

## Department of Arts, Education and Commerce

### Course Outline

#### **Sociology 2410 A2 - SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

M-W-F 11:00 - 11:50 a.m. Room B 202

- Instructor: D. C. (Don) Harper  
 Office H 130 (Early Childhood Development Suite)  
 Phone: 539-2895 Off Campus (day) 532-5771  
 Office Hours: M-W-F 10:30 - 11:00, 12:00-12:30 p.m.
- Prerequisite: An introductory course in psychology or sociology.
- Required Text: Baron, Robert A., Donn Byrne, and Gillian Watson. (1995).  
Exploring Social Psychology: Canadian Edition. Scarborough,  
 Allyn & Bacon.

#### Nature and Purpose of the Course

This course will provide an introduction to the field of Social Psychology. The subject matter of Social Psychology is everyday life. We all make use of social psychological knowledge daily. Everyone has some expertise in the field -- without ever studying it formally. The purpose of this course is to expose you to some of the major theoretical frameworks and concepts that have been developed over years of scientific study of human behaviour. Some of the research findings will confirm what we already *know* as *common sense*. But sometimes the insights will shed new light on old experiences, and provide a basis for better understanding of your own behaviour and that of others. Because the subject matter -- human behaviour -- is so complex, the search is not so much for *truth* as it is for *utility*. That is, we will look at, and evaluate, competing explanations for the same behaviour not to determine which is *right*, but to determine how *useful* each explanation is in given situations in terms of predicting and controlling behaviour.

The human animal is complex, and social psychology tries to take its many dimensions into account: physical (physiological), mental (cognitive), and emotional (affective). Virtually all human behaviour has antecedents in all three realms. Can people ever be truly objective in assessing their own behaviour or that of others? Where do beliefs, values and attitudes come from? What contributes to their stability? What brings about changes in them? How is behaviour influenced by "society"? Why do most people conform most of the time? Why do some fail (or choose not) to conform? How is human behaviour (individually and collectively) changing the very world in which we live? What are the consequences of these changes? As the course progresses we will try to find useful answers to these, and other questions.

### Course Objectives

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the major theoretical frameworks current in Social Psychology.

Students will be able to apply the major concepts and terminology of Social Psychology to historical and current events, and their own lives.

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the major research findings of Social Psychology.

Students will be able to evaluate, compare, and synthesize research findings and relate them to their own experience and understanding of the social world.

Students will demonstrate the ability to write and speak cogently about the social influences on, and the causes and consequences of human behaviour.

### Course Evaluation

The purpose of all evaluative activities is to enhance the learning process. Thus the goal of each activity will be to ensure that the student knows more as a result of doing it rather than having it be a static measurement of "what you know" at a given point in time. All questions and assignments will be designed to make you think about, and apply, the information you have gained through reading, class presentations, and discussions.

The goal of the course is to have every student achieve a grade with which he/she is satisfied. To this end, individuals who are unsatisfied with the grade received on any assignment may do additional work which will be evaluated to improve their grade. If a student has a particular aversion to any evaluative activity, he/she is encouraged to see me and negotiate an alternative activity.

The following activities will be scheduled:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weight</u>
September 30	Mini-paper (500 words)	10
October 11	In-class quiz	5
October 23	Mid-Term Exam	15
November 13	In-class quiz	5
November 29	Major paper (2000-2500 words)	30
Throughout	In-class presentation (1 each)	5
December (TBA)	Final Exam	<u>30</u>
	Total	100

Mini-paper: You may choose any topic you wish from the field of Social Psychology. If you are comfortable doing so, you are encouraged to apply information and insights gained from the course to a personal experience, or an event with which you are familiar. The expectation is that you will use two or three references (the text may be one of them).

In-class Quizzes and Examinations: There will be some "objective" questions (short answer--true/false, multiple choice, concept identification). There will be greater emphasis on written responses. You will be briefed on the topics for the written questions in advance of the examinations.

Major Term Paper: You are encouraged, but not required, to discuss your paper topic with me prior to getting started on it. I will gladly give feedback and suggestions in response to outlines, or even rough drafts, if you wish.

In-class Presentations: As the course progresses, you will be given the opportunity to select a topic from an area that is to be discussed in class. You will be expected to prepare a 10 - 15 minute presentation, and field questions for 5 - 10 minutes following your presentation.

### Course Schedule

September 6	Introductions
September 9-12-13	Human Nature, and the Nature of Human/Social Behaviour (Class discussion)
September 16-18-20	Some applications of Social Psychology (Chapter 10 - pp. 351-385; <i>Applied Social Psychology: Health, Environment and Legal Applications</i> )
September 23-25-27	Culture and Self-concept (Chapter 4 - pp. 108-143; <i>Identity and Culture: The Self in a Multicultural Context</i> )
September 30 October 2-4	Perception and Cognition: Schemas and Heuristics (Chapter 2 -pp. 36-75; <i>Social Perception and Social Cognition: Internalizing our Social World</i> )
October 7-9	Attitudes (Chapter 3 - pp. 76-107; <i>Attitudes: Evaluation the Social World</i> )
October 11	In-class quiz

October 14	Holiday: Thanksgiving Day
October 16-18-21	Prejudice and Discrimination (Chapter 5 - pp. 144-183; <i>Prejudice and Discrimination: Understanding Their Nature, Countering Their Effects</i> )
October 23	MIDTERM EXAMINATION
October 25-28-30 Dissolution	Interpersonal Relationships: Attraction, Intimacy,  (Chapter 6 - pp. 184-233; <i>Relationships: From Attraction to Loneliness</i> )
November 4-6-8	Conformity, Compliance, & Obedience: Influencing Others (Chapter 7 - pp. 235-265; <i>Social Influence: Changing Others' Behaviour</i> )
November 11	Holiday - Remembrance Day
November 13	In-class quiz
November 15-18-20	Groups: Formation, Dynamics, and Leadership (Chapter 9 - pp. 312-349; <i>Groups and Individuals: The Consequences of Belonging</i> )
November 22-25-27	"Human Nature:" Aggression vs. Altruism (Chapter 8 - pp. 266-311; <i>Helping and Harming: Prosocial Behaviour and Aggression</i> )
November 29 December 2-4	Reviewing the Field of Social Psychology (Chapters 1 & 10 - pp. 1-35 & 350-385; <i>The Field of Social Psychology: How We Think about and Interact with Others and Applied Social Psychology</i> )
December 9-17 (TBA)	FINAL EXAMINATION