



Department of Psychology

Psychology630 (L01) – Advanced Topics in Social and Theoretical Psychology: Biological, Cognitive and Motivational Underpinnings of Social Behaviour Fall 2010 – Course Outline

Instructor:	Dr. S. D. Boon	Lecture Location:	A051
Phone:	403-220+5564	Lecture Days/Time:	W 13:00-15:50
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Office Hours:	TBA		

Course Description and Goals

An advanced survey of some of the fundamental issues and recent developments in Social and/or Theoretical Psychology. Topics will vary.

An advanced survey of major topics in contemporary experimental social psychology including but not limited to: evolution, social neuroscience, social cognition, attitudes, emotions, and motivation. For each topic, critical analysis of relevant theory and research will form the basis of written and oral work in the course.

Prerequisite: Undergraduate social psychology course or equivalent

Students who do NOT have credit in an undergraduate introductory social psychology course should prepare for class by reading an introductory-level social psychology text prior to the first class.

NOTE: This course may be repeated for credit.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should:

- be familiar and conversant with the social psychological perspective on human behaviour
- develop critical knowledge and understanding of major areas of research in contemporary experimental social psychology
- develop critical knowledge and understanding of critical issues in contemporary social psychology
- achieve familiarity with methodological issues in experimental social psychology
- develop oral and written skills in the communication of social psychological concepts
- gain experience with the design of social psychological research projects

Required Text

Ross, L., & Nisbett, R.E. (1991). *The person and the situation: Perspectives of Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill (**out of print: available as a PDF document through course Blackboard site**)

Readings

Additional assigned readings will be made available at the course Blackboard site as PDF documents.

Note that you can expect the reading load to be quite heavy in this course. As this is a senior seminar course, I will assume that you are a serious scholar interested in getting as much as possible out of the course. Accordingly, I will expect you to have completed all the reading and to have thought about what you read before each seminar. Like most things, what you get out of the readings (and this course, more generally) will depend on what you put in.

Evaluation

All written assignments will be due on the dates indicated in this course outline and are to be handed in at the beginning of class. Except by prior arrangement, e-mailed and late assignments will not be accepted.

Weight	Component	Due date
15%	seminar participation	throughout term; includes “Social Psychology and You” presentation on September 22, 2010
25%	seminar presentation(s)	throughout term; weight of individual presentations to be determined by number of presentations to be made (i.e., based on course enrollment)
20%	thought papers	due throughout term; equally weighted
40%	research grant proposal	due December 17, 2010 no later than 4:00 pm

Seminar Participation. The primary emphasis here will be on the quality of contributions, not quantity, but you *must* contribute. Attendance every week will be assumed. Quality contributions will be easy to make if you’ve given yourself time to read *and* think about the material before class.

Seminar Presentation Each student will lead one or more seminar sessions (exact number to depend on final enrollment; order of presentation to be determined in the first class). Seminar leaders will be responsible for selecting 2 (two) journal articles related to the assigned readings for that week to use—in conjunction with the assigned reading—as the basis of discussion during the seminar.

Missed seminar presentations will be handled on a case-by-case basis, normally by rescheduling later in the term (where possible).

Social Psychology and You presentation. Each student will make a brief 10 –15 minute presentation during the September 22 seminar that describes how some aspect or aspects of the ideas presented in Ross and Nisbett’s *The Person and the Situation: Perspectives of Social Psychology* has/have implications for his/her own current (or most recent past) research. Plan on briefly describing your research and then discussing implications of R & N, particularly new insights from their book. If you must miss this presentation, you will present in a subsequent class.

Thought Papers. Starting the week after the “Social Psychology and You” seminar, you will be expected to write short (maximum 3 pages double-spaced) weekly thought papers that discuss your response to some aspect(s) of the past week’s readings, journal article(s), and/or class discussion. The first thought paper is due October 6.

Normally, thought papers will be due IN HARDCOPY at the beginning of the class one week after the topic has been covered in class. Electronic submissions will not be accepted. A 20% penalty will be assessed for each work day that the paper is late. It is your responsibility to ensure I receive the assignment on time.

Grant Proposal

Submit a SSHRC-like proposal for a program of research in an area of social psychology that is of interest to you. You are free to choose any topic so long as it is relevant to the course content and *provided it is not directly related to your present (or past) thesis research*. **Students must arrange to meet with the instructor to discuss their proposal plans no later than November 24, 2010.**

Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor’s discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. Final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

Class schedule (subject to change)

Date	Topic/ /Readings
W Sep 15	Course Overview and Introduction
W Sep 22	The Person and the Situation (Social Psychology and You presentations)
W Sep 29	Evolution
W Oct 6	Social Neuroscience
W Oct 13	Automaticity and Control
W Oct 20	Mental Representation
W Oct 27	Person perception
W Nov 3	no classes
W Nov 10	no classes

W Nov 17	Knowledge activation
W Nov 24	Attitudes
W Dec 1	Emotions
W Dec 8	Motivation

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

Absence From A Test/Exam

Makeup tests/exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam.

Evacuation Assembly Point

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **Sep 24, 2010**. Last day for registration/change of registration is **Sep 28th, 2010**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Dec 10, 2010**.