DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE:

This course provides an introduction to social psychology, an interdisciplinary field which systematically examines how the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other people influences a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The focus of the course is on how groups – ranging from friendship circles to ethnic groups – affect the life of an individual and how the individual affects the group. Thus, the course examines the reciprocal relationship between individual-level and group-level phenomena. The course has three parts:

I. Symbolic Interactionism, the Self, and Identity

What do we mean by saying that the “self” is a social process? How does the self develop and change over time? We will focus on a classic Sociological approach, symbolic interactionism, to examine how identities emerge and affect social interaction, and how context influences social dynamics. In addition, we will review the ways researchers attempt to accurately answer these questions.

II. Cognition, Perception, and Affect

What information do we use to form impressions of one another? How do we process that information and what kind of common errors do we make? How do we try to explain other people’s behavior? How do we experience and express emotions in various situations? How do cognitions affect our behavior towards others?

III. Group Processes

How do relationships develop? How does inequality in the larger society manifest in face-to-face interaction? How do cultural assumptions about gender, race, ethnicity, age, class, and sexual orientation affect interactions within groups? How does power operate in relationships? When do people sense unfairness and how do they respond?

The main objective of this course is to introduce you to the social psychological perspective on the individual and interaction and enable you to critically apply these perspectives. You will be asked to apply these concepts to the reading as well as to your own experiences. You will also be asked to attempt to test one or more of these concepts through empirical research. To meet these
objectives, I expect you to read all assigned materials prior to class, participate in class discussions, and, on your own, actively look for applications to the material outside of the classroom. Also, to facilitate this application, we will have in-class exercises on a regular basis that apply the material to everyday life.

REQUIRED TEXT:


ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS:

There are also additional required readings, which will be on the LIBRARY’s ELECTRONIC RESERVE site. These will also be available as PDF files on our BLACKBOARD site.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All assigned readings should be completed before class to ensure active participation in class discussions and activities. Class attendance will be used to improve on close grades. Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester.

Your grade will be based on three in-class exams and a research paper. Each exam will be worth 25% of your grade. The paper also will be worth 25% of your grade.

The three exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions and will cover materials presented in readings, lectures, discussions, and films. Exams are not cumulative, but material presented in later sections of the course may draw on previous sections of the course.

A 6-8 page research paper will provide you with the opportunity to examine a social psychological phenomenon that you have experienced or observed. More specifically, you will complete a mini empirical study of an issue that interests you. You will create a theoretical argument based on materials from the class and at least two additional published empirical studies, derive a hypothesis, formulate a means of testing this hypothesis, collect data, and analyze the data to determine if your hypothesis is supported or not supported.

A handout providing more details on the paper will be provided later in the course. You will submit this assignment in several parts. First, you will submit a proposal for your project due on March 3. I must approve this proposal before you can begin your research. In addition to this proposal, you must also create a consent document for participants in your study which must also be approved. While these documents are not graded, a failure to obtain approval will result in a penalty on the final paper grade.

(Do NOT send me your paper by email). For each day it is late, it will be marked down one letter grade (e.g., from A to A- after first day late).
OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

The use of cell phones and/or pagers is not permitted in this class. Please turn OFF your phones and pagers before entering the classroom.

Make-Up Policy:

Makeup exams will only be allowed in a situation of an excused absence (e.g., illness, family emergency). A mutually convenient time will be arranged for you to make up the exam. Please notify me prior to the exam (leave a message with the department if necessary, 727-7510) if you are affected by these circumstances. If you have a legitimate and unavoidable scheduling conflict for an exam, present this conflict to me at least one week prior to the exam to discuss the possibility of making other arrangements. Please note that make-up exams may be in a different format than the regular exam.

Accommodating Disabilities:

If you have or acquire any sort of condition that may require accommodation(s), please inform me as soon as possible so that we may make the appropriate arrangements. Proper documentation from the Office of Disabilities Services will be required. They can be reached at 404-727-1065 or via the web at: http://www.emory.edu/EEO/ODS/

Academic Conduct:

All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the policies of Emory College with respect to conduct and academic honesty. Anyone engaging in acts that violate these policies, such as plagiarism or cheating will be referred to the Honors Council. For more information see: http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html

Course Outline

While we will attempt to adhere to the following schedule, it is subject to change throughout the course of the semester.

January 13

   Introduction to the Course

I. Symbolic Interactionism: Focusing on Self, Identity, and Contexts

A. Symbolic Interactionist Approach

January 18

   -Aronson, pp. 1-11


**A1. Self, Identity, and Contexts**


**Methods**

February 3, 8  -  Aronson, pp. 329-347

February 10  -  Review and wrap-up of Section I

February 15  -  **Exam 1**

**II: Cognition, Perception, and Emotions**

A. Social Cognition–Impression Formation and Attribution Processes

February 17  -  Aronson, pp. 117-135

February 22  -  Aronson, pp. 135-147 and 166-179

B. Attitudes and Self-Justification Processes

February 24  -  Aronson, pp. 160-166

February 29  -  Aronson, pp. 181-236
C. Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination

March 1
-Aronson, pp. 301-337

D. Reducing Stereotyping, Prejudice and Discrimination

March 3
-Aronson, pp. 338-355
-paper proposals due

March 8, 10
Spring Break

E. Emotions in Interaction

March 15

March 17


March 22
Exam 2

III. Group Processes

A. Interpersonal Attraction and Justice in Relationships

A1. Interpersonal Attraction

March 24
-Aronson, pp. 357-387

A2. Justice Processes in Relationships

March 29

B. Group Conformity

March 31
-Aronson, pp. 13-47
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Authors</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>C. Power and Dependence</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
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<td>Social Exchange Approach (no readings)</td>
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<td>April 21</td>
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<td>Reducing Status Inequality (no readings)</td>
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<td>- Papers due at beginning of class</td>
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<td>April 28</td>
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<td>Final Exam (8:30-11:00 am) Thursday</td>
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