

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE  
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

Course Outline

OCT 22 1990

**SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 2410 - SO2410 A2**  
**PSYCHOLOGY 379 - AU**  
M-W-F 11:00 - 11:50 a.m. Room B202

Instructor - D. C. (Don) Harper      Office - C306      Phone - 539-<sup>569</sup>2977  
Off campus phone:      Day - 532-5771;      Home - 532-4338  
Office hours: 10:20 - 10:50 a.m. M-W-F, or by appointment.

Prerequisite - An introductory course in psychology or sociology.

Required Text - Baron, Robert A., Don Byrne, and Gillian Watson. (1998).  
Exploring Social Psychology: Second 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. Everyone makes use of social psychological knowledge on a daily basis. Everyone has some expertise in the field – without ever studying it formally. This course will expose you to some of the major theoretical frameworks and concepts that have been developed over years of scientific study of human behaviour. Some 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*. We will look at, and evaluate, competing explanations for the same behavior 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), emotional (affective) and social (interactive). Most human behaviour has antecedents in all four realms. 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 and with what consequences? As the course progresses, we will try to find useful answers to these, and other questions.

### Course Objectives

To develop the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the major theoretical frameworks current in Social Psychology.

To acquire the ability to apply the major theoretical frameworks and concepts of Social Psychology to historical and current events, and your own life.

To demonstrate an understanding of the major research findings of Social Psychology.

To develop the ability to evaluate, compare, and synthesize research findings and relate them to your own experience and understanding of the social world.

To develop the ability to write and speak cogently about the social influences on, and causes and consequences of, human behaviour.

### Course Evaluation

The purpose of all evaluation 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 each student achieve a grade with which he/she is satisfied. If you are concerned about any assignment, either before it is given or after it has been marked, you are encouraged to see me to work out a resolution.

The following activities will be scheduled:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weight</u>
September 28	Mini-paper (500 words)	10
October 16	Mid-Term Examination	15
November 27	Major paper (2,000 - 2,500 words)	25
Scheduled throughout	In-class presentation	10
Throughout	Class participation	10
December (TBA)	Final Examination	<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, one of which may be the text.

Mid-Term Examination: The Mid-Term Examination will include "objective" questions (e.g. matching questions, multiple choice, true-false), short answer questions (e.g. concept comparisons, application), and an essay question (analysis and synthesis).

Major Paper: You will be responsible for selecting your own topic -- anything within the field of Social Psychology. You are encouraged, but not required, to discuss your topic with me prior to getting started on it. I will gladly give you feedback and suggestions in response to rough outlines, or even early drafts of your paper.

Class Presentations: It has been said that "The best way to learn, is to teach." Before the end of September, I will circulate a list of dates, with topics drawn from the Course Schedule (below). Each student will be required to select a topic, and prepare a 15 minute presentation to the class (up to 20 minutes including discussion). Presentations should briefly highlight the topic as covered in the text, and must incorporate information from at least two additional sources. One of those sources can be personal experience.

Class Participation: Participation will be evaluated on the basis of your demonstration in class that assigned readings have been done, and that the material presented by both instructor and student-colleagues has been mastered. Comments, elaborations, questions, challenges and examples are a good indication that the material has been read and thought about.

Final Examination: The Final Examination will take the same format as the Mid-Term (above) -- just more of it! It will cover the entire course, with a slightly greater emphasis on the material covered after the Mid-Term.

### Course Schedule

September 2	Introductions; Course Overview
September 4-7	Human Nature, and the Nature of Human/Social Behaviour (Class discussion)
September 9-11	Some Applications of Social Psychology (Chapter 10 - pp. 360-396; <i>Applied Social Psychology: Health, Environment and Legal Applications</i> )

September 14-16	No classes. Skim through the text and identify your areas of interest for your Mini Paper, and your Class Presentation.
September 18	Applications (Chapter 10) continued.
September 21-23	Culture and Self-concept (Chapter 4 - pp. 114-149; <i>Social Identity: The Self, Gender, and Culture</i> )
September 25	No class. Complete work on your Mini Paper.
September 28	Culture and Self-concept (Chapter 4) continued.
September 30 October 2-5	Perception and Cognition: Schemas and Heuristics (Chapter 2 - pp. 36-79; <i>Social Perception and Social Cognition: Internalizing our Social World</i> )
October 7-9-14 Note: Oct. 12 is Thanksgiving - no class	Attitude Development and Change (Chapter 3 - pp. 80-113; <i>Attitudes: Evaluating the Social World</i> )
October 16	MID TERM EXAMINATION
October 19-21-23	Prejudice and Discrimination: (Chapter 5 - pp. 150-189; <i>Prejudice and Discrimination: Understanding Their Nature, Countering Their Effects</i> )
October 26-28	Interpersonal Relationships: Attraction, Intimacy and Dissolution (Chapter 6 - pp. 190-239; <i>Relationships: From Attraction to Loneliness</i> )
October 30	No class. Finalize selection of topic for Major Paper.
November 2	Interpersonal Relationships (Chapter 6) continued
November 4-6-9	Conformity, Compliance and Obedience: Influencing Others (Chapter 7 - pp. 240-273; <i>Social Influence: Changing Others' Behaviour</i> )
November 11	Remembrance Day. No class
November 13-16-18	Groups: Formation, Dynamics, and Leadership (Chapter 9 - pp. 320-359; <i>Groups and Individuals: The Consequences of Belonging</i> )

- November 20-23-25 "Human Nature;" Aggression or Altruism?  
(Chapter 8 - pp. 266-311; *Helping and Harming: Prosocial Behaviour and Aggression*)
- November 27-30 The Field of Social Psychology  
December 2 (Chapter 1 - pp. 1-35; *The Field of Social Psychology: How We Think About and Interact With Others*)
- December 4 Course Review
- December 8-17 (TBA) FINAL EXAMINATION