Overview

I believe social psychology to be the most important course taught at any university. Social psychology is the scientific study of how our behaviors, thoughts, and emotions are affected by the real or imagined presence of other people. That is a broad definition that encompasses a wide range of phenomena, including: how people form attitudes, how people attempt to persuade and are persuaded by others, how people form close relationships, why people help or harm each other, and how people understand each other and themselves. The theories and ideas we will discuss in this course apply to almost every aspect of our day-to-day lives, and thus, when the course has ended, my hope is that it will be impossible to view the social world in the same way as when the course began.

Texts

Required:


This text is held on reserve at Powell Library. I will refer to it as the GKN text.
Assignments

The material of this course will be presented through assigned reading, lectures, discussion sections, and exams. All are designed to combine for the fullest experience of this course. Here’s some more detail about each of these.

Reading: For most of the lectures, there is required reading from the Gilovich, Keltner, & Nisbett (GKN) text. Do the assigned reading. This is the main way to understand the material of this course. The reading associated with each week of lectures is described in this syllabus, and you will notice that the topics do not follow the organization of the textbook. You are advised to have the readings done before the lectures for that week. You are responsible for all of the material in the textbook, even if it was never discussed in class or sections.

Lectures: Attend these. The purpose of the lectures is to amplify, explain, demonstrate, and expand on the material in the text. Naturally, there will be some overlap between the text and the lectures, but there will be a substantial amount of material that is unique to each. The lectures will assume that you have already done the reading for the week, so your understanding of each lecture will be best if you have done the reading first. Class periods will not all be filled with me talking. There may be the occasional film clip, demonstration, or discussion.

Slides for each lecture will be posted before the lecture at the course web site: https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/11W-PSYCH135-1

All lectures will also be video recorded. Those recordings will be available for downloading a day or two after the lecture, from this web site: www.bruincast.ucla.edu

You are responsible for the material of each class meeting, whether or not you attend.

Discussion Sections: Discussion sections are designed to make the material of this course come alive. They are a chance for you to experience and talk about the issues of this course in a way that is not possible in a large lecture. Unlike lectures, we will be taking attendance in sections, and attendance is mandatory. Sauntering into class late does not guarantee that your attendance will be recorded – the TAs have the right to reduce your discussion grade on the basis of tardiness, so please show up on time. Together, attendance in sections is worth about 13% of your final grade.

Writing Assignment: Shortly after the midterm, there will be a 3-page writing assignment due at the beginning of Week 8. Details about this assignment are provided on the last two pages of this syllabus, but the general idea will be to use the material of the course to analyze a social psychological phenomenon as it occurs in your own life. The writing assignment will be worth 20% of your final grade.

Exams: There will be two of these, a midterm and a final exam. The final exam will not be comprehensive and will be held on the last day of class, not during finals week. Both exams will be multiple choice. Together, these exams will account for 66% of your grade (33% each), so do the best you can on them.
Some people do not like multiple choice exams, and I can understand their feelings. To allow for the fact that it takes some students a bit of time to adjust to my style of exam questions, I will distribute some sample questions prior to each exam to give you a flavor of how I write these things.

What will the exams test? **The emphasis in the exams will be on ideas, theories, and research more than on names, dates, and statistics.** The exams will draw equally from both texts and the lectures, which means I will be asking loads of questions about material that I never discussed in class. You can expect some questions about definitions, research designs, theories, and results, but most of the questions will ask you to apply the materials of this course to some real world situation. These applied questions are crucial to assessing the goals of the course: to get you to view the world outside the classroom differently.

One more thing: I have put a lot of effort into designing the tests used in this course, and if I want to use them again then I cannot allow you to keep them. The teaching assistants keep all of the exams and answer sheets. If you want to see your exam after the grades are posted (and I strongly encourage you to do so), then you will want to visit your teaching assistant during office hours or make an appointment.

**About missing exams:** No make-up exams will be allowed without documentation of illness, death in the family, or other suitably traumatic event. If you must miss an exam for one of these reasons, documentation is required at least 24-hours before the day of the exam. If for some reason you cannot provide documentation before the exam, then you must contact the instructor within 24-hours after the exam. If you miss the exam and fail to contact the instructor within this time period, you will not be allowed to take a make-up exam under any circumstances. A warning: if for some reason you do end up taking a make-up exam, the instructor reserves the right to create a new exam for you, and that exam may be in the form of an essay test. My advice? Do not miss an exam.

**About showing up late for an exam:** Do not be late for an exam. If you arrive after someone else has already finished the test and left the room, you will not be allowed to take the exam.

**Extra Credit**

You have the opportunity to earn 2 extra credit points by participating in an experiment through the Psychology Department Subject Pool. Serving as a subject in an experiment provides students with direct exposure to psychological research. By participating in experiments, you will have the opportunity to contribute to on-going research at UCLA while getting an inside glimpse of how research studies are conducted.

One credit is given for every hour of experiment participation. If you complete 2 hour(s) of experiment(s), you will have 2 points added to your final grade at the end of the quarter.

The posting and scheduling of experiments is handled via the Psychology Department Subject Pool system at [http://ucla.sona-systems.com/](http://ucla.sona-systems.com/). More information on how to use the system can be found at [http://www.psych.ucla.edu/undergraduate/subject-pool-experiment-participation](http://www.psych.ucla.edu/undergraduate/subject-pool-experiment-participation).

**NOTE:** Before signing up for experiments, you MUST select the course for which you
want your experiment credits to count. **All experiments must be completed by March 15, 2012 (Thursday of 10th Week).**

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**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

In this class, academic dishonesty means: (1) cheating on exams, and (2) plagiarism in your written assignments.

**Cheating on Exams**

It is your responsibility to know the behaviors that constitute cheating, but cheating on exams comes in two forms: (1) Communicating with others, either verbally or nonverbally, as a way of sharing information during an exam; (2) Bringing in some sort of aid, such as notes, to assist you during the taking of an exam. To help facilitate honest test taking, I will require that all cell phones be shut off and put away, all tables cleared, and all hats to be removed, during all exams.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the presentation of the ideas, opinions, or the writings of others as though it were your own. Plagiarism is stealing. It is dishonest, unethical, and illegal.

Plagiarism can occur in a number of ways, some more obvious than others. For example, if you simply copy someone else’s written assignment and present it as your own, that is a clear-cut case of plagiarism. Also, if you use the exact language of someone else without placing the words in quotation marks and naming the original author, you are clearly committing plagiarism. You are also committing plagiarism, however, if you take someone else’s arrangement of material or pattern of thought and present it as your own, even if you express it in your own words.

The above examples of plagiarism should not make you think that you cannot use the ideas of other people. Indeed, the communication of ideas from one person to another is one of the principle ways that science progresses. However, there are correct and incorrect ways of using the ideas of other people. The above examples are incorrect ways.

To use the ideas of someone else correctly, you must be sure to give credit to the originator of the idea. For example, if you take a quotation word-for-word from another source, you must use quotation marks and name the author or authors of the original source. Even if you are paraphrasing an idea from another source, rather than using an exact word-for-word quote, you must still give credit to the original author or authors from whom you are paraphrasing the idea.

As long as you give proper credit to the ideas of others, however, you can use and build upon those ideas in your own work and writing. **If you are unsure if what you are doing might be plagiarism, please ask your TA well in advance of turning in your assignment.** Plagiarism is not difficult to detect, and we have at our disposal sophisticated software tools for detecting plagiarism.

**Consequences of Academic Dishonesty**

Any evidence of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the procedures of the Office of Student Affairs and the UCLA polices on academic integrity. To the extent that the instructor has some flexibility on how to respond, this instructor will respond very, very harshly.
Grades

Your grade will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Type</th>
<th>Questions/Number</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>50 questions</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment</td>
<td>3 pages</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section attendance</td>
<td>5 sections</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>50 questions</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Final letter grades for the course will be determined according to the following cutoffs.

- A = 140 or above
- A- = 135-139
- B+ = 130-134
- B = 125-129
- B- = 120-124
- C+ = 115-119
- C = 110-114
- C- = 105-109
- D+ = 100-104
- D = 95-99
- D- = 90-94
- F = 89 or below

These cutoffs are real. Although a 119 is only one point below a 120, it is still a C+ and not a B-. There is no curve. This means that everyone can potentially get As and Bs, and if this happened no one would be more pleased than me.

Health and Emergencies

In the interests of promoting good health for everyone in the class, please stay away from lecture or office hours if you are feeling sick. If there should be an emergency that affects whether or not the class will meet, check the course web site for updates.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do you usually communicate with students outside of class?

Course related emails may be sent to the entire class occasionally over the course of the quarter, so it is necessary that all students have an active email account registered with the university.

What is the best way to contact the TAs or the professor?

Personal contact is usually best, especially immediately before or after lecture. Office hours are posted, and you should feel welcome to come and talk with any of us during these times. If these times do not work for you, let us know and we will try to work out a time to meet.
Can we correspond with you by email?

Yes, email is fine when personal contact or an office visit is not possible. Please do not ask questions via email that require a long and detailed response (e.g., “Can you explain…” or “What did I miss?”). If you do send an email, be sure it comes directly from you, and please indicate the course number in the subject line of the email.

Can I call you on the telephone?

No, email is better, because then we both have a record of what was discussed.

Can I get a PTE number if the class is full?

Core courses are over-enrolled to compensate for the typical drop rate. For this reason, PTE numbers will not be issued for this course. Students with concerns should be directed to the Psychology Advising Office. Neither the professor nor the TAs are in charge of distributing PTE numbers. All that said, the course has never ever been full, and I have never once turned an interested student away.

Can I switch sections?

Not easily. In general, you must attend the discussion section in which you are enrolled. If you cannot attend your scheduled section, you must find an alternate open discussion section or another student with whom you can switch. Switching can be done in the Advising Office and MUST be done by the end of the second week of the quarter.

I have a disability. Can I make special arrangements to take this class?

The professor is committed to working with the Office for Students with Disabilities to respond to provide equal access to this class for all students. Special services must be approved by the OSD coordinator and can be accessed by completing the appropriate service request form. Service guideline information is available at the OSD web site: http://www.osd.ucla.edu.

Will there be review sessions before the exams?

Yes, and they will typically be held after lecture at the class meeting before the exam.

Will you distribute a study guide for the exams?

Yes, and it will typically be distributed the week before each exam or at the review session.

Will slides for each lecture be available on line?

Yes. The professor will make every effort to post the slides on the course web site prior to each lecture.
Can I arrange a make-up exam if I have a lot of other exams on the same day?

No. If you are concerned about having too many exams on the same day, you should consider dropping this class.

Will you be offering Honors Sections?

Not this quarter.

May I use a foreign language dictionary on the exams?

Yes, but only under four conditions: (a) only books are allowed, not electronic dictionaries, and the books may not have any papers or writing in them of any kind; (b) you may only use a dictionary in which English words are translated into the same words in your native language. You are not allowed to use a dictionary that gives a definition of the word, either in English or your native language; (c) you must show the professor or the TA your dictionary before the exam; (d) you must sit in the front row during the exam.

What happens if my paper is late?

No extensions on the paper deadline will be given. If you fail to hand a paper in by the deadline you will receive a zero.

Who grades the papers?

The papers are graded by teaching assistants, under the professor’s supervision, using a highly structured grading scheme that corresponds closely to the assignment sheet itself.

Can the TA give me feedback on my paper before I hand it in?

The TA is available to help answer any questions you have about how to complete the written assignment. However, this does not extend to reading over the actual text you have written as this would give some students an unfair advantage on this assignment.

What happens to uncollected papers and exam materials?

Uncollected papers and all exam materials are shredded one month after the final exam. This means that any questions you have about your grades must be raised within one month after the final exam.
## Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1:</td>
<td>January 11</td>
<td>Why Social Psychology?</td>
<td>GKN Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 13</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>GKN Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No discussion sections.*

| Week 2: | January 18 | The Law of Social Impact  | GKN Chapter 8     |
|         | January 20 | Social Influence          |                   |

*No discussion sections due to Monday’s holiday.*

| Week 3: | January 25 | Group Behavior            | GKN Chapter 14    |
|         | January 28 | No lecture!               | GKN Chapter 3     |

*Discussion section #1: Social Influence*

| Week 4: | February 1 | Attribution Theory        | GKN Chapter 4     |
|         | February 3 | Cognition & Well-being    | GKN Chapter 5     |

*Discussion section #2: The effects of pre-existing knowledge*

| Week 5: | February 8 | Attitudes                 | GKN Chapter 6     |
|         | February 10| **MIDTERM**               |                   |

*No discussion sections, but there will be a review after Wednesday’s class.*

| Week 6: | February 15| Prejudice                 | GKN Chapter 12    |
|         | February 17| Persuasion                | GKN Chapter 9     |

*Discussion section #3: Jane Elliot*
## Syllabus (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 7:</td>
<td>February 22</td>
<td>Central and peripheral processing</td>
<td>GKN Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>Attraction and Intimacy</td>
<td>GKN Chapters 10, 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No discussion sections due to Monday’s holiday.*

| Week 8:   | February 29  | Helping                      | GKN Chapter 13      |
|          | March 2      | Aggression                   |                     |

*Discussion section #4: Attraction*

*(WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, 10:00am)*

| Week 9:   | March 7      | Violence and the Media       |                     |
|          | March 9      | Social Psychology and the Law| GKN Chapter 15      |

*Discussion section #5: Helping and Hurting*

| Week 10:  | March 14     | Conflict                     |                     |
|          | March 16     | FINAL EXAM                   |                     |

*No discussions sections, but there will be a review after Wednesday’s class.*
Psychology 135: Introduction to Social Psychology
Winter, 2012

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Topic

We talk a lot in this course about how people gather information and draw conclusions about the social world. For this brief writing assignment, I would like you to think about how the specific cognitive processes, heuristics, and biases that we discuss in the course have affected your own thinking. Please identify from your own experience a time when you made a significant error in a social judgment. This could be drawing a mistaken conclusion about someone, believing something you later realized was false, behaving in a way that you later realized was misguided, or anything else. IMPORTANT: Be sure that the error was the result of some facet of social cognition/motivated reasoning/information processing (rather than, for example, simply having incorrect information). In other words, the error should have been the result of the natural motivational and cognitive processes we talk about in class. The goal of this paper is to use your understanding of social cognitive processes to explain why this error occurred.

Organization

Your paper must have the following sections, clearly labeled.

Section 1: Describe your error in judgment. What happened, and how did you discover your error? (5 points)

Section 2: Explain three specific cognitive mechanisms that contributed to this error. Be concrete, use terms from the course, define them, and use specific examples to illustrate how these processes and biases affected you. For example, if you wanted to talk about the availability heuristic, you would need to define it and then show exactly how it was operating in your experience and how it contributed to your judgment error. (15 points)

Section 3: What does this experience tell you about how the world works? Do you see examples of other people making the same error? Discuss how these same mechanisms operate more generally in the world, and how these errors might be avoided. (5 points)

Format

The last five points are simply for following the format correctly. Papers must be typed and double-spaced and no more than three pages long. Use 12 point Times New Roman font (i.e., this font). No title page, just print your name and the section day and time in the top right corner of the first page. (You can title the paper, if you wish). Please allow one-inch margins at the top, bottom, and sides of each page so the graders can write comments if necessary.
About reference lists: we do not need one for this paper. We will assume that you have been reading the textbook, and that it informs your thinking for this paper. That is the whole point, so don’t worry about citations and bibliographies. Just explain an experience and show how much you know.

Due Date

All papers must be printed out and submitted through TurnItIn by 10:00 AM on Monday of Week 8 of the course. No late papers will be accepted. Seriously, the web site will not let you submit a late paper, so do not even think about it. That web site is cold, man.

How to Submit through Turn-It-In:

Step 1. Log onto MyUCLA and scroll down to your Study List for the current term

Step 2. Click on the “TurnItIn” link for the class. This link will take you directly to your class portfolio page on the TurnItIn.com website

Step 3. Click on the “submit” icon for the assignment you wish to turn in and the “submit” window will open for that specific assignment

Step 4. You can upload your file as a Word document.

Step 5. Click Submit. After you click submit, a new window will open displaying your digital receipt. Your digital receipt is the confirmation that your submission has been successfully completed.

Tips on Writing

Writing brief essays is challenging, and you should approach the paper with this in mind. Try to write as efficiently as possible. You want to be clear, but at the same time don't waste space by using unnecessary words to make a point or by talking about something that isn't really relevant to your argument. Doing so will prevent you from making important arguments or describing something more fully in another section of the paper, and thereby hurting your grade. One way to approach these papers is to write a draft and then revise it repeatedly, editing it until it is concisely and clearly written. If you are uncertain about what you have written, have a friend read your writing first. Then have your friend tell you what your paper is about. If your friend does not understand your paper, you have some revising to do.

One purpose of the paper assignment is for your TA to see how well you understand material from lecture and readings and how well you can apply that material. Therefore, the information from class and from the book represents the "building blocks" that you should use in constructing your paper. In other words, BUILD YOUR PAPER AROUND COURSE MATERIAL! Use as much information as possible from lectures and readings to support your ideas in the papers. Use the paper to demonstrate that you have understood the lectures, read the text, and can effectively apply the material to a problem.