

Social Psychology

Northeastern University

Fall 2007

Mon. and Wed. 2:50 - 4:30

Piercarlo Valdesolo

231 Nightingale Hall

617-373-8541

piercarlo.valdesolo@gmail.com (always available)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisites: Intro to Psych

Broadly defined, Social Psychology is the study of the influence of the situation on personal and interpersonal processes. Some of the topics we will be covering this semester include: attraction, aggression, altruism, conformity, prejudice and stereotyping, persuasion, and morality. In discussing these topics, we are going to be focusing on the role of factors external to the self in shaping our preferences, motivations and behavior. Throughout the course I want to emphasize the everyday nature of the topics we are discussing. The most fascinating part of social psychology is its applicability to every aspect of our lives. Given this, a large portion of the class will be devoted to incorporating examples and discussion of social psychology at work in the real world. With this in mind, the primary goal of this course is not to be able to regurgitate definitions of theories and concepts (though at certain points you will have to do this too), but to be able to start to see the world through the lens of a social psychologist – to come to a fuller understanding of human behavior and its underlying determinants, and to be able to apply this knowledge to the most mundane (what kind of music should I have on the stereo when she comes in the room so she knows I'm interested, but it's not totally obvious and creepy) and the most important (what environment is best for my child?) decisions in your lives.

Required Text: Gilovich, Keltner, & Nisbett (2007). *Social Psychology*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc.

The text book should be considered a supplement to the class lectures. I will not test/quiz you on TOPICS that I do not cover in class. However, any additional information that touches on those topics that is covered in the textbook is fair game. So, while coming to the lectures is the most important part of the class, you shouldn't file the text under your bed and wait to re-sell it to the bookstore.

I recommend reading the text chapters after the relevant lectures. This will allow you to focus on the parts of the text covered in class (since not all topics from the text will be covered) as well as give you some background from which you can draw to better understand the chapters.

Course Website: Course materials will be posted on blackboard.neu.edu.

I have also created a **Facebook group** for the class so that you can more easily ask questions, and the answers to your questions can be seen by everyone in class (if one person is confused, 20 others probably are as well). It's called **NEU Social Psych Seminar, Fall '07**. I will also be posting articles and any other interesting and relevant materials I find for online and in-class discussion. If, for any reason, you do not have and do not want a Facebook profile, come see me and we'll figure it out.

CPS System: We will be making use of a wireless data collection tool called a Classroom Performance System. Everyone will have a remote which they will use to answer questions posed during class. Data will be sent to my computer and collected for immediate feedback.

CLASS POLICIES

Quizzes and Exam: There will be 4 quizzes and a final exam. The reason for having more quizzes rather than a midterm is to a) ease the burden of the mid-semester grind and b) allow you greater opportunity to make up for a bad grade on one of them, should you be motivated to do so.

Academic Integrity: Make sure you have it. Don't put me or yourself in the awkward situation of having to deal with this; it's certainly not worth the extra 5 or 6 points you might get. If caught, you will receive a failing grade for the course and be referred to the appropriate University disciplinary committee.

Office Hours: Since it is impossible to find a time that would be convenient for everyone's schedules, I do not like to keep regular office hours. Instead I like to meet by individual appointments. I will do my best to make myself available as much as I can outside of class, but you can also feel free to email me (piercarlo.valdesolo@gmail.com) or IM me if I am online (Storm8015) with any questions or concerns.

Grades

Quizzes = 30 points each (x4)

Exam = 80 points

200 total points

93-100% = A

90-92% = A-

87-89% = B+

83-86% = B

80-82% = B-

77-79% = C+

73-76% = C

70-72% = C-

67-69% = D+

63-66% = D

60-62% = D-

< 60% = F

Extra credit assignments are a possibility and can be discussed on an individual basis.

Even though the class is a large lecture I will expect there to be a good deal of class participation. I don't want to hear myself talk for 3 hours a week and I doubt you do either. At the end of the semester if you are on the border between two grades I will factor in class participation, or "effort" as a kind of tie-breaker. So it will do you some good to make me know you. This can be through contributing to class discussions, talking in individual appointments, or contributing to discussions on the Facebook group.

****24 CLASS PERIODS****

Wed Sep 5: Class Intro, Watch 1st half of Jonestown

Mon Sep 10: Finish Jonestown, Intro to Social

Wed Sep 12: Groups

Mon Sep 17: Attraction

Wed Sep 19: Relationships

Mon Sep 24: The Social Self

Wed Sep 26: Catch-up

Mon Oct 1: Quiz #1

Wed Oct 3: Social Influence

Mon Oct 8: No Class

Wed Oct 10: Attitudes and Persuasion

Mon Oct 15: Attitudes and Behavior

Wed Oct 17: Catch-up

Mon Oct 22: Quiz #2

Wed Oct 24: Causal Attribution

Mon Oct 29: Social Judgment

Wed Oct 31: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Mon Nov 5: Quiz # 3

Wed Nov 7: Emotion

Mon Nov 12: No Class

Wed Nov 14: Emotion

Mon Nov 19: Aggression and Altruism

Wed Nov 21: No Class

Mon Nov 26: Morality, Justice, Cooperation

Wed Nov 28: Morality, Justice, Cooperation / Catch-up

Mon Dec 3: Quiz #4

Wed Dec 5: Review