COURSE SYLLABUS

GENERAL INFORMATION:
Professor: Nicholas Epley
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Phone: 773-834-1266
Office: HC 407

Meeting time and location: Tuesdays, 8:30-11:30, Harper Center, Room 3A

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Intended for Ph.D. students interested in getting an advanced understanding of social psychology. This seminar will focus on foundational topics such as attitude change, emotion, social influence, and social cognition, covering both classic as well as contemporary research. Each week we will try to gain some understanding of how judgment and behavior is influenced by the social context in which people find themselves. Each week we will try to identify new research directions worth pursuing, in the hope that students will develop new research ideas of their own.

COURSE GOALS:
To gain a broader understanding of both current and historical research in social psychology that will enable students to be better researchers in their chosen field of study.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:
Requirement #1: Class Participation (30% of final grade). This is not meant to be a lecture course. I expect you to come to class having read all of the class material for that week and to participate actively in the class discussion. To encourage student participation, two students each week will work as a team to be the discussion leaders for that week. You are likely to serve as a discussion leader at least twice during the quarter. Discussion leaders are expected to provide a quick summary of the week’s readings, help to lead the class discussion, and introduce the class to the “additional readings” for the week. Discussion leaders should meet with me on Monday morning of their designated week to come up with a plan for the week’s discussion.

Requirement #2: Weekly Thought Papers (30% of final grade). In order to stimulate class discussion, you will prepare a short thought paper for each class (no more than 500 words). There are no explicit guidelines for what should be included in a thought paper. They are meant to be opportunities for you to mention interesting ideas or observations. Perhaps bring up a major point not considered by the authors, or a mortal flaw in a set of experiments, or a subtle connection between topic areas, or a new study idea. DO NOT reiterate the points made in the readings, or to summarize the papers’ main arguments. You will post your paper each week on the course Chalk site by Monday at 12:00 PM. I will not grade any papers turned in late.
I encourage you to read other students’ papers each week, as they may comprise a significant component of the discussion and may spark ideas you would not have considered otherwise. I will discuss these papers in greater detail on the first day of class.

Requirement #3: Final term paper (40% of final grade). The main goal of this course is to stimulate your own research. I will therefore ask you to write a research proposal as a final term paper for the course. Your paper is due by noon on June 9th. It should present an empirical study (ideally an experiment or set of experiments) that you were led to think of during the course. I do not want a paper describing research you are already doing, or would have done without taking the class. This paper should be concise, no more than 10 double-spaced pages (although I will accept longer papers if necessary). My hope is that you will describe a project that you are actually interested in pursuing as part of your own research program. To help you in developing your idea, and to let you hear other students’ ideas, you will present your research proposal to the class in Week 10.

Course Structure:
Social psychology covers a wide range of psychological processes, from intrapersonal processes within the mind of a single individual to collective processes between groups of individuals. We will begin in Week 1 by discussing the material and methods most commonly used in social psychology. We will then discuss intrapersonal processes (the self, experience, attitude change), then move to interpersonal processes (social inference and stereotyping), and end by discussing collective processes (interpersonal and intergroup relations, social influence, and collective variation from evolution and culture).

Classroom Etiquette:
1. Arrive on time.
2. Come well prepared.
3. Participate actively in the discussion.
4. Offer thoughtful and constructive comments.
5. Be present. Do not check your email, text, and surf the web in class.
**Course Material:**

All class readings will be posted on the Chalk website. You may print out the papers and bring them to class. The “additional reading” for each week is required reading for the discussion leaders, but is optional for everyone else. Most weeks we will try to cover both classic as well as contemporary material, to give a sense of what we already know about a given topic and where it seems to be heading.

**Week 1 (March 31): Material and Methods**

**First half: What social psychologists study**


**Second Half: How social psychologists study it**


**Additional reading:**


Week 2 (April 7): The Self

**First Half: Self Insight**

**Second Half: Self Concept**

**Additional Reading:**
Week 3 (April 14): Experience

First Half: Emotional primacy in judgment?

Second Half: Experience as information

Additional Readings:
Week 4 (April 21): Attitude Change

First Half: Motivated versus Inferential Attitude Change


Second Half: Dissonance, extended


Additional Reading:


Week 5 (April 28): Social Inference

First Half: Understanding others


Second Half: From self to others


Additional Reading:


Week 6 (May 5): Stereotyping
First Half: Stereotype formation, activation, and application


Second Half: Stereotype Accuracy


Additional reading:


Collective Processes
Week 7 (May 12): Interpersonal and Intergroup Relations
First Half: Interpersonal Relations


Second Half: Intergroup Relations


Additional Reading:


**Week 8 (May 19): Social Influence**

**First Half: Normative and Informational Influence**

**Second Half: Recognizing Influence**

**Additional Reading:**
Week 9 (May 26): Variation—Evolution and Culture

First Half: Evolutionary predictions about mate preference, and its discontents

Second half: Cultural variability

Additional Reading:

Week 10 (June 2): Research Proposal Presentations

Exam Week (June 9): Final Paper Due