Spring 2019  
PSYC 550 – Graduate Proseminar in Social Psychology, Section 01  
Mondays 2:30pm – 5:20pm  
Social and Behavioral Sciences Building 4119

Instructor: Daniel R. Berry, PhD  
Email: drberry@csusm.edu  
Office: SBSB 3208

Course Website: Website Link  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00a-12:00p

Text:
There is no textbook for this class. All required and recommended readings will be posted on our cougar courses website

Course Overview
Welcome to social psychology! Social psychology is the scientific study of how the real, implied, or imagined presences of others affects the way we feel (affect), act (behavior), and think (cognition). Think of these as our social psychology ABC’s. This class is designed to expose graduate students to a variety of theories, principles, and research in social psychology. Primarily, we will read and evaluate classic and contemporary empirical and theoretical articles in social psychology in areas including social cognition, attitudes, self and identity, groups and intergroup processes, social influence, aggression, and prosocial behavior. We will also put this research into practice by engaging in weekly activities outside of classroom discussion. Therefore, this course will help you in both your future psychology courses and your daily life.

Programmatic Student Learning Outcomes:
The Psychology MA degree at CSUSM includes five Programmatic Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) that serve as expected outcomes of your classroom experiences and your broad training in the program. This course addresses the following PSLOs:

PSLO 1: Explain and contrast important empirical and theoretical foundations of psychology and identify unanswered questions stemming from those bodies of knowledge, with particular attention given to areas of psychology related to the thesis.

PSLO 3: Demonstrate proficiency in the written and oral presentation of scientific content in psychology, including the appropriate use of APA style.

Instructor’s Learning Objectives:
• To build or knowledge and understanding aims and scope of the field of social psychology and its implications for well-being enhancement.
• To improve your ability to critique published research and theory and to enhance your ability to think creatively about the study of social psychology.
• To evaluate societal myths related to social psychology and how they can affect decision-making related to personal and societal well-being.
• To integrate and apply concepts in social psychology to benefit our own lives.
• To practice the art and science of effective communication in the presentation of ideas to other individuals and to groups.
**Course Structure and Evaluation**

This course has two major interrelated components: weekly classes and a term project + presentation. These are outlined as follows.

1. Weekly classes

The format of this course is interactive and experiential. At class meetings, I will give “interrupted lectures” for 30 minutes to an hour, and the remaining time will be reserved for discussion, using courses readings and out-of-class exercises as jumping-off points. The primary focus of this seminar will be on class discussion. Evidence suggests that students learn material more thoroughly and retain it longer if they are actively engaged in the learning process. Getting involved in the class will not only benefit you, it will also contribute to the learning of your classmates. I want you to complete all required readings before class and to come to each class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for class. To help you do so, I ask you to generate two discussion questions each week and to write a paragraph or two about the experiential homework you completed for that week. These assignments are only to be completed during weeks that you are not leading discussion. These questions and experiential homework responses will be the starting point for class discussions and will be organized by two discussion leaders who will facilitate discussion that week. Other areas of discussion will likely emerge as we go through the course.

**Class Attendance and Participation (200 points):** Your participation in class discussions throughout the semester will constitute 20% of your grade for this course. I will give you feedback on your class participation about halfway through the semester. Quality participation in class does not just mean talking. Good class participation involves coming to class on time with questions on issues that are unclear in the readings, raising questions that you think we should cover, and constructively criticizing and commenting on ideas you think are interesting. Class discussion also means volunteering insightful answers to questions that provide contrasts and integration of ideas, actively listening to others’ contributions to discussion and moving the discussion along toward a shared understanding. I am looking for a “popcorn effect” in which a student raises comments about personal experience are great insofar as a connection is made between your experience and the class topic and readings. In sum, I am looking for evidence that you have done the readings and thought about the relevant issues. I especially value comments that contribute to our collective learning. The criteria I will use in assigning points for class participation are as follows.

- **200 points:** Actively and consistently contributes to the class discussions and exercises well beyond expectations (e.g., raises important issues based on class readings, clarifies questions raised by other participants, and consistently makes comments that display a sophisticated grasp of the relevant material).
- **180 points:** Actively and consistently contributes to the class discussions and exercises beyond expectations (e.g., makes substantial contributions to class discussions).
- **160 points:** Actively and consistently participates in class discussions and in the exercises.
- **140 points:** Attends class but participation is minimal or does not actively participate.
- **<140 points:** Problems with class attendance, minimal participation in discussions and exercises, and or does not appear prepared for class.
Discussion Questions and Experiential Homework Journals (200 points): As noted in the Class Attendance and Participation section above, each student is asked to contribute two discussion questions based on each set of weekly readings. These questions are meant to focus your thinking and guide our in-class discussions. Here are some possible topics for discussion questions: topics or issues you did not understand about the articles/chapters; challenges to the conclusions drawn by the authors, consideration of the implications of the findings, relating one or more readings to other readings or topics, and connections between the ideas articulated in the readings and your own research ideas. Please stay away from rhetorical questions – those that simply test your classmates’ knowledge about the material.

In addition to discussion questions, each week I will ask you to complete an out-of-class exercise to help you et first-hand or inside experience with each topic under study and to foster your own well-being. These exercises will, I hope, be fun, interesting, or positively challenging for you. Each week I will announce the exercise to be completed before the next class. You will write a paragraph or two about the exercise. Describe what you did in the exercise; how did the exercise influence the way you think about course readings or everyday life?

Thus, each week that you are not leading discussion (11 weeks total), you will post two discussion questions and one experiential homework assignment paper to discussion board on Cougar Courses. So that the discussion leaders have time to organize for the class on Monday, please post questions by Friday 11:59 PM (three days before class meets). I will drop the lowest non-zero grade, leaving a total of 10 grades. The Discussion Questions and Experiential Homework Journals will be graded on the following scale:

- **20 points:** Excellent; questions and experiential homework were highly relevant to the readings and made insightful contributions to the discussion.
- **18 points:** Very good; questions and experiential homework were relevant and helped to contribute to the class discussion.
- **16 points:** Good; questions and experiential homework were relevant but did not contribute to the discussion.
- **14 points:** Marginal; questions and experiential homework were somewhat relevant and did not contribute to the discussion.
- **12 points:** Yikes; questions and experiential homework were not relevant or were incomplete.
- **0 points:** Student did not submit a completed assignment by the deadline.

Facilitating Discussion (200 points): Each student is expected to serve as discussion facilitator for two class sessions. Discussions will be facilitated in teams of two. The discussion facilitator is responsible for leading the discussion of the assigned readings. Students are encouraged to integrate peers’ discussion questions, and reserve time to discuss experiential homework. Creativity is encouraged! Although critically evaluating the articles is encouraged, please stay away from questions like “so what did you all think about the X article?” Find commonalities among your peers’ discussion questions; find points that your peers might disagree on. Ask questions about how the course content could be applied. Ask how to improve studies. Ask peers to design studies in class. Show brief videos or complete an exercise to demonstrate a phenomenon. After Dr. Berry completes his interrupted lecture, discussion facilitators will have the floor! Please note that pauses in discussion are a normal part of discussion. Everyone needs time to think about the question. Discussion facilitators will be graded on the following scale:
100 points: Excellent; facilitators promoted highly meaningful discussion via provocative questions, demonstration, and/or exercises. Facilitators made insightful comments that contributed to the discussion, and clarified students’ responses. Facilitators made comments that moved the discussion along at a pace that all could learn.

90 points: Very good; facilitators promoted meaningful discussion and made some attempts to do so via provocative questions, demonstrations, and/or exercises. Facilitators made comments that moved the discussion along.

80 points: Good; facilitators promoted meaningful discussion by using peers’ questions. Facilitators made comments that moved the discussion along.

70 points: Marginal; facilitators were organized but only use peers’ questions to create conversation.

60 points: Yikes; facilitators lacked organization, relied little on peers’ questions, and appeared unprepared.

0 points: Both facilitators came to class unprepared (or unaware that they were facilitating).

**In most cases facilitators will be assigned the same grade unless there is clear evidence that one facilitator planned significantly more than the other facilitator planned.

2. **Term Paper (400 points)**: In this seminar, you will complete an empirical research proposal. The written product will be due **Monday, May 13 at 11:59 PM.** Please see “Research Proposal Guidelines and Rubric” document for more details on preparing this project. Please have your project ideas ready by **Monday, March 25 in class.** On this day you will submit a paragraph detailing the project you intend to conduct. A completed draft of your manuscript is due on **Monday, April 22 at 11:59 PM.** I will review these papers using the guidelines and rubric posted on Cougar Courses and return them to you in class on **Monday, May 6 in class.**

Toward the end of the term, each student will present their proposal to the class. The presentation has two purposes: One is to generate discussion with the class that may aid in developing your research proposal; the other is to give you practice in communicating your ideas. Presenting to a live audience is a primary way in which scientists do this. Good presentations will have a clearly defined purpose, outline the major problem and the questions or hypotheses following from it, map out an integrated method, outline the data analytic approach (as appropriate), and suggest implications for the research proposal. Please use visual aids (slides, etc.) and adhere to the time limit (15 minutes including questions). Presentations should be organized and not simply read from the slide. Practicing your presentation is the best way to prepare. Projects will be presented on **Monday, May 6 during class.**

Finally, on presentation day, you will peer critique 5 of the 10 presentations. Students who present at the end of class will comment on the students who present at the beginning of class and vice versa.
GRADING SYSTEM:
The table to the right details the total points available in this class. I will grade assignments quickly but carefully before returning the feedback to you. You can find your grades posted on the class website (Cougar Courses). Should you have any questions about your grades, I encourage you to share your concerns.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

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EXPECTATIONS, POLICIES, AND RESOURCES

CLASS EXPECTATIONS:

Come prepared. Complete all readings prior to lecture, and come to class after thinking about the material. Bring your textbook, and be prepared to take notes. Check Cougar Courses regularly.

Contribute. Come to class prepared with questions from the readings. All questions will be respected. Please, share your unique perspective with the class! It is an opportunity to demonstrate your competence, help clarify the material for others, and promote an engaging classroom environment.

Be respectful. People relate to psychological theories and concepts in different ways. Please remain open and respectful to alternative perspectives of the course material. Use reason and evidence to challenge ideas presented in this class.

Minimize distractions. You may use laptops/tablets in this class. For each class Dr. Berry will share a Google Doc with the class prior to lecture as a way to crowdsource notes and create an interactive learning environment. Do not surf the web, check your email, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, IM, Snapchat, etc, during class. While these great activities are only few clicks away, they will not help you or your neighbors accomplish the course objectives. Please be mindful of your classmates when using your computers.

COURSE POLICIES:

Academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is a bad scene; don’t go there. All assignments must represent your own work. However, in doing lab assignments you may find it useful to confirm your logic, phrasing, and formatting with classmates and Dr. Berry – just make sure you write your assignments individually. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism), please ask me.
Meeting course requirements. Generally, the only reasons I consider legitimate for missing a class or assignment deadlines are: conference attendance, medical illness (appropriate documentation required), or personal/family emergencies that require you to leave school. Oversleeping, heavy work load, forgetfulness, assignment disappearance (e.g., computer meltdowns), and alien abduction will not be considered legitimate failures to meet course requirements.

Writing Requirement:
As stated in the course catalog, all CSU students must demonstrate competency in writing skills as a requirement for graduation. This requirement mandates that every course at the university must have a writing component of at least 2500 words (approximately 10 pages). The writing requirement in this course will be satisfied through your lab assignments, in-class exercises, and the written portion of exams. Check out the Writing Center for help on writing!

The Psychology Academic Resource Lab (PARL):
is located in SBSB 1206 and is available for one-on-one tutoring help in statistics. Check their website for the hours that the lab is staffed at PARL WEBSITE.

Accommodations for Students:
Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services (DDS). This office is located in Craven Hall 4300, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with me during my office hours in order to ensure confidentiality. Should you have any questions about services provided through Disabled Student Services, please call 760-750-4905 or go to http://www.csusm.edu/dss/handbooks/student_book.html.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Section 1: Historical, General, and Methodological Roots of Social Psychology

1/21/2019: Class does not meet. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Campus is Closed

1/28/2019: History and Themes in Social Psychology: Facilitator DAN

Course Discussion: Orientation to the course. Selection of discussion leaders. Historical and contemporary themes in social psychology.

Experiential Homework: In social psychology we learn to understand the importance of context. Contexts afford us things to think, feel, and do, and nothing brings to sharp relief the importance of context like doing something that is inappropriate for the context. Your assignment for this week is to violate a social norm. You can pick any social norm you would like. Just don’t do anything illegal. Discuss in your paragraph the social norm you chose to violate. Tell us how you felt violating that norm. Tell us about how others reacted

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


2/4/2019: Research Methods and Ethics in Social Psychology. Facilitators

Course Discussion: Designing studies in social psychology. Primary focus on ethics in human participant protections (i.e., using deception in research) and ethics in dissemination and scientific integrity.

Experiential Homework: Pick a social phenomenon that you encounter in your everyday life. It could be anything. Design a single experiment to test this social phenomenon. How would you conduct this experiment?
Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Section 2: Foundational Topics in Social Psychology


Course Discussion: How does automaticity benefit and hurt us? Paradoxical effects of being in control.

Experiential Homework: TBD

Required Readings:


**Recommended Readings:**


2/18/2019: Social Cognition II. Heuristics and Judgments. Facilitators _______________

- Course Discussion: Are heuristics beneficial to us or can they harm us? What are the benefits of unconscious thinking?
- Experiential Homework: TBD

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


- Course Discussion. How do we infer the causes of others’ behaviors? Old theories vs. dual-process theories. Errors in attribution.
- Experiential Homework: TBD

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:

3/4/2019: Attitudes and Their Consequences. Facilitators

Course Discussion. What are attitudes? Do they always predict behavior? What are the negative consequences of attitudes.

Experiential Homework: Please go to the Project Implicit Research Website (http://implicit.harvard.edu). Take a test. Read the FAQs and other background information. Talk about your results to your test.

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:


**3/11/2019**: Changing Attitudes to Allay Prejudice and Discrimination. Facilitators _______________________________________

Course Discussion. Looking at old theories of attitude change (Balance and Cognitive Dissonance). How do we change attitudes that we aren’t even aware of?

Experiential Homework: TBD

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**3/18/2019**: The Self-Concept and Sources/Consequences of Self-Esteem. Facilitators ______________________

Course Discussion: What is the self? What is self-esteem? What happens when we strive too much for self-esteem? What are positive illusions? Where does self-esteem come from (focus on Terror Management Theory)?

Experiential Homework: TBD

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**3/25/2019:** Self-Regulation Theories and Consequences. Facilitators ________________________

Course Discussion: Is the active self a resource? Can people override the depleting effects of self-regulation?

Experiential Homework: TBD

***One Paragraph Description of Research Proposal Due Today in Class***

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings**


4/1/2019: Class Does Not Meet. Spring Break. Campus is Closed

Section 3. Special Topics in Social Psychology


Course Discussion: Benefits and downsides of rejection. Do we have a need to belong? What is love, and how can we study it?

Experiential Homework: Try to experience rejection. Ask a stranger, family member, peer, partner for a favour that you know they are unwilling to do. Don’t push the issue after they tell you know. Just sit with it. If you’re not comfortable with seeking rejection, try to take notice of a time that you feel rejected.

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

4/15/2019: Social Influence. Facilitators ________________________________

Course Discussion: Can social influence be used to promote positive change? What are good qualities in a leader?

Experiential Homework: TBD

Required Readings:
4/22/2019: Aggression. Facilitators _____________________________

Course Discussion: Can culture influence aggression? How does the media promote/hinder aggression? Nationalism and Xenophobia.

Experiential Homework: TBD

***Completed Draft of Research Proposal Due at 11:59 PM

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

4/29/2019: Prosociality. Facilitators _____________________________

Course Discussion. How can prosociality promote our survival? Is it learned or innate? Is altruistic motivation real?

Required Readings:

5/6/2019: Presentation Day

I will return edited research proposals on this day. You may use these to improve your final proposal.

We will complete 5 peer reviews during presentations and turn them in. I will photocopy them and place them in your peers’ mailboxes. You may use these to improve your final proposal.

5/13/2018: Exam week bonus day.

I will hold office hours today and you can come visit me and discuss your papers

***Final papers are due at 11:59 PM Today is not a good day to start your paper 😊