# Course Information

* PSY235-001: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
* Tuesdays/Thursdays, 2:40-4:00, Brody Hall Room 112
* Professor: Joseph Cesario
* Professor Office Hours: Fridays 11:30-12:30 in 255 Psychology (or by appointment)
* Teaching Assistant: Takatso Sibanda
* Teaching Assistant Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00–2:00 in 9 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. Rather than providing a list of topics and research findings, however, 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. 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 this 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, sit toward the rear of the room. This will minimize the distraction 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 in the relevant section in D2L. Required and optional readings are listed on the calendar below and on the D2L calendar.

# Evaluation

## Philosophy

* Your evaluation is based on how successfully you master and 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 understanding the 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 understanding 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 particular findings that have been established by social psychologists, you may still be able to use what you know about the psychological approach to contemplate your own behavior and the behavior of those around you.

## 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, exams 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 (112 Brody Hall).
* The format of the final exam will be the same as that of the four section exams. **The final exam is** **Wednesday 12/10, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM in Brody Hall 112.**

## 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 division of the paper will likely be ~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 from paper to paper. You should write as much as you need to demonstrate that you understand in detail the topic you've chosen and the appropriateness of your application.
* Each assignment will be graded as 5 points, 3 points, or 1 point. Failure to complete the assignment will result 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.

## Extra Credit: Attendance

* You are an adult, and it is your choice to attend class. That said, as a psychologist I recognize the power of incentives to motivate behavior. Moreover, 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. You must be present in class to earn these points.

## Calculating Your Final Grade

* This course is based on 215 points. *It is your responsibility to keep track of your grade.*

Highest

4 out of 5 exam scores

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***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 |
| In-class extra credit |  | /0 |
| **Total points:** |  | **/215** |

* 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.

# Honors Option

* You can fulfill an Honors Option for this course with a research paper and oral defense.
* The research paper will be a 10-page research report on any topic of your choosing related to the presented course material. This will be a counter-argument paper to any finding or set of findings presented in the course. The essay must be empirical and analytic in nature; it is not a paper about your feelings or opinions on some topic. Instead, the paper should marshal data and analysis to create a logical and reasonable argument. The Honors Option is designed to meet the twin goals of (1) developing your ability to do empirical research and (2) sharpening your logical reasoning skills. The paper should be written in a professional manner using APA or MLA format.
* After submitting the paper, you will then complete an oral defense of your work. This will involve presenting a summary of your research, followed by a question & answer session lasting ~15 minutes.
* The paper is due Friday, December 5. The oral defense will take place during Finals Week.
* If you intend to complete an Honors Option, contact me right away so we can work together on finding an acceptable topic. Do this *before* you begin researching or writing.

# 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.

# Attendance & Make-Up Exams

* If you miss a lecture, first borrow one of your classmate’s notes and then meet with me to go over missed material.
* 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.

# 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 for any written assignment in this class; any use of AI tools for written assignments 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

* **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 with the goal of providing 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 2:40 and will always run until 4:00. 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 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****!*
* Readings and deadlines for each week are listed on the D2L calendar. Required readings are in the relevant section on D2L.

***Date Topic***

*~~Part 1: Biological & Developmental System~~*

* Week 1

Aug 26: Course Introduction & Approach

Aug 28: Evolution

* Week 2

Sept 2: Evolution cont.

Sept 4: Life History Theory

* Week 3

Sept 9: Delay of Gratification

Sept 11: ***Exam 1***

*~~Part 2: Cognitive System~~*

* Week 4

Sept 16: Principles of Knowledge Activation

Sept 18: Categories & Expectancies

* Week 5

Sept 23: Stereotypes & Stereotype Accuracy

Sept 25: Stereotypes & Stereotype Accuracy

* Week 6

Sept 30: Categories & Expectancies: Conditions

Oct 2: Categories & Expectancies: Implicit Bias

* Week 7

Oct 7: ***Exam 2***

*~~Part 3: Motivational System~~*

* Week 7

Oct 9: Regulatory Focus Theory

* Week 8

**Monday, Oct 13: Application Assignment #1 due by 5:00pm**

Oct 14:  Attribution

Oct 16: Attribution cont.

* Week 9

Oct 21:  *No Class: Fall Break*

Oct 23: Motivated Reasoning

* Week 10

Oct 28: Motivated Reasoning cont.

Oct 30: Motivated Perception

* Week 11

Nov 4: ***Exam 3***

*~~Part 4: Social System~~*

* Week 11

Nov 6: Interpersonal Level: Attraction & Repulsion

* Week 12

***Monday, Nov 10: Application Assignment #2 due by 5:00pm***

Nov 11: Attraction & Repulsion cont.

Nov 13:  Fundamentals of Us vs. Them

* Week 13

Nov 18: Fundamentals of Us vs. Them cont.

Nov 20:   Being a Good Group Member: Shared Reality, Ostracism

* Week 14

Nov 25: Being a Good Group Member: Social Influence

Nov 27: *No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday*

* Week 15

Dec 2: Social Influence cont.

Dec 4: ***Exam 4***

***Monday, Dec 8: Application Assignment #3 due by 5:00pm***

**Final Exam: Wednesday 12/10, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

**Brody Hall 112**