

# PSYC 260: Introduction to Social Psychology

Dylan Wiwad

Spring 2019

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Class Hours: Friday 9:30-12:20 p.m.

Class Room: SWH 10080

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## *Social Psychology*

Have you ever wondered what leads us to help a stranger in distress? How unnoticeable aspects of the environment shape our behaviour? Why we are more likely to become friends with the people we see often? What makes people happy? If so, then you're in the right spot!

In this course, we'll be exploring the fascinating field of Social Psychology. Social Psychology uses the scientific method to examine how the real or imagined presence of others influences our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.

## *Teaching Team*

TA	Email	Office	Office Hour
Jason Proulx	<a href="mailto:jason_proulx@sfu.ca">jason_proulx@sfu.ca</a>	RCB 5232	Mon 2:00pm - 3:00pm
Maitland Waddell	<a href="mailto:maitland_waddell@sfu.ca">maitland_waddell@sfu.ca</a>	RCB 5232	Weds 11:30am - 12:30pm

## *Required Materials*

- There is no textbook to buy for this class. Instead I have chosen to use a freely available set of book chapters to create a custom textbook. Each chapter is modern, up to date, and written by world-leading experts in their respective sub-fields of psychology.
- The custom textbook for this course can be found on the Noba website [here](#).

## ***Grading***

- Article Review assignment: **10%**
- Decision Reflection assignment: **10%**
- New York Times Op-Ed assignment: **20%**
- Midterm and Final Exam (2 x 30%): **60%**

## ***Teaching Philosophy***

For me, teaching is an exciting way for me to impart my enthusiasm and curiosity with you all. While it may seem like you “knew it all along” when it comes to the content of this course, I want you to see how social psychology has developed to understand, explain, and predict many of the phenomena you experience on a near-daily basis.

As such, my teaching is centered around two main goals: (1) helping you develop a deep and meaningful understanding of the course content, and (2) creating excitement for how the course material can be applied outside the classroom.

## ***Course Overview and Learning Objectives***

This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to the wonderful field of Social Psychology.

This means that we’ll be exploring both classic and current theories and research, while considering how this body of work can be applied to our own lives. We will also cover larger meta-issues in social psychology such as the replication crisis.

While covering these topics, this course will also provide you with an opportunity to build analytic, writing, and critical thinking skills. Some topics that we will cover include: prejudice, stereotypes, culture, conformity, persuasion, and happiness.

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- a) Recall, name, identify, and explain key concepts and theories in Social Psychology
- b) Compare and contrast different methods of research design
- c) Isolate key information from a research article and think critically about the findings
- d) Write in a clear, concise, and impactful manner
- e) Apply Social Psychology to your everyday life

## ***Course Format and Expectation***

### ***A) Weekly Participation***

***Interactive Lessons.*** To gain the most from this course, you won’t just read about social psychology, you’ll experience it. Course lessons will often involve demonstrations, activities, and discussions, which may be covered on the exam. Do your best to attend class and participate.

***Reading(s).*** Each week we will cover a course topic (please see the course calendar below). As we cover these topics, you should be sure to read the corresponding Noba sections and/or assigned

readings and revisit the lesson slides. Lesson slides for each course topic will be posted on the course website after class.

**Lecture Comprehension Checks (“LCC”).** The last 3-5 minutes of every class will be reserved to give you time to write down your own brief take-home message from the lesson, and possibly a question about something you didn’t understand or want to know more about. You should always turn in a lesson comprehension check before leaving class. These comprehension checks will not be graded – they are designed to help me ensure that you understand the course material and that you get a chance to ask any lingering questions. Common points of confusion (and interest) will be discussed during each subsequent class. Of course, not all submitted questions will be answered in class, but you are always welcome to see me before/after class or during office hours about your question.

### **B) One-Time Assignments**

**Article Review Assignment.** At one point during the course you will be asked to read a social psychology article from a peer-reviewed journal and then write a 1-page review and analysis. More information regarding this assignment will be distributed and discussed in class (please see the course schedule for timing).

**Decision Reflection Assignment.** You will be asked to write a short paper examining a decision you have made through a social psychological lens. The 2-page paper should incorporate and integrate information regarding how key social psychological phenomena may have influenced your decision making process.

**New York Times Op-Ed Paper.** Towards the end of the course, you will be asked to write a 3-page paper explaining a social psychological concept to a lay-audience. More information regarding this assignment will be distributed and discussed in class (please see the course schedule for timing).

### **C) Exams**

You will have one midterm and one final in this course. Both of these exams will test material covered in class, the Noba sections, assignments, discussions, and additional readings (whether material appeared in only one or in all of these sources). The exams will include multiple choice and short essay questions that test your deep understanding.

#### **Grade Distribution**

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	85%+
B	75% - 84%
C	65% - 74%
D	55% - 64%
F	< 55%

**NOTE:** The range for “+” and “-” within each grade will be determined when final grades are being calculated.

## ***Class Schedule***

### ***Week 01, 12/31 - 01/04: Course Introduction and Groups***

- **Readings**
  - [An Introduction to the Science of Social Psychology](#) by Robert Biswas-Diener
  - [Why Science](#) by Edward Diener
  - [The Psychology of Groups](#) by Donelson R. Forsyth

### ***Week 02, 01/07 - 01/11: Research Methodology and Reproducibility***

- *Article Review Assignment given*
- **Readings**
  - [Research Designs](#) by Christie Napa Scollon
  - [Research Methods in Social Psychology](#) by Rajiv Jhangiani
  - [The Replication Crisis In Psychology](#) by Robert Biswas-Diener and Edward Diener

### ***Week 03, 01/14 - 01/18: Social Cognition and Attitudes***

- **Readings**
  - [Social Cognition and Attitudes](#) by Yanine D. Hess and Cynthia L. Pickett

### ***Week 04, 01/21 - 01/25: Social Perception***

- **Readings**
  - [Social Comparison](#) by Stephen Garcia and Arnor Halldorson

### ***Week 05, 01/28 - 02/01: Conformity and Social Norms***

- *Article Review Assignment DUE*
- **Readings**
  - [Conformity and Obedience](#) by Jerry M. Burger

### ***Week 06, 02/04 - 02/08: NO CLASS; Entire teaching team at a major conference***

### ***Week 07, 02/11 - 02/15: Midterm Exam and Mini-Lesson on Self-Knowledge***

- **Midterm Exam this Week**
- *Decision Assignment given*
- **Readings**
  - [Self and Identity](#) by Dan P. McAdams

***Week 08, 02/18 - 02/22: UNIVERSITY CLOSED FOR READING WEEK; NO CLASS***

***Week 09, 02/25 - 03/01: Attitudes: Cognitive Dissonance and Persuasion***

- *Mid-course feedback*
- **Readings**
  - [Persuasion: So Easily Fooled](#) by Robert L. Levine

***Week 10, 03/04 - 03/08: Culture***

- *Decision Assignment DUE*
- *New York Times Op-Ed Assignment Given*
- **Readings**
  - [Culture](#) by Robert Biswas-Diener and Neil Thin
  - [Culture and Emotion](#) by Jeanne Tsai

***Week 11, 03/11 - 03/15: Stereotypes and Prejudice***

- **Readings**
  - [Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotyping](#) by Susan T. Fiske

***Week 12, 03/18 - 03/22: Aggression***

- **Readings**
  - [Aggression and Violence](#) by Brad J. Bushman

***Week 13, 03/25 - 03/29: Love, Attraction, and Relationships***

- **Readings**
  - [Love, Friendship, and Social Support](#) by Debi Brannan and Cynthia D. Mohr
  - [Relationships and Well-Being](#) by Kenneth Tan and Louis Kay.

***Week 14, 04/01 - 04/05: Happiness and Prosocial Behaviour***

- *New York Times Op-Ed Assignment DUE*
- **Readings**
  - [Happiness: The Science of Subjective Well-Being](#) by Edward Diener
  - [Positive Psychology](#) by Robert A. Emmons
  - [Helping and Prosocial Behavior](#) by Dennis L. Poepsel and David A. Schroeder
  - [Cooperation](#) by Jake P. Moskowitz and Paul K Piff

## *Course and Department Policies*

**Course Website:** You can find the syllabus, PowerPoint slides, important announcements, assignment information, and discussion forums on the class website. You are responsible for checking this site frequently. Please check the website for course information before emailing the professor or TAs.

**Electronics:** Please turn off and put away electronics that make sounds (e.g., phones, headsets). Phones and computers are acceptable for note taking and class participation purposes only. That being said, I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand. Check out this paper called “[The Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard](#)” for why.

**Hint:** research shows you process and retain information better when you take the time and effort to write it by hand. Electronics will not be permitted during quizzes.

**Missed Classes/Exams:** If you miss all or part of any class, it is your responsibility to speak with one of your classmates to find out what course materials and announcements you missed. You are expected to write the course mid-term and final exam on the dates listed in the course schedule. University regulations state that “Students who miss examinations because of illness or for compassionate reasons are required to provide sufficient supporting documentation.” If you are requesting accommodation for medical reasons, you must provide a Health Care Provider Statement Form (available [here](#)). If your absence is not excused, you will be given a score of zero on the exam. If your absence is excused, your final exam will also count as your midterm grade. There will be NO makeup exams.

**Special Accommodations:** The University accommodates students with disabilities and students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let the professor know in the first week of class if you will require any special requirements as such. Absences due to athletics, family obligations, vacations, work scheduling, or other similar commitments WILL NOT receive special accommodation.

**Deadlines:** Deadlines are firm. No extensions will be given for the article review or op-ed assignments—not even sudden illness. You will have weeks to prepare for these assignments. Please plan accordingly.

**Communication:** The professor and TA are available to you via email, office hours, and before/after class. Please reach us when you have questions. We will only provide short (2-3 sentences) responses via email. If you have a question that cannot be answered as a short response, please see us right before or after class or come to office hours and we will be happy to discuss it with you. Please permit at least 24 hours for an email response.

**Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty is an important consideration in this course and your academic career. It is your responsibility to know the rules and policies associated with academic dishonesty and abide by them (see them [here](#)).

**Grade Appeal:** If you are unhappy with your grade on an assignment or exam, you can appeal your grade by notifying the professor in writing within 10 days of receiving your grade. Your assignment will be re-graded using the same assignment criteria by another grader, with the possibility that your grade will increase or decrease.