

# **Social Psychology**

## **PSYC 308A, Section 003**

**(2016-2017 Academic Year, Term 2)**

**When: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 – 3:20**  
**Where: Buchanan A102**

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

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**Office hours:** [to be announced soon]

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### **Course Objectives and Overview:**

Social psychology is the subfield of psychology that investigates the many ways in which our thoughts and behaviors are influenced by the real or implied presence of others, and how this affects our interpersonal interactions. (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 behavior.) This course is designed to provide an overview of important theories and research findings within social psychology, and also to reveal some of the implications that this research has for important real-life outcomes.

Ideally, by the end of this course, you will not only know about important social psychological facts and findings, you will also know about (and be equipped to think critically about) the subtle psychological processes that produce these effects. I hope you will leave this course with a deeper and more nuanced appreciation for how the human mind works in social situations, and why it matters.

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, or from participating actively in class. I'll try as best as I can to keep you alert and mentally active in class. And please do 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.

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### **Readings:**

There is no textbook for you to buy. (You don't have to buy anything!)

Instead, I have assembled a set of readings that correspond to the topics that we will be covering. A few of those readings are from a free on-line "textbook" (the Noba project). Most of the readings are articles published in actual scholarly journals (and most of those articles are from the journal *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, which publishes short and not-too-painful-to-read review articles on psychological research topics).

All the readings can be accessed via the reading list that you'll find at the end of this syllabus, and also on a separate list on the [course website](#). Each reading that is listed contains a link that will take you directly to the reading itself (in the form of a downloadable pdf file or, in a few cases, a link to the appropriate place on the Noba project website).

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### **Course Website:**

I won't be posting course materials on Connect. Instead, I'll be making a variety of course-relevant materials available on a separate course website that I have created: <http://www2.psych.ubc.ca/~schaller/psyc308.htm>.

On that website, you will find the electronic version of this syllabus (which may be updated as needed) as well as a variety of additional materials that you may find helpful – including detailed outlines of my lectures (including key pieces of information presented in lectures) and a list of "things that matter most" in the readings and lecture materials (which is designed to help you distinguish between high-priority information and less essential information in the readings and lectures).

I will be posting exam grades on the course website. Those postings will be password-protected, and to access them you will need to enter a User ID and Password that I will provide in class.

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### **Assessments of Learning (Exams):**

There will be three exams – two Midterm Exams and a Final Exam. Your performance on each Midterm Exam counts 30% each toward your overall course

grade. Your performance on the Final Exam counts 40% toward your overall course grade.

*Midterm Exams:* Midterm Exam 1 will be on Tuesday, January 31. Midterm Exam 2 will be on Tuesday, March 7. 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 also include a cumulative component, 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.

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### **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. 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). Consequently, grades will be scaled to accurately reflect your performance relative to other students taking this course.

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 essentially numerical translations 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.

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### **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.

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### **Classroom Norms and Classroom Conduct:**

I intend to start class promptly. So please show up on time – and be ready to be fully engaged – because late arrivals are disruptive and distracting to other students (and I'd rather that you didn't miss anything). I also intend to finish promptly, so that you can get to your next class in time (if indeed you do have a class that immediately follows this one).

And, more generally, please show respect for everyone else in class. Be considerate and avoid engaging in distracting behavior. Make sure cellphones are turned off before you come to class. Please refrain from engaging in non-class-related electronic activities during class. Please don't chatter with each other when I'm lecturing or if someone else is asking a question or commenting. I definitely do want you to actively participate in the class – to ask questions and make comments – but please do so in respectful way.

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## **Academic misconduct:**

Academic misconduct, such as cheating or plagiarism, is a serious offense, and may be subject to punishment by the university. Evidence of academic misconduct may result in a "0" grade for any exam or assignment in question, and may prompt more severe punishment as the University deems appropriate. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please ask first. (Ask me; I'm happy to give you my thoughts.) For details on University policies and procedures pertaining to student conduct and academic dishonesty, please see [the UBC Academic Calendar](#).

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## **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 [UBC Academic Calendar](#). If you run into trouble and need information about studying, preparing for exams, note-taking or time-management, a variety of helpful services and sources of advice are available through [UBC Student Services](#).

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## **Calendar of Events:**

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. (Each reading listed contains a link that should take you directly to the reading itself.)

**Tuesday, January 3:** *The fundamental theme of social psychology*

**Thursday, January 5:** *Overview of the course and primer on social psychological research methods*

- [Fiske, S. T., Harris, L. T., & Cuddy, A. J. \(2004\). Why ordinary people torture enemy prisoners. \*Science\*, 306, 1482-1483.](#)

- [Jhangiani, R. \(2016\). Research methods in social psychology. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener \(Eds.\), \*Noba textbook series: Psychology\*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers.](#)

**Tuesday, January 10:** *The mind is a miser (heuristics and biases)*

- [Gilbert, D. \(2011\). Buried by bad decisions. \*Nature\*, 474, 275-277.](#)

- [Bazerman, M. H. \(2016\). Judgment and decision making. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener \(Eds.\), \*Noba textbook series: Psychology\*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers.](#)

**Thursday, January 12:** *The mind is a time traveler (expectancy effects and counterfactual thinking)*

- [Rosenthal, R. \(2003\) Covert communication in laboratories, classrooms, and the truly real world. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 12, 151-154.](#)  
- [Spellman, B. A., & Mandel, D. R. \(1999\). When possibility informs reality: Counterfactual thinking as a cue to causality. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 8, 120-123.](#)

**Tuesday, January 17:** *Who am I? (It depends on the context)*

- [Bosson, J. K., & Vandello, J. A. \(2011\). Precarious manhood and its links to action and aggression. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 20, 82-86.](#)

**Thursday, January 19:** *Feelings about the self: Causes and consequences*

- [Leary, M. R. \(1999\). Making sense of self-esteem. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 8, 32- 35.](#)  
- [DeWall, C. N., & Bushman, B. J. \(2011\). Social acceptance and rejection: The sweet and the bitter. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 20, 256-260.](#)

**Tuesday, January 24:** *Causal attribution and implications for social inferences*

- [Krull, D. S., & Erickson, D. J. \(1995\). Inferential hopscotch: How people draw social inferences from behavior. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 5, 35-38.](#)

**Thursday, January 26:** *Misattribution of arousal and its implications*

- ["Capilano Suspension Bridge is a perfect love laboratory." \*Georgia Straight\*. 9 February, 2011.](#)

**Tuesday, January 31: MIDTERM EXAM 1**

**Thursday, February 2:** *Appearances matter*

- [Zebrowitz, L. A., & Montepare, J. M. \(2005\). Appearance does matter. \*Science\*, 308, 1565-1566.](#)  
- [Van Vugt, M., & Grabo, A. E. \(2015\). The many faces of leadership: An evolutionary-psychology approach. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 24, 484-489.](#)

**Tuesday, February 7:** *Cognitive bases of stereotypes and prejudices*

- [Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. \(1999\). Reducing prejudice: Combating intergroup biases. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 8, 101-105.](#)

**Thursday, February 9:** *Stereotype(s) and prejudice(s), plural*

- [Neuberg, S. L., & Schaller, M. \(2016\). An evolutionary threat-management approach to prejudices. \*Current Opinion in Psychology\*, 7, 1-5.](#)

**Tuesday, February 14:** *Consequences of stereotypes for people who are stereotyped*

- [Schmader, T. \(2010\). Stereotype threat deconstructed. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 19, 14-18.](#)

**Thursday, February 16:** *Subtle causes and consequences of attitudes*

- [Nosek, B. A. \(2007\). Implicit / explicit relations. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 16, 65-69.](#)

- [Dunning, D., & Balcetis, E. \(2013\). Wishful seeing: How preferences shape visual perception. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 22, 33-37.](#)

**Tuesday, February 28:** *We are of two minds (automatic & controlled routes to persuasion)*

- [Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. \(2002\). The science and practice of persuasion. \*Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly\*, 43, 40-50.](#)

- [Strahan, E. J., White, K., Fong, G. T., Fabrigar, L. R., Zanna, M. P., & Cameron, R. \(2002\). Enhancing the effectiveness of tobacco package warning labels: A social psychological perspective. \*Tobacco Control\*, 11, 183-190.](#)

**Thursday, March 2:** *We persuade ourselves (cognitive dissonance and its implications)*

- [Harmon-Jones, E., Harmon-Jones, C. & Levy, N. \(2015\). An action-based model of cognitive dissonance processes. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 24, 184-189.](#)

**Tuesday, March 7: MIDTERM EXAM 2**

**Thursday, March 9:** *The power of social norms*

- [Cialdini, R. B. \(2003\). Crafting normative messages to protect the environment. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 12, 105-109.](#)

**Tuesday, March 14:** *Obedience to authority*

- [Burger, J. M. \(2016\). Conformity and obedience. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener \(Eds.\), \*Noba textbook series: Psychology\*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers.](#)

**Thursday, March 16:** *Aggression in context*

- [Anderson, C. A. \(2001\). Heat and violence. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 10, 33-38.](#)

**Tuesday, March 21:** *Helping behavior and pluralistic ignorance*

- [Greitemeyer, T. \(2011\). Effects of prosocial media on social behavior: When and why does media exposure affect helping and aggression? \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 20, 251-255.](#)

**Thursday, March 23:** *Reflexive altruism and strategic "altruism"*

- [Zaki, J., & Mitchell, J. P. \(2013\). Intuitive prosociality. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 22, 466-470.](#)

- [Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., & Norton, M. I. \(2014\). Prosocial spending and happiness: Using money to benefit others pays off. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 23, 41-47.](#)

**Tuesday, March 28:** *Why are attractive people attractive?*

- [Franklin, R. G., & Zebrowitz, L. \(2016\). Attraction and beauty. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener \(Eds.\), \*Noba textbook series: Psychology\*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers.](#)

**Thursday, March 30:** *Sex differences in mating relationships*

- [Bjorklund, D. F., & Shackelford, T. K. \(1999\). Differences in parental investment contribute to important differences between men and women. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 8, 86-89.](#)

**Tuesday, April 4:** *Social dilemmas*

- [Van Vugt, M. \(2009\). Averting the tragedy of the commons: Using social psychological science to protect the environment. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 18, 169-173.](#)

**Thursday, April 6:** *Applying social psychology wisely to make things better*

- [Walton, G. M. \(2014\). The new science of wise psychological interventions. \*Current Directions in Psychological Science\*, 23, 73-82.](#)

**FINAL EXAM:** Time and place to be announced