

Course Information

- PSY235: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
- Tuesdays/Thursdays, 4:10-5:30, 118 Psychology Building
- Professor: Joseph Cesario
- Professor Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-2:00, 255 Psychology or by appointment
- Teaching Assistant: Kenya Mulwa
- Teaching Assistant Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00-12:00, 238 Psychology
- ***Send all course emails to: psy235cesario@gmail.com***
- Website: d2l.msu.edu

Course Overview

- This course provides an overview of social psychology. Research in social psychology uses the scientific method to understand the relationship between people and their social environments.
- Research in social psychology has implications for all aspects of life, because social influence is pervasive: romantic relationships, economic decision making, child rearing, marketing and advertising, group identification, political negotiations, etc. So there is much applicability for the principles you will learn in this course. However, rather than providing a list of topics and research findings, this course is structured around the intra- and inter-personal systems that regulate social behavior. My hope is that this provides a more cohesive and engaging presentation compared to simply describing topic after topic in an unconnected way.

Email & Contact

- Use the email address **psy235cesario@gmail.com** for all emails. You will not receive a response if you ask a question that could have been answered by reading this syllabus. Please take care in writing your emails; treat them as professional correspondence.
- If you are having difficulties with the material or would like to talk about the course for any reason, please feel free to come to office hours or email for an appointment. I cannot stress this enough: *do not wait until the last minute to seek help*. I cannot do anything to help you if you wait until one week before the final exam to seek help.

Course Objectives

- One objective of this course is to demonstrate how psychologists think about social interactions and social influence. What questions do social psychologists ask? What have they learned? A second, more important, objective is to teach you how to think like a social psychologist. By the end of the course you should be able to apply these approaches to novel situations relevant to your own experiences.

Lectures

- I will post lecture slides on D2L before each lecture. I use lecture slides to highlight main points, present data, and illustrate difficult concepts. Most of the material presented in class will *not* appear on the lecture slides, so ***you must pay attention and take notes during class.***
- Research on effective note-taking and electronic devices is somewhat limited; however, existing data suggest that students learn more effectively when taking notes by hand rather than on a laptop.
- If you think it is likely that you will use your phone or laptop to do anything other than take notes, please sit toward the rear of the room. This will minimize distractions to other students.
- Although I have prepared formal presentations for each class, you should not feel as though you're a spectator. Please ask questions and provide comments. It will make the class more enjoyable for both of us.

Required Reading

- There is no required textbook. Original source material is posted on D2L. Required and optional readings are listed in the calendar below and on the d2l calendar.

Evaluation

1.1 Philosophy

- Your evaluation is based on how successfully you master and are able to apply the approaches and methods of social psychology that we cover in the course. As important as learning the findings of social psychology research is that you understand the more substantive issues behind research: Why a researcher thought an experiment was important, why the experiment was designed the way it was, and the implications of the results for our understanding of human behavior. An understanding of the scientific process of psychological research is one of the most valuable things you can take away from this course. Long after you have forgotten the findings that have been established by social psychologists, you may still be able to use what you know about the psychological approach to contemplate the behavior of those around you, as well as your own.

1.2 Exam Format

- There are four section exams and one final exam, each worth 50 points. The four section exams are not cumulative; the final exam is cumulative. ***Only your top four of five exam scores count toward your final grade.*** Consistent with the philosophy described above, examinations will focus both on the extent to which you are able to remember *what* social psychologists have found and on the extent to which you are able to understand and apply *how* they went about finding it.
- All exams are in-person, administered in the lecture room (118 Psychology).
- The final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions, similar to those found in the four

section exams. **The final exam is Wednesday December 13, 8:00pm - 10:00pm.**

1.3 Application Assignment

- Three times during the semester you will turn in a 3-page (maximum), double-spaced report of your efforts to apply a concept learned in this course to any aspect of your life or the world. The possibilities for this assignment are endless, really. For example, you could:
 - Use a theory to make sense of your thoughts, behavior, or emotions. (Can evolutionary theory tell me why I find my girlfriend attractive?)
 - Use a social influence technique to get what you want. (If I make certain types of norms salient, can I get my roommate to pick up his underwear off the floor?)
 - Generally, apply a social psychology topic to any experience you have.
- Papers should include a detailed description of the concept/theory/technique you have chosen and a description of your attempted application. The paper will likely be about 1/2 description of the chosen idea and 1/2 description of your application attempt, but of course this will vary from student to student and paper to paper. You should write as much as you need to convey to me that you understand in detail the topic you've chosen, and then write as much as you need to convey to me the appropriateness of your application.
- Each assignment will be graded as check+ (5 points), check (3 points), or check- (1 point). *Failure to complete the assignment results in 0 points.* Upload your assignment to the relevant dropbox in d2l **by 5:00pm on the due date.** It is your responsibility to check that the assignment has been uploaded. You can turn in any assignment before the deadline and you can write on any topic covered during the semester prior to (but not after) that deadline. There is no specific formatting requirement, but it should be written in a professional manner.
- This exercise not only allows you to demonstrate your understanding of the material but also allows you to discover practical applications that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. This requirement is designed to contribute to your education and understanding of the material, not to be a piece of busywork that you begrudgingly complete for a grade. It should be enjoyable! Take this as an opportunity to exercise creativity in applying the material to your life.

1.4 Extra Credit: Human Participation in Research

- You can earn extra credit in this course by participating in psychology research. You will receive 1 point for every 1 hour of research participation, with a maximum of 10 points (10 hours) of extra credit added to your final grade. *You must see the documentation on D2L for information on research participation!* All research must be completed by **Friday, December 8 at 5:00pm.**
- If you would like to complete an alternative assignment (10-page research ethics review paper) instead of research participation, **you must inform me before November 1.** After November 1, you no longer have the option of doing the alternative assignment.

1.5 Calculating Your Final Grade.

- This course is based on 215 points. *It is your responsibility to keep track of your grade.* Use these handy charts to do so:

To get this grade:	You need this percent:	Which is this many points:
4.0	90%	193.5
3.5	85%	182.75
3.0	80%	172
2.5	75%	161.25
2.0	70%	150.5
1.5	65%	139.75
1.0	60%	129
0.0	<60%	<129

Exam 1	/50
Exam 2	/50
Exam 3	/50
Exam 4	/50
Final Exam	/50
Application Ass. 1	/5
Application Ass. 2	/5
Application Ass. 3	/5
HPR extra credit	/0
In-class extra credit	/0
Total points:	/215

Highest
4 out of 5 exam scores

- The final calculated percentage will be rounded to the nearest whole number at 0.5% (e.g., 89.4% stays at 89.4%, but 89.5% rounds up to 90%). ***There will be no adjustments to your grade merely because you are close to the next grade.*** I will never, ever, *under any circumstance*, change your grade for any reason other than a calculation error, nor will I give you any special, unique-to-you assignments so you can get a grade higher than the one you earned. Please do not ask.

Accommodations

- Students who need accommodations during class or exams should see me immediately.
- Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or ***two weeks prior to the accommodation date*** (test, project, etc.). Requests received without sufficient lead time will not be honored.
- If you require testing accommodations (additional time, less disruptive room, etc.) you must contact me and ***present your VISA at least two weeks before the exam date*** to schedule an alternative exam. Requests received without sufficient lead time may not be honored.

Attendance & Make-Up Exams

- You are an adult, and I will not force you to attend my class; whether you choose to attend is between you and the person(s) paying your tuition. That said, as a psychologist I recognize the power of incentives to motivate behavior (and the power of a comfy bed in November to de-motivate behavior). Moreover, it is absolutely clear that the more lectures you attend the more you will learn, and as an educator I have the responsibility of designing the course in a way that maximizes learning. Thus, throughout the semester I will have in-class extra-credit opportunities.
- **If you miss a lecture, *first* borrow one of your classmate's notes and *then* meet with me to go over missed material.** I will not repeat the entire lecture for you. My responsibility is to help you understand those aspects of the lecture that you do not understand, *after you have made an attempt to understand the lecture with a classmate.*
- No makeup tests or exams will be given unless you have a valid, documented excuse. Any notes must explicitly state "This student was unable to take the test/exam on (dates) because _____." If you cannot get a note or if your excuse involves something that is private, you must get a note from the Dean. **You must notify me that you have a valid excuse by the end of the day of the test period/exam or you will not be allowed a makeup.**
- If you cannot take the test/exam because of a university-scheduled event, a religious holiday, or some other acceptable event that you could have foreseen, you must notify me **at least one week before the test/exam.** (See the homepage of the Ombudsperson's office for acceptable non-emergency absences.) If you do not notify me within this time frame, you will not be allowed to take the makeup. There will be one makeup time scheduled for each of the in-class exams. If you cannot make this time, you will not be able to take a makeup exam. Instead, you will need to take the optional final exam to make up your grade.

Academic Honesty

- The following is the academic honesty statement from the Office of the Ombudsperson; all students are required to adhere to this statement:
 - Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Psychology department adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, *Protection of Scholarship and Grades*; the all-University Policy on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide* and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in PSY 342. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including -- but not limited to -- a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/index.html>)
- If you break the academic honesty agreement in any way, ***you will receive a 0.0 for the course.*** There are no exceptions.

- **STATEMENT ON Generative A.I.:** The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) **is not permitted in this class**; therefore, any use of AI tools for work in this class may be considered a violation of Michigan State University's policy on academic integrity, the Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge and Student Rights and Responsibilities, since the work is not your own. **The use of unauthorized AI tools will result in a 0.0 for the course**, without exception.
- I encourage you to visit honorcode.msu.edu to learn more about the Spartan Code of Honor:
 - “As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.”

Our Social Contract

- This course is more than you sitting in a lecture hall and me dispensing information. This course constitutes a social contract that represents a meaningful and, dare I say, *magical* shared experience. As with any good contract, we both have to play our parts:
 - **⇒As the professor**, I promise to devote my full attention and capabilities to our class. I will plan and deliver all my lectures to the best of my abilities. I am dedicated to providing you with an engaging learning experience. I will make decisions about this course based on what I think is the optimal learning environment for you, the student. I will never do my job in a half-hearted way.
 - **⇒As the student**, you promise to attend lectures and be an engaged student. You will take the course as seriously as I take it, and you will do your best to learn the material and understand its importance. You promise never to complain about the course if you are not holding up your end of this contract.

A Final Note

- Class begins at 4:20 and will run until 5:30. I promise--unconditionally--that I will never interrupt your dinner, show up at a party, or corner you as you walk down the hall to force you to listen to me lecture. By enrolling in this class, you promise to do your part: you will not interrupt lecture with side discussions, phone calls, and so forth. Put away newspapers and other reading material. Turn off your phone. Do not have side discussions with other students. Doing so is a distraction to me, and it infringes on the right of other students to experience the lecture as they wish. University policy prohibits any behavior that disrupts class.
- In short: Disruptions are not tolerated. You will be asked to leave if you cannot abide.

Course Topics and Readings Calendar

- ***You must check d2l weekly for the current calendar!***
- Topics and readings for each week will be listed on the d2l calendar. Required readings will be posted on d2l.
- The course follows four sections:
 - ***Section I: Biological & Developmental System***
 - ***Section II: Cognitive System***
 - ***Section III: Motivational System***
 - ***Section IV: Social System***