

# Social Psychology

## Psy/Soc 301, Spring 2005

Dr. Susan Cloninger

Class Meetings: TuTh 11:20 am to 12:50 pm

Office Hours: (drop-ins and phone calls): Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:30, and by appointment

Office: Gurley Hall, Room 306 (phone: 244-2071)

E-mail: My campus e-mail address is: [clonis@sage.edu](mailto:clonis@sage.edu) This address gets a lot of mail that I delete without reading. If you use it, please put "Psy301" or "Soc301" in the subject line so that your message isn't accidentally deleted before being read. Or, use the following address instead: <mailto:socialpsy@suecloninger.com>

### Course Description:

This course provides a study of human interaction in society and its psychological basis. Some of the major topics covered include aggression, altruism, attitudes, attraction, conformity, group dynamics, perception of self and others, prejudice, social roles, and social power. Social psychology is a rapidly changing field which studies the ways humans influence and are influenced by other people. It is an exciting field, with many implications for other areas of psychology and for the events of all of our lives. Because the social context has powerful effects on behavior and experience, while varying from culture to culture and from one historical time to another, an understanding of social psychology can help us to appreciate the diversity of human experience and to imagine new potentials.

### Prerequisite:

Before enrolling for the course, students are required to complete either Psychology 101 or Sociology 101. *Students are responsible for making sure they have completed any prerequisites before registering for this (or any) course.*

### Text:

Myers, D. G. (2005). *Social Psychology* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

The publisher provides additional pedagogical materials with this text on the web, which you may find useful (though no explicit assignments are made from them). There is also a study guide published, which is available for purchase at the bookstore; no assignments will be made from it and it is not required, but many students find that the study guide improves their learning (and grades).

### Objectives and Requirements:

Students are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of social psychological theory and research, and the relevance of the field to current issues in the news and in psychological peer-reviewed research journals. This will be evidenced on (1) exams, (2) oral and written presentations, and (3) class discussions. Regular attendance is expected.

## Grading:

As a general guide, grades will be calculated based on exams (70%), papers and presentations (27%) and class participation (3%). Presentation grades will take into account the appropriateness of the topic, as well as the quality of its presentation (both oral and written—see details below).

## Exams:

Exams will consist of multiple choice and essay questions. Students are required to be present for scheduled exams. Truly extraordinary circumstances warrant makeup exams, but the minor illnesses and work overloads that many of us experience do not. Don't assume that a makeup will be granted until you discuss your request with the instructor.

## Papers and Oral Presentations:

The text raises many more questions than it answers. Three papers (details on the class schedule below) are assigned to explore additional aspects of social psychology. The major determinant of your grade is the academic quality of your *written* paper: the detail and accuracy of the social psychological analysis. (Mechanics and the appropriateness of the topic selected are also important.)

Here are the three paper assignments. (See the schedule below for due dates.)

1. **Correlational and Experimental Research in Psychology:**

Select an *empirical research study* from a peer-reviewed journal in social psychology that (1) describes material related to one of the above chapters (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 or 14), and (2) uses either a correlational method or an experimental method. Describe the article and discuss the strengths and limitations of the research method that was used. (Hint: "*Correlation permits prediction, but correlation does not prove causation.*")

2. **Social Influence in the News:**

Select a *current news event or current social issue* that illustrates a social psychological principle covered in these chapters (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, or 15). Print and television news sources are acceptable. Films may be acceptable if they are directly related to a current news event or current social issue. Describe the event or issue and explain how social psychology helps understand it.

3. **Applying Social Psychology to Improve the Social World:**

Use material related to Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, or 16. (By instructor's permission, for this assignment, you may use material related to other chapters – but only with prior approval.) Decide whether you want to report on an intervention that actually has been done, or one that you would recommend for the future. If you are proposing your own intervention, try to describe it in the form of an experimental research proposal, in which the intervention is one level of the independent variable and a group not exposed to the intervention remains as a control group. Describe what will be done to the experimental group, and how you think their outcome (dependent variable) will be different than for the untreated control group. Locate appropriate sources in social psychology journals and/or other sources (such as news reports). Sometimes the terms "intervention" or "model program" are used in psychology journals for describing such interventions. Describe the intervention. Explain what evidence is (or would be) relevant to deciding whether the intervention has been successful or not successful.

*All sources that you have used in preparing reports must also be submitted to the instructor with your report.* This includes journal articles, news reports, and any other material used. This material may be submitted either in printed form or electronically (either as full text or as a “persistent link” to a library source, if you know how to do that).

In addition to the written paper, many of these reports will also be presented orally to the class. (I would like for them *all* to be presented in class, but because of time constraints, it is likely that each student will present only two times orally.) Oral presentations should last approximately 8-10 minutes. Your time will be limited by the number of presentations scheduled for that day. Visual aids (such as overheads, powerpoint or other computer-assisted presentations, and/or handouts) are encouraged. If you use such materials, submit a copy with your report for grading.

***You are required to select your topic and have it approved in advance of each scheduled presentation.*** This will help ensure that your topic is acceptable and will permit us to schedule related reports together, so discussion can be more interesting. The dates indicated on the syllabus are the *last* dates for submission of topics.

- It is possible that your topic may not be approved, so get approval in advance, before preparing the presentation! If you need a longer time to prepare, you should submit your selection before the deadline listed on the syllabus, so that it can be approved earlier.)
- When you submit your presentation proposal, you must also include an abstract of a journal article, a copy of a news article, or a description of any “other” material that will be your primary source material. This helps me to evaluate whether the proposed topic is acceptable.
- If you procrastinate too long and don’t get your topic approved on time, realize that you will not be able to fulfill the requirement of two oral reports. So don’t procrastinate! *Here’s a recommendation: well before the deadline, look at the assignment and skim the relevant chapters in the text. On the basis of this information, make a tentative report choice. (If you find something better, you could change your selection before the deadline for the topic submission.)*

### **Electronic resources and submission of assignments:**

Course-related notes and other resources, including a copy of this syllabus, are available on my personal website (<http://www.suecloninger.com>). You may find the class notes useful for preview and review (though they are not a substitute for attending class and reading the text). Many students print them and take class notes (from the textbook and from lecture) in the margins.

Assignments will be submitted electronically through <http://www.turnitin.com>. Registered students will be enrolled by the instructor in this electronic drop box website and will be given further instructions. Papers will be accepted only until the day they are due (as indicated on the schedule below). After that, the electronic drop box will be closed. If you have difficulties with this procedure, you should come to my office to discuss your difficulties in person. Realize that various instructors may set up their turnitin.com courses differently, so the options available to students in this course may be different from those

you may have experienced in the past, in other courses (e.g., feedback about originality of your work, opportunities for re-submission of papers, and so on). It is my plan to use this website only as a drop box for receiving papers, which may be submitted only once, only until the deadline, and without feedback to students about their originality reports.

Classroom courtesy, some friendly reminders:

*We spend so much time with our heads buried in books or our eyes glued to television or computers that sometimes we forget that our behavior affects other people! Please be courteous to other class members and to the instructor.*

Try to arrive on time and avoid leaving early. If these aren't possible, please seat yourself near the door.

Avoid side conversations with classmates.

Don't eat in class. A discrete nibble of some snack if you are hypoglycemic, a sip of coffee or another drink to keep you awake and hydrated – these are OK. But spreading out an elaborate breakfast or lunch, especially directly in front of the instructor or your classmates, is rude. Don't do it.

Any use of cell phones during class is highly distracting and disrespectful. Thus, the use of cell phones is not permitted during class time for any purpose and they are to be kept turned off and out of view inside pocketbooks, knapsacks, etc. Any student whose phone rings during class is hereby asked to leave the class (no need to wait for me to ask you to leave). Cell phones distract other students from learning, disrupt lectures, and create an environment in which events outside the classroom appear to be more important than those occurring inside the classroom--precisely the kind of environment none of us wants or needs for our classes. [I've borrowed this cell phone statement from a colleague, with permission.]

**Notes:**

- College policies and deadlines regarding academic honesty, registration, drop-add, disability accommodations, and so on are contained in college publications and listed later on this syllabus (but consult college publications for official statements).
- Students who require accommodations because of disabilities (including learning disabilities) must bring this to the attention of the instructor *at the beginning of the course*.
- I am sympathetic to the dangers of commuting in adverse weather. If you believe that it would be dangerous to drive to campus because of weather, then don't come to my class, and contact me as soon as possible to discuss the situation. If the College closes, there will obviously be no class. If I personally am unable to make it to campus, I will leave a phone message on my office telephone: 244-2071.
- This syllabus may be modified as events dictate. (For example, weather may require us to change dates.)

# Social Psychology Class Schedule

(SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION)

Thurs	1/20	Chapter 1: Introducing Social Psychology (begin)  <i>(Note: You should pay particular attention to the lecture presentation on correlational and experimental research, since this information is essential for the first paper/presentation assignment.)</i>
Tues	1/25	continue Chapter 1 Chapter 2: The Self in a Social World
Thurs	1/27	continue Chapter 2
Tues	2/1	Chapter 3: Social Beliefs and Judgments <b>Suggestion:</b> <i>You could submit your presentation sign-up early, so you know earlier whether it is approved.</i>
Thurs	2/3	Chapter 4: Behavior and Attitudes <i>Presentation sign-up due on turnitin.com today. (If you miss this deadline, you will not be scheduled for an oral presentation.)</i>
Tues	2/8	Chapter 14: Social Psychology in the Clinic <i>Check presentation approval and schedule.</i>
Thurs	2/10	Student presentations and discussion: <b>Correlational and Experimental Research in Social Psychology.</b>
Tues	2/15	Student Presentations and discussion (continued)  <b>Papers are due today for all students. Submit them through the turnitin.com drop box.</b>
Thurs	2/17	<b>EXAM 1</b> (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 14)
Tues	2/22	Chapter 5: Genes, Culture, and Gender
Thurs	2/24	continue Chapter 5
Tues	3/1	Chapter 6: Conformity
Thurs	3/3	Chapter 7: Persuasion <b>Suggestion:</b> <i>You could submit your presentation sign-up early, so you know earlier whether it is approved.</i>
Tues	3/8	Chapter 8: Group Influence <i>Presentation sign-up due on turnitin.com today. (If you miss this deadline, you will not be scheduled for an oral presentation.)</i>
Thurs	3/10	Chapter 15: Social Psychology in Court <i>Check presentation approval and schedule.</i>
	3/15 & 17	<i>No class: spring break</i>
Tues	3/22	Student Presentations and discussion: <b>Social Influence in the News.</b>

Thurs	3/24	Student Presentations and discussion (continued) <b><i>Papers are due today for all students. Submit them through the turnitin.com drop box.</i></b>
Tues	3/29	<b>EXAM 2</b> (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 15)
Thurs	3/31	Chapter 9: Prejudice: Disliking Others (begin)
Tues	4/5	Continue Chapter 9 Chapter 10: Aggression: Hurting Others
Thurs	4/7	Continue Chapter 10 <b><i>Suggestion:</i></b> <i>You could submit your presentation sign-up early, so you know earlier whether it is approved.</i>
Tues	4/12	Chapter 11: Attraction and Intimacy: Liking and Loving Others <b><i>Presentation sign-up due on turnitin.com today. (If you miss this deadline, you will not be scheduled for an oral presentation.)</i></b>
Thurs	4/14	Chapter 12: Helping <i>Check presentation approval and schedule.</i>
Tues	4/19	Chapter 13: Conflict and Peacemaking and Chapter 16: Social Psychology and the Sustainable Future
Thurs	4/21	Student Presentations and discussion: <b>Applying Social Psychology to Improve the Social World.</b>
Tues	4/26	Student Presentations and discussion (continued) <b><i>Papers are due today for all students. Submit them through the turnitin.com drop box.</i></b>
<i>Registrar's final exam schedule</i>	Monday, 5/2, 10:30am to 12:30pm	<b>EXAM 3</b> (Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 16)

# College Policies on Various Academic Matters

## ***THE SPIRIT OF LEARNING***

All members of The Sage Colleges community are expected to conduct themselves in a way which respects the learning environment. Thus, Sage has the right to remove any student from the classroom, other academic area, or program at any time if the student's behavior is contrary to the spirit of learning or hinders the operation of the program in any way. Violent, disruptive, harassing, or intimidating behavior is not tolerated in the classroom or any other place on campus. Any student whose conduct disrupts a class or other learning environment may be required to leave the premises immediately and subjected to disciplinary or legal actions.

## ***STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES***

The Sage Colleges is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student seeking academic adjustment under the Americans with Disabilities Act must make a request in writing to The Sage Colleges Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, Sage Albany Campus, 140 New Scotland Avenue, Albany, NY 12208: telephone 518-292-1764. Any student in need of classroom assistance or modification under the Americans with Disabilities Act must inform the instructor of the needed adjustment no later than the first week of class, and provide documentation from the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities.

## ***POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY***

Academic dishonesty in any of its forms, including cheating, plagiarism, misuse of SageNet, and failure to comply with guidelines for the conduct of human research, will not be tolerated at The Sage Colleges. A full statement of the policy on plagiarism, cheating and academic dishonesty is available in any of the academic division offices, in the Russell Sage College Dean and Graduate Dean offices (Troy) and Sage Center for Extended Learning and Sage College of Albany Dean's office (Albany).

For guidance in proper referencing of sources, as well as how to avoid plagiarism, consult the most recent editions of the following works, which are available in the reference sections of the libraries on the Troy and Albany campus:

Joseph Gibaldi & Walter S. Achtert *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.  
New York: Modern Language Association.

Kate L. Turabian *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations*.  
Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

American Psychological Association *Publication Manual*. Washington, D.C.:  
American Psychological Association.

(Check college publications for any additional or revised policies.)