



Department of Psychology

Psychology 627 (L01) – Advanced Topics in Social/Personality Psychology

Fall 2007

Instructor:	Dr. Susan D. Boon	Lecture Location:	A248A
Phone:	220-5564	Lecture Days/Time:	T 14:00 – 16:30
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Course Description and Goals

Course Description

An advanced survey of major topics in contemporary experimental social psychology, with a particular focus on human cognitive and motivational systems. 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 be sure to 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

- To become familiar and conversant with the social psychological perspective on human behaviour
- To develop critical knowledge and understanding of the major areas of research in contemporary experimental social psychology in the areas of individual differences and interpersonal and intergroup processes
- To develop critical knowledge and understanding of critical issues in contemporary experimental social psychology in the areas of individual differences and interpersonal and intergroup processes
- To achieve familiarity with methodological issues in experimental social psychology in the areas of individual differences and interpersonal and intergroup processes
- To develop oral and written skills in the communication of social psychological concepts
- To gain experience with the design of social psychological experiments

Required Readings: There is no required text for this course. However, **you are required to read Ross & Nisbett's (1991) *The Person and The Situation* prior to the first class on September 11.** As only a small number of copies are available in the

Department (and it's out of print), you may need to coordinate with another student to ensure you have access to it in time to have it read it in advance of the beginning of classes.

Ross, L., & Nisbett, R. E. (1991). The person and the situation: Perspectives of social psychology. Toronto: McGraw-Hill.

Depending on their source, weekly assigned readings will be available in advance either on the credenza in the entry to A231B/C (for personal copying) OR in full citation form on Blackboard so that you may access them online. Readings assigned by seminar leaders will be made available one week prior to their seminar.

N.B. The assigned reading in this course will be moderately to very heavy (50 to 100 pages per week). Please ensure that you have completed all required readings *and* spent time thinking critically about the material PRIOR to class. Naturally, what you get out of this course will depend on what you put into it.

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.

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%

Grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level (see [2007-2008 University of Calgary Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar](#), p. 13).

As stated in the University Calendar, it is 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. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (i.e., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90%; 89.4% will be rounded down to 89%, etc

Distribution of Credit

15%	seminar participation	throughout term; includes "Social Psychology and You" presentation
25%	seminar presentation(s)	throughout term
20%	thought papers	due throughout term
40%	research grant proposal	due December 11, 2007 no later than 4:30 pm

Seminar Participation The primary emphasis here will be on the quality of contributions, not quantity. 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. Recurring evidence that you have not done the assigned reading will necessarily be reflected negatively in your grade for the seminar participation portion of the course. At this level, thoughtful (but fair) criticism of ideas and research and proposals for new ideas and research are particularly valuable.

Seminar Presentation Each class member will lead at least one seminar session (perhaps more depending 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.

Seminar leaders may select the empirical reports they assign from among the journal articles cited in the assigned reading or from closely related papers published since 2002. Papers thus selected must be chosen from the following journals:

- The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP)
- Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin (PSPB)
- Journal of Experimental Social Psychology (JESP)

The instructor must approve all selected articles prior to circulation to the class.

Seminar leaders will make a copy of each journal article available for copying at least one week prior to their seminar. Where possible, they may choose instead to provide the full citations on Blackboard so that students can access the articles online. **Remember: All students will be required to read the selected articles.**

Seminar leaders will design a set of **3 to 5 questions** to facilitate discussion based on the assigned reading and selected journal articles and draft a 1-2 pp. (max.) **integrative summary** synthesizing the material in the articles and assigned readings (due in class no later than 1 week prior to the session). Leaders should use the first part of the seminar to present an overview of the assigned reading and a critical discussion of the material covered. They should follow with an extended presentation of the related journal articles, including a critical analysis that addresses issues such as:

- What contribution does the research make?
- Weaknesses in the logic, design or execution of the study(ies)
- Limitations of the research (particularly at the conceptual level)
- Possible extensions or new directions to take the research, including possible studies

Evaluation of seminar presentations will be out of 20 and based heavily on the extent to which the presentation goes beyond a simple oral report of what is in the reading material. Effort invested in integrating the readings and developing a sophisticated critical analysis will be most likely to yield a top grade.

Social Psychology and You presentation. Each student will make a brief 10 –15 minute presentation during the second seminar (September 18) 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 then discussing implications of R & N, particularly new insights on your topic gleaned from their book.

Thought Papers. Starting the week after the second 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. Individual thought papers will be graded on an Outstanding (2 points), Satisfactory (1 point), Fail (0 points) basis. The goal is to create a weekly opportunity for you to demonstrate your abilities to:

- integrate and synthesize ideas,
- think critically,
- apply material from the readings to analysis of the journal article presented in class OR to real life issues/other relevant research, and
- identify conceptual extensions of the material in the readings.

Things that should NOT appear in thought papers include:

- citations or references
- summaries of the readings
- personal anecdotes

NOTE: I will push you (hard!) to *go beyond simply applying the material to the work you are doing/considering doing for your thesis research.*

HINT: Think “insight.” This is your chance to demonstrate your ability to draw conceptual links between the journal articles, the assigned reading, and class discussion. Use these thought papers as vehicles to showcase your ability to be “perceptive” and “insightful” and to demonstrate your sophistication of thought and critical/analytical abilities.

Normally, thought papers will be due at the beginning of the class one week after the topic has been covered (i.e., the first thought paper will be due at the beginning of class on September 25).

Grant Proposal

Submit a 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 anticipated thesis research.* Assume you are applying for a 3-year grant (i.e., propose either a longitudinal study or a set of inter-related studies) and design your program of research to yield a *JPSP*-like research report. Use basic SSHRC format (see application materials at www.sshrc.ca) and provide appropriate documentation, excluding budget. Proposals must be no more than 15 pages (double spaced), exclusive of references. **Students must arrange to meet with the instructor to discuss their proposal plans no later than November 6, 2007.** The evaluation criteria will be the same as for grant competitions.

TENTATIVE TOPIC OUTLINE

Please read Ross & Nisbett prior to the first class on September 11.
It is required pre-reading.

Fall 2007 – Lecture Schedule
(September 3 -December 19, 2007)
Tuesdays

DATE	Topic
Sept. 3	Labour Day – University closed
Sept. 10	Lectures begin for Fall Session
Sept. 11	Introduction
Sept. 18	The Person and The Situation; Social Psychology & You
Sept. 25	Individual Differences I (the self)**
Oct. 2	Individual Differences II (gender)
Oct 8	Thanksgiving – University closed
Oct. 9	Interpersonal System I (attachment)
Oct. 16,	Interpersonal System II (interdependence)
Oct. 23	Interpersonal System III (social influence)
Oct 30	Interpersonal System IV (altruism/prosocial behaviour)
Nov. 6	Interpersonal System V (aggression)
Nov. 10-13	Reading days – No classes
Nov. 20	Group/Cultural System I (social identification)
Nov. 27	Group/Cultural System II (social conflict)
Dec. 4	Group/Cultural System III (intergroup relations)
Dec. 11	Grant proposal due by 4:30 pm

** first thought paper due September 25

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, test, etc.) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within fifteen 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 fifteen 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 fifteen 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 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 fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

Important Dates

Fall Session:

The last day to drop this course and **still receive a fee refund** is September 21, 2007. The last day to withdraw from this course is December 7, 2007.