Social Psychology

CLPS0700 (formerly PSYC 0210), CRN 15678

Fall 2010, Tue, Thu 2:30-3:50 p.m., Hunter Auditorium
Professor Bertram F. Malle
Hunter 291  |  (401) 683-6820  |  bfmalle@brown.edu
Office hours: Thu 4-5 p.m. & by appointment

Teaching assistants:
Joanna Korman (joanna_korman@brown.edu)
Office hours  Tues 3:50-4:50 & by appointment, Hunter 266
Sandra Mather (sandra_mather@brown.edu)
Mon 10:30-11:30 & by appointment, Hunter 102
Elena Tenenbaum (elena_tenenbaum@brown.edu)
Tue 1-2:30 p.m. & by appointment, Hunter 209

Syllabus

• How do people’s self-perceptions influence social behavior?
• How do people make sense of human behavior?
• What are the roots of stereotypes, prejudice, and aggression?
• How do social situations influence human thinking and behavior?
• What factors govern attraction and relationships?

In this course you will learn about research and theories in social psychology that help answer these questions. More important, you will learn to think carefully about important social phenomena, and thus about yourself and other people.

You will work hard in this course. This is not a threat but a promise. In return for a considerable amount of reading, thinking, and writing, you will gain insight into social psychology as a science, excitement about the complexities of social behavior, and increased self-awareness of the mechanisms that guide your own behavior and experience.

However, this is not a self-help course, nor primarily an applied course. The focus is on the science of social psychology, and both lectures and readings will routinely elaborate on methodological and theoretical challenges. Social behavior is enormously complex, and gaining solid knowledge about how it works requires much more than personal experience, anecdotes, and intuitions—it requires a commitment to the scientific method, to empirical evidence, and to persistent questioning of our ordinary understanding and explanation of social behavior.

Course Format

This course combines multiple activities and sources of learning. You will learn about the field of social psychology in lectures, electronic handouts, the textbook readings, and original
research articles. You will also write multiple short papers. These activities will require constant work from you in order to keep up with the flood of new information, so getting behind will be very costly—both for your success and your enjoyment in the course.

Lectures. I have high expectations of my students—that they are intellectually curious, prepared, and eager to be challenged. I also tend to talk fast. Interrupting me with questions is therefore required and absolutely welcomed. To do so, please make yourself seen and heard.

I use electronic slides that will be available after class on MyCourses. For several reasons I don’t post slides in advance; however, sometimes outlines will be available. I audio record all my lectures and make them available on the MyCourses site as mp3 files.

Readings. The course relies on a textbook (Gilovich, Keltner, & Nisbett, Social Psychology, 2nd ed.) and 1-2 original research articles per class topic (available electronically on MyCourses). The textbook has a very different organization from our course, so you’ll need to follow the detailed topic sequence and reading references in our Reading list rather than read the textbook from front to back.

Most of the articles are taken from prime research journals and will challenge you with both the theory and methodology. Even though I have selected relatively short and readable pieces, authors usually presume considerable theoretical and methodological knowledge. Often you can acquire this knowledge from the lectures and the textbook, but you will benefit from several strategies of reading and background research:

• For empirical articles, first read the Abstract, the beginning of the Discussion, and the Conclusions (if available). Then read the Introduction and the Results. Finally, read the Methodology. The Methodology section is important, but it’s much easier to understand as the tool that helped the authors answer their questions and back up their conclusions.

• There will be technical terms in every article. Check our textbook’s glossary, and Google the terms. Not all internet sites are accurate or helpful; so look for converging information (and credible sites are usually of the .edu variety). Obviously, you can ask me and the TAs as well; but doing your own search first creates a stronger memory trace.

• You can also search (in PsycINFO and Google Scholar) for other articles that cited the target article you are reading. Those articles will probably highlight important aspects of the target article.

• I encourage you to form an informal reading group in which you clarify and discuss the reading material. If you are part of such a reading group, please document it. I don’t give explicit extra credit, but participating in a reading group will benefit you in a tough grading decision (when your points are exactly at a letter cutoff).

• I welcome questions about the articles (or the textbook) toward the end of each lecture (again, please don’t be shy to make yourself seen and heard). Questions such as “What was the article about?” are usually not productive; try to formulate specific questions that show you have tried to read the article and have holes in your understanding that you are hoping to fill (especially about methodology and statistics). You are welcome to visit, alone or in groups, my office hours to ask about the readings or about lecture material.
On your reading list you will see that several topics have Extended readings. You are not obligated to read them, nor will they be tested on the exams (except to the extent that they are covered in the textbook or in lecture). They are opportunities for you to go into depth on topics of particular interest to you.

Written Assignments. In addition to learning, thinking about, and discussing social phenomena, you will also write about them. However, you won’t compose long papers but five concise and precise responses to individual research articles, as described below.

Response Papers

Over the next 3 months you will make many new observations and have many new ideas about social behavior. I want you to develop these ideas and communicate them. Therefore you will write 4 short “response papers” about some of the research articles on your reading list. This way, you continuously monitor and document your thinking and learn to communicate it. The guidelines for these papers are detailed and the expected standard is very high. We will give you thorough feedback on the first few responses to help you improve as you go along.

Format. Each response page must have a cover sheet that shows your Banner ID (no names, please) and an APA-style reference for the article you are responding to. The response must fit on one page and must be between 400 and 600 words long. It has three parts.

(1) The first paragraph summarizes the main point of the article or, if the article has multiple points (e.g., a review), highlights the specific point that you are responding to. Your summary must be clear and concise. Do not assume that the reader of your paper has read the article.

(2) One or two paragraphs develop a constructive point that the article stimulated in you. For example, use the article’s concepts or findings to analyze an everyday situation; to develop a possible application in education, business, clinical, law, etc.; or to propose an additional study. Don’t vaguely point to several ideas; describe one constructive thought in detail.

(3) One or two paragraphs develop a critical point about the article. For example, critique the clarity of the theory, the logic of the main claim; the adequacy of the methods (if the article is empirical); or the strength of the empirical support for the interpretation or conclusion.

All papers must be submitted in electronic format (.doc or .rtf, not pdf files), and we will open submission portals on MyCourses for each paper.

Writing quality. You will need to write clearly and concisely. Every sentence must be grammatically well-formed and easily understandable, and sentences must be logically connected to each other. Begin each paragraph with a one-sentence précis of what you will say in more detail in the paragraph. Whenever you make a claim (e.g., that the article has a certain shortcoming or can be applied to a certain domain), you must back up your claim with evidence in the paper or in other literature, with logic, or with a compelling example. Don’t be vague; be precise; and concise. Re-read and edit your paper multiple times. And don’t forget to spell-check. If you speak English as your second language, make sure you have other students or Student Services edit your papers.
**Paper due dates.** The response papers are due **10/5, 10/26, 11/16,** and **12/7.**

**Late papers.** Your response pages are due on the date marked in the Schedule. Turning in a paper late leads to point deductions. Within 24 hours of the due date, you lose 3 points; beyond that, you lose 2 additional points per day late. There is one exception: You have a 1-day grace period for one of your papers (because perhaps sometimes pets really do eat papers).

If you are an athlete traveling to an official event or if you face a serious difficulty with your health or have a death in the family you must speak to us in advance of the due date to arrange for a new due date. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations for the response paper assignment, please speak with me.

**Challenges (and how to overcome them).** If you have little practice in writing (especially writing short responses), you will find this assignment difficult at first. Read and edit your papers repeatedly. Put yourself in a reader’s perspective and keep asking yourself: Is this clear? Would they know what I mean? And heed our feedback on early papers.

The last of the three parts, the critique, is the most difficult. Keep these guidelines in mind: Never attack the authors; instead, critique the theory, argument, data, or interpretation that the article presents. Do not merely suggest that more data should be collected; say what kind of studies would address your criticism. Do not critique the size of the study sample unless it created real problems for the statistical analysis. Do not critique the composition of the sample unless it seriously undermines the paper’s main conclusion. Do not vaguely refer to possible personality differences; describe how such differences provide an alternative explanation of the findings. Do not simply say: “This finding is not true of me” (every finding in psychology is true of many but not all people); if you think that the finding is not true of most people, describe your evidence or how one could collect such evidence.

**Original work.** You need to think deeply and independently about your response topics. Ideas that are not your own must be acknowledged by source, and all quotes must be referenced. All writing assignments will be checked with anti-plagiarism software.

**Response Grading.** Each response paper earns up to 60 points, and the points breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turned in on time</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within length and page requirement</td>
<td>+3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correct APA-style reference on cover page</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spelling errors</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No grammatical errors</td>
<td>+6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understandable sentences and sentence transitions</td>
<td>+6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarity, relevance, backing of claims, and creativity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>in each of the main three parts:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>+12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constructive extension</td>
<td>+12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critique</td>
<td>+12</td>
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Quizzes and Exams

We will have two brief quizzes (9/23 and 11/4) and two exams (Midterm 10/14 and Final 12/11). All assess your mastery of material in the lectures and required readings; the quizzes contain around 10 questions; the exams contain 40-50 questions.

The exams themselves will not be returned. However, you are welcome to come to office hours to look at and discuss the questions you missed.

We do not write make-up exams, so you will need to take the exams at the scheduled times. Students who face a serious difficulty with their health or a death in the family or athletes traveling to official events must speak to us in advance and arrange remote exam administration. If you speak English as your second language or have a documented disability, please provide the official paperwork and speak with me about accommodations you might need.

Research Participation

In this course you will hear and read about numerous methodologies of psychological research, and there is no better way to get a sense of these methodologies than to participate in research yourself. A requirement in this course is therefore to participate in 120 minutes of empirical research in the psychology department subject pool. Most studies come at 60min or 30min length, so you will take part in two to four of them. (No paid studies count.)

Your participation is tracked electronically through a system called SONA (see separate handout), but for full class credit you need to provide a brief written statement of your study experience, which you submit to your TA by Dec 7. This summary includes (a) a brief description (in your own words) of the kinds of studies you participated in and (b) one aspect of the studies that connects or contrasts with some content in our course.

You may opt out of the requirement and instead write a 2-page response paper. Its criteria are similar to the required one-page responses, but the content is expected to be somewhat more extensive and detailed.

Grading

A perfect grade consists of 1000 points. You can earn points the following way:

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two quizzes</td>
<td>100 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four response papers</td>
<td>60 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research participation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translation of points into grades will be approximately as follows: A > 900, B > 800, C > 700. I always look for fair cut-offs that separate clusters of scores from one another.

I offer no explicit extra credit opportunities. However, if you are exactly at a grade cut-off point, any additional contributions (reading group, active class participation) will be taken into account.
I do not tolerate any form of cheating and have failed students who have cheated in the past (e.g., copied somebody else’s paper, plagiarized paper content).

**Communication**

Because this course is work-intensive from the start, it is important that we communicate effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. Come to class and contribute; see me or a TA in office hours; make sure you check MyCourses and your E-mail several times a week. There are few problems that cannot be solved by open and effective communication.

For administrative questions, please first consult the syllabus. However, there is always a chance that I forgot to add some important piece of information to the syllabus (or the reading list), and then it’s to everybody’s benefit if you ask about it.

Please adhere to posted office hours or make an appointment; please don’t show up unannounced at my office. Appointments can be made by email with 48-hour notice.
Schedule

Thu 9/2  Orientation: Syllabus, Overview
Tue 9/7  1: Science of Social Behavior
Thu 9/9  2: Self-Concept and Self-Schema
Tue 9/14 3: Dissonance and Rationalization
Thu 9/16 4: Self-Enhancement
Tue 9/21 5: Self-esteem and Self-Presentation
Thu 9/23 6: Understanding Other Minds I  1st Quiz
Thu 9/23 6: Understanding Other Minds I  1st Quiz
Tue 9/28 7: Understanding Other Minds II
Thu 9/30 8: Explaining Behavior
Tue 10/5 9: Moral Judgment  1st Paper Due
Thu 10/7 10: (Social) Emotions
Tue 10/12 11: Language and Communication
Thu 10/14 2:30 p.m. MIDTERM EXAM
Tue 10/19 12: Personality Judgments
Thu 10/21 13: Stereotypes
Tue 10/26 14: Stereotypes and Prejudice  2nd Paper Due
Thu 10/28 15: [Film presentation and discussion]
Tue 11/2 16: Intergroup perception and conflict
Thu 11/4 17: Interpersonal Aggression
Tue 11/9 18: Prosocial Behavior  NEW DATE: 2nd Quiz
Thu 11/11 19: Persuasion and Compliance
Tue 11/16 20: Conformity
Thor 11/18 21: Obedience  NEW DATE: 3rd Paper Due
Thu 11/22 22: Group Dynamics  Thanksgiving
Tue 11/30 23: Attraction
Thu 12/2 24: Affiliation and Relationships
Tue 12/7 Review  4th Paper Due
Sat 12/11 2:00 p.m. FINAL EXAM
Social Psychology, CLPS0700, CRN 15678
Fall 2010, Tue, Thu 2:30-3:50 p.m., Hunter Auditorium
Professor Bertram F. Malle
Hunter 291 | (401) 683-6820 | bfmalle@brown.edu
Office hours: Thu 4:00-5:00 p.m. and by appointment

Schedule and Readings

Textbook passages in blue font are from:


Required research articles are in burgundy font. Many of them are good starting points for writing a response paper. Optional readings are in dashed boxes and black font. They are also possible starting points for writing response papers, but many of them are longer and therefore more challenging.

Thu 9/2 Orientation: Syllabus, Overview
TEXTBOOK: pp. xviii-xxii, 5-11(middle)

Tue 9/7 1: Science of Social Behavior
TEXTBOOK: pp. 43-63

Thu 9/9 2: Self-Concept and Self-Schema
TEXTBOOK: pp. 65-88 (top); 553-555 [SELF-AWARENESS]; 30-33

Malle, B. F. (1994). The self in philosophy and psychology. [Overview of the topics in the first few weeks.]

Tue 9/14 3: Dissonance and Rationalization
TEXTBOOK: pp. 206-233


Extended reading: Classics in dissonance research
**Thu 9/16  4: Self-Enhancement**

**TEXTBOOK:** pp. 88-90; 128-130 [THE SELF-SERVING BIAS]


**Extended reading:** Implicit egotism across cultures and life domains


**Body image as exception**


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**Tue 9/21  5: Self-esteem and Self-Presentation**

**TEXTBOOK:** pp. 91-109


**Extended reading:** The debate on the value of self-esteem


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**Thu 9/23  6: Understanding Other Minds I  1st Quiz**

**TEXTBOOK:** pp. 26-28, 247-251


**Extended reading:** Social Neuroscience and Evolution


**Tue 9/28**  7: Understanding Other Minds II


**Extended reading: Intricacies of self-other asymmetries**


**Thu 9/30**  8: Explaining Behavior

**TEXTBOOK: pp. 116-127, 147-148**


**Extended reading: Attribution theory and causal explanation**


**Tue 10/5**  9: Moral Judgment

**TEXTBOOK: pp. 256-258**


**Extended reading: Agency and responsibility in moral judgment**


**Extended reading: Emotion, not reason?**

Thu 10/7  10: Morality and Emotions

**TEXTBOOK:** pp. 235-256


**Extended reading on emotion recognition**

**Extended reading on emotion regulation**

**Extended reading on kinship detection and incest aversion**


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Tue 10/12  11: Language and Communication


**Extended reading on conversation and conversational norms**


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Thu 10/14  MIDTERM EXAM
Tue 10/19  12: Personality Judgments

**TEXTBOOK:** pp. 111-116; 131-140; 151-177


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**Extended reading on personality judgment**


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Thu 10/21  13: Stereotypes

**TEXTBOOK: Chapter 12**, especially pp. 461-476


Implicit Associations Test Demonstration: [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/)

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Tue 10/26  14: Stereotypes and Prejudice  

**2nd Paper Due**

**TEXTBOOK: Chapter 12**, especially pp. 441-449, 476-480; also 596-600 in Chapter 15)


Virginia Valian’s resource site on gender inequity: [http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/gendertutorial/](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/gendertutorial/)

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**Extended reading: Stereotype vulnerability**


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Thu 10/28  Film Session
Tue 11/2   15: Intergroup Perception and Conflict

**TEXTBOOK: CHAPTER 12, especially pp. 449-461**


*Extended reading: Two views on the Robbers Cave experiment*

http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/psychology/social/sherif_robbers_cave_experiment.html/sherif_robbers_cave_experiment


Thu 11/4   16: Interpersonal Aggression

**TEXTBOOK: pp. 485-505**


*Extended reading: Debate on the effects of violent video games*


Tue 11/9   17: Prosocial Behavior

**TEXTBOOK: pp. 505-531**


Thu 11/11   18: Compliance

**TEXTBOOK: pp. 327-351, 304-314**

Extended reading: Applications to Environmental Issues

**Tue 11/16  19: Conformity**

**TEXTBOOK**: pp. 275-293


**Thu 11/18  20: Obedience**

**TEXTBOOK**: pp. 293-304


Extended reading: Social Psychology and Torture


Not suitable for response papers:
How psychology can help explain the Iraqi Prisoner abuse [http://www.apa.org/topics/iraqabuse.html](http://www.apa.org/topics/iraqabuse.html)


Further *Stanford Prison Experiment* resources: [http://www.prisonexp.org/links.htm](http://www.prisonexp.org/links.htm)

**Tue 11/23  21: Group Dynamics**

**TEXTBOOK**: chapter 14


Extended reading:

**Thu 11/26  Thanksgiving**
Tue 11/30  22: Attraction

**TEXTBOOK: CHAPTER 10**


**Extended reading: Physiology and evolution**


Thu 12/2  23: Affiliation and Relationships

**TEXTBOOK: CHAPTER 11**


**Extended reading: Getting into relationships**


Tue 12/7  Review

*4th Paper Due*

*Research Participation Summary Due*

Sat 12/11  2:00 p.m.  FINAL EXAM