

SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY 2C03: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour
McMaster University
Winter Term 2009

Please note: This syllabus is subject to change if circumstances warrant. Because this is a night class that meets once per week, a snow day could throw us off substantially, thus forcing me to change Midterm dates.

Course time: M 7-10pm
Course location: CNH 104

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Professor:

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Teaching Assistants:

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Course Description: This course is designed to introduce you to research and theory in social psychology. We will pay special attention to how research is carried out in this very experimental field, and how research informs (and forms) theories of human social behavior. We will also think about how social psychology can apply to everyday life.

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Textbook (required): Myers, D. & Spencer, S. (2006). *Social Psychology*, 3rd Canadian Ed. I cannot vouch for previous editions' suitability as substitutes.

I have created a *custom edition* of this textbook for you, available in the McMaster bookstore. This version cuts all materials that will not be used in 2C03, is soft-cover, is printed in black and white, and therefore saves you *big* bucks. If you prefer a full version of the textbook, then this may be available used in bookstore, or can be bought on-line.

Website: This course has a Blackboard website. You are responsible for all information posted on the website. You are expected to check the website regularly for announcements, changes to our schedule, discussion board postings, and other valuable information.

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How To Do Well in this Course: Read the syllabus very carefully! Read the website carefully as well: follow the discussions, read the announcements, and read the "Important Information" section. Check the website *several times per week*.

Know the missed tests policy. This is available on our website under "Important Information"; partial information is available in this syllabus, but the website version is more comprehensive. Do exactly as this policy asks if you miss a test, or you may be in for a nasty surprise.

You cannot do well in this course if you do not attend lectures. Although the textbook does support the lecture material, lectures often go far beyond the textbook. Therefore, if you miss lectures, you will miss important

information.

You also cannot do well in this course if you do not supplement lectures with independent learning from the textbook. I do not cover all of the materials in the textbook; there is no time for that in a one-term course. Therefore, I expect you to spend some of your study-time identifying important concepts from the text, and learning them. Independent learning is a very important skill. You will be expected to do this in your upper level courses, and – more importantly – in what academics like to call the “real world”.

Slides are posted *after* their contents have been lectured on. I post the slides after lectures for several reasons. The most important of these is that no one in the real world is going to give you slides! In order to do well in the real world, you will have to know how to cope with large amounts of incoming information. If you have trouble taking effective notes, then please visit CSD, or see me or one of your TA’s for advice.

Please note that my slides contain only basic information – bullet points, figures, and data. You cannot recreate lectures, and therefore cannot succeed in this course, by depending on them instead of attending lecture.

Finally: Think carefully about the information I’m presenting you in lecture. Two things are usually happening: (1) I’m telling the story of some theory or idea, and (2) I’m discussing the research that helped develop that story. As you study, think about *why* I’ve told you what I’ve told you. E.g., how does the research I’ve told you about change or add to or otherwise develop the theory that inspired it? If you’re having trouble figuring out the answer to this question, then please come see me, and we’ll work on it together.

Participation: In-class and discussion board participation are strongly encouraged. Remember, if you have a question, your colleagues probably have one, too, and will appreciate it if you speak up. Don’t be shy about asking questions!

Assessment: Your final mark will be based on the following.

- (1) Midterm 1 = 30%
- (2) Midterm 2 = 30%
- (3) Final Exam = 40%

The midterms will be non-cumulative (*exception*: research methods), and will cover lecture material *and* assigned readings, *even* readings not discussed in class. The final exam will be cumulative, and will be held during the examination period. All tests will be comprised of some combination of multiple choice and written answers. Please see the schedule, below, for assessment dates.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to alter the evaluation scheme if circumstances warrant it (e.g., TA loss).

Missed Assessments: You are strongly encouraged never to miss a test. If something comes up that will interfere with your ability to write a test, then you must immediately contact me – before the test, if at all possible, not after the fact. If you do not contact me in a timely manner, your grade in the course will suffer.

If you miss a test, then you must provide a doctor’s certificate (or equivalent for non-medical situations) to your Dean’s office, or you will receive a grade of zero (0) on that test. If you miss a make-up (given during class, in a room TBA on our website, a week to the day after the original midterm date), then you must also provide a doctor’s certificate for the date of the makeup, or you will receive a zero (0) on that test.

See the link on WebCT, under “Important Information”, for more information on missed assessments.

Final Grade Calculations: Your final grade will be converted to a letter grade, according to the following scheme:

<u>Percentage (Grade)</u>	<u>Percentage (Grade)</u>	<u>Percentage (Grade)</u>	<u>Percentage (Grade)</u>
90-100 (A+)	77-79 (B+)	67-69 (C+)	57-59 (D+)
85-89 (A)	73-76 (B)	63-66 (C)	53-56 (D)
80-84 (A-)	70-72 (B-)	60-62 (C-)	50-52 (D-)
			0-49 (F)

Academic Integrity: You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g., a grade of zero (0) on an assignment, loss of course credit with a notation on the transcript (“grade F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

This course is divided into three (3) sections. Below is a list of topics (with associated readings listed in [blue](#)) that I expect to cover in each of these sections. Note that not all of the topics covered in your textbook will be covered in lecture. Read and learn these anyway.

At the end of each section, you will write an exam. You will also write a quiz on research methods after we have finished discussing research methods. Here are the pertinent dates:

Midterm 1: 2 Feb

Midterm 2: 16 Mar

Final Exam: To be scheduled by the Registrar

A note on the readings: I will *not* be deleting any of the readings listed below. Plan carefully so that you do not find yourself “cramming” the readings at the last minute. Please do not email me asking whether I plan to delete any of your readings! This is rather high up on my “top ten most annoying emails” list. I will not respond to emails that ask questions answered by the syllabus.

Please note as well that extra readings *may* be assigned as we go. These will be announced in class and on WebCT; links to extra readings will be posted on WebCT; it is your responsibility to keep track of extra materials.

Section 1: 5 Jan to 2 Feb

Research Methods

[Read Ch 1](#)

Social Influence (conformity, bystander intervention, obedience to authority, brutality)

[Read Ch 6 and pages 116-118 \(on Role Playing, relevant to Brutality\) and pages 271-275 \(on Minority Influence\)](#)

Persuasion

[Read Ch 7 and pages 120-123 \(on Foot-in-the-Door\)](#)

Section 2: 9 Feb to 16 Mar

Prejudice

[Read Ch 12](#)

Aggression

[Read Ch 10](#)

Altruism *aka* Prosocial Behaviour

[Read Ch 9](#)

Section 3: 23 Mar to 6 Apr

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Self Esteem

[Read Ch 2](#)

Attribution Theory

[Read Ch 3](#)

Group Behaviour

[Read Ch 8](#)

The Attitude-Behaviour Connection: Dissonance Theory

[Read Ch 4](#)

Sex

[Read Ch 11](#)