

## **PSY220H1S: Introduction to Social Psychology**

“The person, the environment, and behavior exist in an interlocking relationship characterized by bidirectional causality.” – John F. Kihlstrom (2013)

Why do people do the things they do? This is a question that we all ask ourselves, and it is the question that lies at the heart of psychology. Cognitive psychologists explore this question by focusing on cognitive processes, biological psychologists explore this question by focusing on biological processes, and – lo and behold – social psychologists explore this question by focusing on social processes: How are our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours influenced by *other people*? We cover a range of topics in this class, including how we form impressions of each other, how we are persuaded by others, and where stereotypes and prejudice come from.

A man and his young son in Jaipur, injured in a major road accident, sat on the road next to the bodies of his wife and infant daughter for an hour, desperately in need of assistance, but nobody stopped to help.  
(taken from <http://www.ndtv.com>, April 15 2013)

Sadly, we all know that stories like this happen every day. Why would the individuals driving by this scene not stop to help? Maybe they were cruel, heartless people. Maybe they were good people, but so preoccupied that they didn't notice the scene before them. Maybe they assumed that help was already being offered, or perhaps that help wasn't actually needed in the first place. In all likelihood, the actions of the passersby were influenced by other people – the other people who failed to stop, the behavior of the man needing help, their thoughts about what other people they know might do in this situation, etc. Their behaviour (not stopping) then likely influenced the behaviour of those around them. These are the types of issues we will discuss in this class – how people, situations, and behaviour are all influenced by one another. As we discuss these ideas you will likely notice that it becomes more and more difficult to determine where 'the situation' stops and 'the person' begins. But that's what happens when knowledge expands – you realize that things aren't as simple as they once seemed!

### **Class Meets: Thursdays 6-9pm in SS2117**

Prerequisites: PSY100H1. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you will be removed from the course. No waivers will be granted.

### **Instructor: Professor Ashley Waggoner Denton**

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Office: SS5016D

Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3-4pm or by appointment

Phone: (416) 978-3020

### **Teaching Assistants**

*Email for one-on-one appointments & writing consultations:*

Last names: A – J: Maria Iankilevitch ([maria.iankilevitch@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:maria.iankilevitch@mail.utoronto.ca))

Last names: K – O: Jacklyn Koyama ([j.koyama.28@gmail.com](mailto:j.koyama.28@gmail.com))

Last names: P – Z: Patricia Marshall ([patricia.marshall@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:patricia.marshall@mail.utoronto.ca))

**Course Communication Policies:**

Email should only be used for *private/personal matters*, not for general questions about course content, policies, tests, etc. For these types of questions, please use the Blackboard discussion board. Please make sure you check the syllabus, lecture notes, and announcements on Blackboard before you post your question.

I am very prompt at responding to email, but I will not respond over the weekend. It will also take me longer than normal to respond during very busy times of the semester (such as the final couple of weeks).

**Textbook (required):** *The Social Animal* (11<sup>th</sup> edition, 2012), by Elliot Aronson. E-book is fine. The use of older editions is not recommended. If you choose to use an older edition, you do so at your own risk. The textbook is also available in Course Reserves at Robarts Library (3 hour loan).

**Learning Outcomes\***

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

***Goal 1: Knowledge***

- Describe the major content areas in social psychology (e.g., social cognition) and define key terms associated with each (e.g., hindsight bias, attribution)
- Name some of the most influential social psychologists (both past and present) from each of the major content areas and describe their contributions to the field
- Provide examples of how social psychology has been shaped by the socio-political context
- Propose ways in which psychological findings can be used to make informed judgments that strengthen the community and build public policy
- Describe examples of relevant and practical applications of social psychological principles to everyday life

***Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry & Critical Thinking***

- Identify and navigate psychology databases and other legitimate sources of psychology information
- Describe the characteristics and relative value of different information sources (e.g., primary vs. secondary)
- Read and summarize general ideas and conclusions from psychological sources accurately
- Use the fundamental axioms/basic principles of social psychology to analyze novel situations
- Use psychology concepts to explain personal experiences and recognize the potential for flaws in behavioral explanations based on simplistic, personal theories
- Describe common fallacies in thinking (e.g., confirmation bias, post hoc explanations) that impair accurate conclusions and predictions

***Goal 3: Ethical and Social Responsibility***

- Identify obvious violations of ethical standards in psychological contexts

- Build and enhance interpersonal relationships
- Recognize potential for prejudice and discrimination in oneself and others

*Goal 4: Communication*

- Construct arguments clearly and concisely using evidence-based psychological concepts and theories
- Craft clear and concise written communications to address specific audiences (e.g., lay, peer, professional)
- Write using APA style
- Seek feedback to improve writing quality resulting in multiple drafts
- Provide effective, useful feedback on the writing of your peers

*Goal 5: Professional Development*

- Develop enhanced self-regulation strategies (e.g., reflection, time management)
- Pursue and respond appropriately to feedback from others to improve performance

*\*These outcomes are based on the learning goals set forth in the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, version 2.0 (2013)*

**Assessment**

*Test 1 (20%)* – 90 minute test, held during normal class time (6 pm start), locations will be posted on Blackboard. Will consist of 45 multiple-choice questions. Covers all lecture and textbook material from January 14 – February 11. Practice questions will be provided.

*Test 2 (20%)* – 90 minute test, held during normal class time (6 pm start), locations will be posted on Blackboard. Will consist of 45 multiple-choice questions. Covers all lecture and textbook material from March 3 – March 24. Practice questions will be provided.

*Final Exam (30%)* – Cumulative, three-hour exam to be held during the April exam period. Mix of multiple-choice and written response questions. More details will be provided during the final lecture.

*Observational Study: Research Proposal (10%)* – A proposal of the observational study that you will conduct in order to test a hypothesis about people's behaviour. Will consist of a brief literature review that justifies your study and hypothesis, a description of your proposed study design and procedure, and an explanation of what you expect to find. For more information, please see the instructions and additional resources provided on Blackboard and peerScholar.

*Observational Study: Lab Report (20%)* – An APA-style lab report of your observational study. Must include the following sections: introduction, method, results, discussion, and references. For more information, please see the instructions and additional resources provided on Blackboard and peerScholar.

Note: You **MUST** access peerScholar **via the link on Blackboard**. Do not create a separate account.

### **Schedule**

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Major Topics</i>                              | <i>Class Preparation</i>                                       | <i>Notes/Due</i>   |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| Jan 14      | Introduction to the course and social psychology | Ch. 1 (What is social psychology?)                             |  |
| Jan 21      | Conformity<br>Research Methods & Ethics          | Ch. 2 (Conformity) &<br>Ch. 9 (Social psychology as a science) |  |
| Jan 28      | Persuasion & Social Norms                        | Ch. 3 (Mass communication, propaganda, and persuasion)         |  |
| Feb 4       | Impression Formation                             | Ch. 4 (Social cognition)                                       | Initial research proposal due to peerScholar by 11:55pm on Feb 5       |
| Feb 11      | Heuristics                                       | Ch. 4 (Social cognition)                                       | Peer assessments due by 11:55pm on Feb 12                              |
| Feb 18      | <i>Reading Week (no class)</i>                   | --   | Final research proposal due to peerScholar by 11:55pm on MONDAY Feb 22 |
| Feb 25      | <b>Test 1</b> (90 minutes, 45 MC questions)      | Covers all lecture and textbook material from Jan 14 – Feb 11  |  |
| Mar 3       | Cognitive Dissonance                             | Ch. 5 (Self-justification)                                     |  |
| Mar 10      | Attitudes & the Self                             | Ch. 5 (Self-justification)                                     | (note: drop date is March 13 <sup>th</sup> )                           |
| Mar 17      | Aggression & Violence                            | Ch. 6 (Human aggression)                                       |  |
| Mar 24      | Prejudice  | Ch. 7 (Prejudice)  | Initial lab report due to peerScholar by 11:55pm on Mar 25             |
| Mar 31      | <b>Test 2</b> (90 minutes, 45 MC questions)      | Covers all lecture and textbook material from Mar 3 – Mar 24   | Peer assessments due by 11:55pm on April 1                             |
| April 7     | Liking & Loving                                  | Ch. 8 (Liking, loving, and interpersonal sensitivity)          | Final lab report due to peerScholar by 11:55pm on April 8              |
| TBA         | Final Exam (3 hours)                             | Cumulative   |  |

Note: Classes will consist of a mix of lecture, discussion, and activities. If you are ill-prepared or disengaged, you will not enjoy this class or learn nearly as much, and you will undermine the learning experience of your classmates. If you are looking for a class where you can sit quietly in the back, ignore those around you, and do all the reading the night before a test, *this is not the class for you.*

### **Course Policies**

#### **Missed Test Policy:**

If you miss one term test, your other term test and the final exam will be reweighted to make up the missing chunk of your grade (i.e., the term test will be worth 30% and the exam 40%). If you miss BOTH tests, you must email me by **April 4<sup>th</sup>** to make arrangements to take a make-up test that week. If you miss test 1, you do not need to submit any documentation. If you miss test 2, you **DO** need to submit documentation (e.g., <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>).

Please note that the drop date is March 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Late/Incomplete Assignments:**

Written assignments will be submitted via peerScholar and will go through a 3-part process. (1) Submit initial assignment. (2) Give and receive feedback on your assignment from peers. (3) Submit final version of assignment, along with a short reflection on the changes you've made. Late peer assessments will not be accepted, so if you do not complete your peer assessments on time, you will receive 0 on this portion of your grade. Late final versions of assignments will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Explore It Program** (*optional*)

This year, we are including a new element to the course – the Explore It program. This is a voluntary career exploration program that will allow you to meet with alumni from the Psychology department in their work environment and to see firsthand, how the skills and knowledge gained through this course are translated into a breadth of potential careers. Visits with alumni hosts will last from a half- to a full-day and can include up to eight students. Each experience will differ depending on the alumni host but in all cases, you see an alum's career in action, can grow your network and will have the opportunity to consider your education in a wider context. An Explore It orientation will be scheduled around one of the early classes introducing you to the program and showing you how to participate.

### **Academic Resources**

#### *Accessibility Needs*

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978-8060; <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca>

#### *Writing*

As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>. NOTE: Writing Centres offer ONE-ON-ONE consultations – use the schedule above to book your appointments for the semester now!

### *Academic Integrity and Plagiarism*

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters ([www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm)) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see [www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html](http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html)).

### *Other Resources*

Student Life Programs and Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/>)

Academic Success Services (<http://www.asc.utoronto.ca/>)

Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>)

Health and Wellness Services (<http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/>)

Psychology Students' Association (<http://psa.psych.utoronto.ca/>)

*Syllabus updated: January 8 2015*