

Social Psychology

PSYC 308A, Section 004

(2014-2015 Academic Year, Term 2)

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 – 12:30

Where: Irving K. Barber Learning Centre 182

Course Website: <http://www2.psych.ubc.ca/~schaller/psyc308.htm>

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Office hours: Thursdays 9:30-10:30, and by appointment

Required Textbook:

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., Fehr, B., & Akert, R. M. (2013). *Social Psychology* (5th Canadian Edition). Toronto: Pearson.

The textbook should be available for purchase in the UBC Bookstore.

If you buy a new textbook, it comes with access to an optional online resource called MyPsychLab. You can also separately buy access to MyPsychLab. It is optional, and I won't be testing you on any material that appears only on MyPsychLab. But some students do find it helpful as a study aid. Anyway, to access it, you need to enter a special course ID. The course ID is: schaller84914.

Course Objectives and Overview:

Social psychology is the subfield of psychology that investigates the many ways in which our thoughts and actions are influenced by the real or implied presence of others. (Research in social psychology covers a wide range of topics, including such things as self-concept, impression formation, stereotypes and prejudices, attitudes and attitude change, interpersonal attraction, altruism, aggression, and group decision-making.) This course is designed to provide you with a good overview of important theories and research findings within social psychology. In providing you with this overview, I want you to not only know the various facts and findings, but also to know about (and think critically about) the subtle psychological processes that produce these findings. I hope you will leave this course really knowing how the human mind works in social situations.

This is a big class, and I will present a lot of material in a lecture format. But please don't let that keep you from thinking: I'll try as best as I can to keep you alert and mentally active in class. Feel free to ask questions and/or make cogent comments during class.

The material that appears in the readings and the material that I present in class are designed to be complementary. There will be some overlap, of course. But there is lots of material in the readings that we won't have time to talk about in class; and I will present lots of material in class that doesn't appear in the readings. If you want to do well in

this class, be sure to keep up with the readings, and be sure to come to class.

Exams:

There will be three exams – two Midterm Exams and a Final Exam. Your performance on each Midterm Exam counts 25% each toward your overall course grade. Your performance on the Final Exam counts 50% toward your overall course grade.

Midterm Exams: Midterm Exam 1 will be on Thursday, February 5. Midterm Exam 2 will be on Thursday, March 12. Both Midterm Exams will consist primarily of multiple-choice questions, and will also include several short answer questions.

Final Exam: The Final Exam will be sometime in April, on a date to be announced later. The Final Exam will consist primarily of multiple-choice questions, and will also include several short answer questions and/or an essay question. In addition to covering new course material (material presented since the previous Midterm Exam), the Final Exam will be cumulative too, testing you on material presented throughout the entire course.

Exams won't be handed back to you. Students at UBC have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the university.

Students who miss an exam will receive a mark of “0” for that exam. You will not be allowed to take a make-up an exam unless you have written documentation from a health professional.

Scaling of Grades:

Grades will be scaled in order to maintain equity among sections and to conform to University, Faculty, or Department grading norms. In accordance with the policy of the Psychology Department, the expectation is that the grades in this course (as in all 300-level courses) will be normally distributed around an average grade of approximately 68 (i.e., right around a C+ or B-).

Let me explain what this is all about. The primary function of grades is to inform you (and other people) as to your performance *relative* to other students taking the course. In order for grades to serve this function, it's important that average performance is reflected in an average grade, that better-than-average-but-not-great performance is reflected in a better-than-average-but-not-great grade, and so forth. The Faculty of Arts has guidelines for appropriate distributions of grades in courses at all levels. This is something we really pay attention to in the Psychology Department – especially in courses like PSYC 308 for which there are multiple sections taught by multiple instructors.

Let me make this point in a slightly different way. Don't be fooled by the fact that UBC records numerical grades on a 100-point scale. These numerical grades *aren't* really percentages. They are simply a numerical translation of letter grades. Again: The purpose of your final course grade is to reflect your performance in this course *relative* to the other students taking the course. If your performance is right in the middle of the overall grade distribution, then you'll get an average grade (a C+ or B-). If most students in class perform better than you, you'll get a low grade (in the low C's, or D's or – if you're way at the bottom of the grade distribution – an F). If you perform better than average, then you'll get a better-than-average grade (e.g., a B perhaps). And if you perform way better than average (e.g., if your performance is among the top 15% of students in the entire class) then you may get an A.

So, please remember that, for this course, the average final grade will be around a C+ or B-, and that grades will be normally distributed around that mean. I will scale the grades to ensure that the distribution of final grades in this class meets these guidelines.

Special Accommodations:

UBC accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with UBC's office of [Access and Diversity](#). If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this class, please make sure you have contacted the Access and Diversity office to arrange for accommodations. Please let me know of these accommodations as soon as possible.

UBC also accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, assignments, or examinations. Please let me know as soon as possible – and well in advance of any assignment or examination – if you will require any accommodation on these grounds.

The university does not have any formal policy on accommodating students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments. So, please do not assume that you will get special accommodations for these sorts of absences. It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the course requirements as scheduled. If you do plan to be absent during any time an examination is scheduled, please discuss this with me as soon as possible.

Class conduct:

Please show respect for everyone else in class. Show up on time and please don't leave early, because comings and goings during class are disruptive. Make sure cellphones and other distracting electronic stuff are turned off before you come to class. And please don't chatter when I'm lecturing or if someone else is talking. I do want you to actively participate in the class – to ask questions and make comments – but please do so in respectful way.

Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are very serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. The Department has implemented software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams by analyzing the patterns of students' responses. The Department also subscribes to *TurnItIn* – a service designed to detect and deter plagiarism. All materials that students submit for grading will be scanned and compared to over 4.5 billion pages of content located on the Internet or in TurnItIn's own proprietary databases. The results of these comparisons are compiled into customized "Originality Reports" containing several, sensitive measures of plagiarism; instructors receive copies of these reports for every student in their class. In all cases of suspected academic misconduct, the parties involved will be pursued to the fullest extent dictated by the guidelines of the University. Strong evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question. According to the University Act (section 61), the President of UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, or a notation added to a student's transcript.

All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original work done independently by individuals. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult your instructor. For details on University policies and procedures pertaining to student conduct and academic dishonesty, please see [the UBC Calendar](#).

Other Stuff:

This syllabus is our roadmap for the course, but it is possible that some revisions (in scheduling, in policy, etc.) may have to be made as we work our way through the material. Any announcements made in class "count" just as much as policies outlined in this written syllabus.

Further information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates and credits can be found in the [University Calendar](#). If you run into trouble and need information about studying, preparing for exams, note-taking or time-management, free workshops and advice are available from the Student Resources Center.

Calendar of Events: Topics and Assigned Readings

Here is a list of the general topics that we will be covering each week, along with a list of the readings that you should have completed by the time we cover these topics.

Week 1 (January 6 and 8): Introductory Material

- Tuesday January 6: Aronson et al., Chapter 1
- Thursday January 8: Aronson et al., Chapter 2

Week 2 (January 13 and 15): Social Cognition

- Tuesday January 13: Aronson et al., Chapter 3
- Thursday January 15: Aronson et al., Chapter 3

Week 3 (January 20 and 22): Person Perception

- Tuesday January 20: Aronson et al., Chapter 4
- Thursday January 22: Aronson et al., Chapter 4

Week 4 (January 27 and 29): Self-Concept

- Tuesday January 27: Aronson et al., Chapter 5
- Thursday January 29: Aronson et al., Chapter 5

Week 5 (February 3 and 5): Midterm Exam 1

- Tuesday February 3: [No Lecture]
- Thursday February 5: Midterm Exam 1

Week 6 (February 10 and 12): Attitudes and Attitude Change

- Tuesday February 10: Aronson et al., Chapter 6
- Thursday February 12: Aronson et al., Chapter 6

Week 7 (February 24 and 26): Attitude Change and Social Influence

- Tuesday February 24: Aronson et al., Chapter 6
- Thursday February 26: Aronson et al., Chapter 7

Week 8 (March 3 and 5): Social Influence and Group Processes

- Tuesday March 3: Aronson et al., Chapter 7
- Thursday March 5: Aronson et al., Chapter 8

Week 9 (March 10 and 12): Social Dilemmas / Midterm Exam 2

- Tuesday March 10: Aronson et al., SPA 1 (pp. 416-430)
- Thursday March 12: Midterm Exam 2 (Covers material since Midterm 1)

Week 10 (March 17 and 19): Interpersonal Attraction

- Tuesday March 17: Aronson et al., Chapter 9
- Thursday March 19: Aronson et al., Chapter 9

Week 11 (March 24 and 26): Altruism

- Tuesday March 24: Aronson et al., Chapter 10
- Thursday March 26: Aronson et al., Chapter 10

Week 12 (March 31 and April 2): Aggression; Stereotypes and Prejudices

- Tuesday March 31: Aronson et al., Chapter 11
- Thursday April 2: Aronson et al., Chapter 12

Week 13 (April 7 and April 9): Stereotypes and Prejudices, Wrap-up

- Tuesday April 7: Aronson et al., Chapter 12

- Thursday April 9: [Wrap up]

Final Exam: Time and place to be announced