Social Psychology to Achieve a Sustainable & Happy Future; Social Psychology in Action 2: Social Psychology & Health; Social Psychology in Action 3: Social Psychology & the Law; Final 6 Chapters of Finkel and Baumeister (2010).

Attendance

Class attendance will not be monitored. However, due to the participatory and interactive nature of this course, consider your attendance mandatory. Studies show that class time is the most efficient use of a student's time when it comes to learning material. Unless by reason of extenuating circumstances or participation in religious or civic observances, your attendance is expected at all times.

Lecture Notes and Canvas

Lecture notes are provided on Canvas. However, lectures will be interactive, involving class-discussion related to the topic, and thought experiments. You are expected to become familiar with the Canvas academic suite <https://canvas.wfu.edu/>. Canvas is an online course environment that allows Wake Forest University faculty and students to create, integrate, and maintain web-based teaching and learning resources. Grades, announcements or course changes will be posted on Canvas.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Although I don't expect there to be any problems, cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated. When you signed your application for admission to Wake Forest University, you agreed to live by the honor system. As part of the honor system, you agreed to abstain from cheating, which includes plagiarism. You are accountable to the following from the Student Handbook: "Plagiarism is a type of cheating. It includes: (a) the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without complete acknowledgment of the source; (b) the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another agency or person providing term papers or other academic materials; (c) the non-attributed use of any portion of a computer algorithm or data file; or (d) the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of on-line material without complete acknowledgment of the source."

Contingency Plan

In the event that the university closes due to pandemic or other disaster, please review and study the required readings. Reading quizzes (distributed over Canvas, if the internet is available; or by postal mail if the internet is not available) must be completed to test your comprehension of the readings. Complete all required work (to be distributed either through Canvas, e-mail, or postal mail) listed on the schedule and send the solutions to: John Petrocelli (petrocjv@wfu.edu), if the internet is available; or if the internet is not available to: John Petrocelli, P.O. Box 7778, Winston-Salem, 27109. You will be mailed or e-mailed a midterm and final examination that should be taken closed book, without access to papers, persons, or other resources. The return date for the examination will be specified in the mailing. If the internet is available, Professor Petrocelli will be available for normal office hours by e-mail.

Disclaimer

Consider this syllabus a binding contract of your responsibilities. As with most other courses, I do reserve the right to modify the schedule as deemed necessary. Any changes made to the schedule or policies within this syllabus will be announced in class and on Canvas.

Course Readings and Schedule

August 27 Introduction to Social Psychology¹

Myers & Twenge: Module 1 Doing Social Psychology (pp. 1-12)

Myers & Twenge: Module 2 Did you Know It All Along? (pp. 13-16)

September 3 History of Social Psychology and Social Psychological Methods²

Wilson, T. D., Aronson, E., & Carlsmith, K. (2010). The art of laboratory experimentation. In S. T. Fiske, D. T. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 51-81). McGraw-Hill.

Klinesmith, J., Kasser, T., & McAndrew, F. T. (2006). Guns, testosterone, and aggression: An experimental test of a mediational hypothesis. *Psychological Science, 17*, 568-571.

ESPIAD: John Petrocelli – Quiz Game

September 10 Social Cognition, Attribution, Impression Formation³

Myers & Twenge: Module 6 The Fundamental Attribution Error (pp. 45-52)

Myers & Twenge: Module 7 The Powers and Perils of Intuition (pp. 53-60)

Goldinger, S. D., Kleider, H. M., Azuma, T., & Beike, D. R. (2003). "Blaming the victim" under memory load. *Psychological Science, 14*, 81-85.

ESPIAD: _____

September 17 Self-Understanding⁴

Myers & Twenge: Module 3 Self-Concept: Who Am I? (pp. 19-29)

Myers & Twenge: Module 4 Self-Serving Bias (pp. 31-38)

Ross, L., Lepper, M. R., & Hubbard, M. (1975). Perseverance in self-perception and social perception: Biased attributional processes in the debriefing paradigm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 32*, 880-892.

ESPIAD: _____

September 24 Judgment and Decision Making⁵

Myers & Twenge: Module 8 Reasons for Unreason (pp. 61-70)

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1984). Choices, values, and frames. *American Psychologist, 39*, 341-350.

ESPIAD: _____

October 1 Attitudes, Persuasion, Social Influence⁶

Myers & Twenge: Module 14 How Nice People Get Corrupted (pp. 131-143)

Myers & Twenge: Module 15 Two Routes to Persuasion (pp. 145-157)

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1984). The effects of involvement on responses to argument quantity and quality: Central and peripheral routes to persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*, 69-81.

ESPIAD: _____

October 8 Stereotyping, Prejudice, Discrimination⁷

Myers & Twenge: Module 22 The Reach of Prejudice (pp. 209-221)

Myers & Twenge: Module 23 The Roots of Prejudice (pp. 223-245)

Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*, 5-18.

ESPIAD: _____

October 15 Group and Intergroup Behavior⁸

Myers & Twenge: Module 17 Social Facilitation: The Mere Presence of Others (pp. 165-170)

Myers & Twenge: Module 18 Social Loafing: Many Hands Make Diminished Responsibility (pp. 171-175)

Myers & Twenge: Module 19 Deindividuation: Doing Together What We Wouldn't Alone (pp. 177-182)

Myers & Twenge: Module 20 How Do Groups Intensify Decisions? (pp. 183-198)

Turner, R. N., Crisp, R. J., & Lambert, E. (2007). Imagining intergroup contact can improve intergroup attitudes. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 10*, 427-441.

October 22 MIDTERM EXAM⁹

In-Class Exam and Take-Home Exam

October 29 Morality¹⁰

Skitka, L., & Conway, P. (2019). Morality. In E. J. Finkel & R. F. Baumeister (Eds.), *Advanced social psychology: The state of the science* (pp. 299-324). Oxford University Press.

Bostyn, D. H., Sevenhant, S., & Roets, A. (2018). Of mice, men, and trolleys: Hypothetical judgment versus real-life behavior in trolley-style moral dilemmas. *Psychological Science, 29*, 1084-1093.

ESPIAD: _____

November 5 Attraction¹¹

Myers & Twenge: Module 26 Who Likes Whom? (pp. 279-298)

Dutton, D. G., & Aron, A. P. (1974). Some evidence for heightened sexual attraction under conditions of high anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 30*, 510-517.

ESPIAD: _____

November 12 Intimate Relationships¹²

Myers & Twenge: Module 27 The Ups and Downs of Love (pp. 299-315)

Joel, S., MacDonald, G., & Plaks, J. E. (2013). Romantic relationships conceptualized as a judgment and decision-making domain. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22*, 461-465.

ESPIAD: _____

November 19 Emotion¹³

Mendes, W. B. (2019). Emotion. In E. J. Finkel & R. F. Baumeister (Eds.), *Advanced social psychology: The state of the science* (pp. 325-342). Oxford University Press.

Crawford, M. T., McConnell, A. R., Lewis, A. C., & Sherman, S. J. (2002). Reactance, compliance, and anticipated regret. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38*, 56-63.

Schori-Eyal, N., Tagar, M. R., Saguy, T., & Halperin, E. (2015). The benefits of group-based pride: Pride can motivate guilt in intergroup conflicts among high glorifiers. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 61*, 79-83.

ESPIAD: _____

November 26 Cultural Psychology¹⁴

Myers & Twenge: Module 12 Biology and Culture (pp. 103-117)

Choi, I., & Nisbett, R. E. (1998). Situational salience and cultural differences in the correspondence bias and actor-observer bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 24*, 949-960.

ESPIAD: _____

December 3 Future of Social Psychology¹⁵

No readings

December 14 FINAL MEETING¹⁶

Saturday December 14, 9:00am

Final Presentation Due (Final Exams: December 9 – December 14)