SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY 3CD3: INTERGROUP RELATIONS
Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour
McMaster University
Winter Term 2011

Course time: M7-10pm
Course location: ITB 137

Professor:
Dr. J. M. Ostovich
Email: jmostovich@mcmaster.ca
Phone: Please do not call me; Instead, please consider an email, a visit during office hours, or a posting on Avenue (if not a personal matter).
Office: PC-415A
Office hour: T 2-3:30; monitor announcements section of website for cancellations, changes, and extra hours.

Teaching Assistants:
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Please note: This syllabus – including scheduling, topic order, topics themselves, and assessment strategy – is subject to change if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss, “snow days”).

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Course Description: The purpose of this course is to use social psychology research and theory to help us better understand intergroup relations. We will focus on stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, the three major components of poor intergroup relations.

Readings (required):
Intergroup Relations readings book (packaged with the Jones textbook at the bookstore)

E-mail Policy: E-mail must originate from your designated McMaster e-mail account. Should we need to communicate with you about individual matters, the e-mail will be sent to your mcmaster.ca account. You should monitor this account regularly. E-mail sent from third-party providers (e.g., hotmail, cogeco) will be ignored. We have this policy for three reasons: (1) to reduce the amount of incoming spam to our accounts; (2) to ensure that we know with whom we are communicating; and (3) to teach the professional use of e-mail.
Remember: E-mails to your professors are professional communications. They should include correct spelling and punctuation, should have an informative subject line, and should be brief.

Website Policy: This course has an Avenue to Learn website. You are expected to check this website with regularity for announcements, updates, discussion board postings, and other valuable information. It is your responsibility to keep up with the information provided on this site.

Use of the website’s discussion boards is strongly encouraged, and, in the case of non-private inquiries (e.g., questions about course content and the running of this course, but not emails reporting illness or other private matters) is preferred to email communication. I have hundreds of students each term and cannot possibly answer all emails. Questions asked on the discussion board allow other students with the same questions the chance to see the answer (and therefore not have to ask the question themselves). Discussion board questions also provide a learning experience for students who wish to answer these questions themselves.

Please see the top of each discussion board for directions on how to use the board. Posts that ignore these directions will be deleted. The professor reserves the right to ban students from the course website if they use the board inappropriately (e.g., posting inappropriate comments). This will involve lost access to slides and other important course information.

Finally, students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Policy re. the Recording of Lectures: No student is permitted to record lectures, unless they have CSD documentation that they require this service due to disability (e.g., dyslexia). Those with permission to record lectures may not share their recording with others. Any infraction of this policy will be severely dealt with.

Why? You will have difficulties in your post-graduate, real-world job if you are not able to listen effectively to, and take note of, the right things. Note-taking gives you practice in this very important skill.

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 your performance on two midterms and a final exam. The midterms will be worth 30% each, and the final exam will be worth 40%.

The midterms will be non-cumulative (exception: running themes in the course, such as knowing what stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination are), 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.

The midterms and final will be comprised of written answers only. Assessment dates are listed below (page 5).

NB: The instructor reserves the right to alter the evaluation scheme if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss).
**Test-Taking Policy:** Tests will be run like final examinations. You can bring only writing instruments, an eraser (or similar), and essentials like kleenex and bottled water to your desk. All other materials, especially electronics, must stay in your bag, at the front or side of the room in which you write your test.

Moreover, you must bring your student ID to all tests. Once seated, you must put your student card on your desk; your ID will be compared with a our most recent class list; anyone not on the class list will have their ID card confiscated, and will be asked to leave the room immediately.

**Missed Tests:** Recently, McMaster has adopted a self-report tool, the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF), for reporting absences of 5 days or less. If your absence is longer than 5 days, then you must submit a doctor’s certificate to your faculty’s Office of the Associate Dean. Please make yourself aware of the ins and outs of reporting absences by going to [http://www.mcmaster.ca/health/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/health/) and [http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/).

It is your responsibility to submit all excuses for missed tests within one week of the original test date. It is also your responsibility to speak with your professor as soon as possible. Senate regulations for petitions for special consideration have always required that: "40. The student shall make a prompt and timely request for special consideration." No requests for special consideration will be accepted after one month.

If you miss the midterm, then a make-up test will be provided during class time about one week (usually to the day) after the original test. Watch the news section of our Avenue website for details.

*If you miss this make-up test,* then you must once again report your absence to the university, as described above; otherwise, you will receive a mark of zero (0) on the missed work. If you can provide an acceptable excuse for having missed the make-up, then either (a) an alternate make-up assignment will be designed for you or (b) the 30% value of the midterm will be added to the 40% value of the final exam, resulting in a 70% final. Please note that if you miss both midterms, you will almost certainly not pass this course, having missed 60% of the work in the course. You are advised to seek academic counseling if this happens to you.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100 (A+)</td>
<td>77-79 (B+)</td>
<td>67-69 (C+)</td>
<td>57-59 (D+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89 (A)</td>
<td>73-76 (B)</td>
<td>63-66 (C)</td>
<td>53-56 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84 (A-)</td>
<td>70-72 (B-)</td>
<td>60-62 (C-)</td>
<td>50-52 (D-)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-49 (F)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Please Note:** The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up or down, on a individual basis, in the light of special circumstances. Students who do not pass the final, or whose final exam mark is their lowest mark in the course, will not have their final marks adjusted up under any circumstances – poor performance on a cumulative final demonstrates a lack of familiarity with course content.

**Please Note as Well:** I do not do special favours for one student that I would not also do the whole class. For example, I will not, under normal circumstances, bump up a final mark for any one student (e.g., 69.2% is a C+ for all students; it is not a B- for you, but a C+ for the rest of the class). Your final mark is your final mark, unless a marking or mathematical error has been made. I live by this rule because special favours to one student are unfair to the multitude of students who neither ask for nor get those same favours. Therefore, if you are concerned about your final mark, it is your responsibility to visit with me or with one of your TA’s for guidance.

**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 academic dishonesty, please refer to Mac’s Academic Integrity Policy, at http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

**How to Do Well in This Course.**

As you know, I have high expectations of my students. This is because I believe that you can meet them, and believe that it’s my job to challenge you to do so!

My tests in this course will be *exclusively in written (essay) format*, with no multiple choice. Therefore, you must be sure to target your studying and understanding of this material such that you can write about the material in an intelligent manner.

In my 2nd year courses, you are expected to give detailed experimental descriptions (methods; IV; DV; results), and to have some rudimentary understanding of why a given piece of research was done, and of what its findings tell us.

In my 3rd year courses, I take this one step further. I now focus more strongly on testing your understanding of why a given experiment or survey study was done, and focus less strongly on point-by-point experimental descriptions.

That is: I expect that you are already able to think clearly about the mechanics of research, and are therefore ready to *summarize* experiments and survey studies into a few sentences (2-5 sentences, depending on complexity of the research). Usually, this will entail giving a brief outline of methods ("what was done?"); and brief summary of results ("what did they find?"); in *sentence form* (no bullet points allowed).

I also expect you to be able to demonstrate that you understand *why* a given piece of research was done and *what it tells us*. And therefore, for any given test question, I expect you to be able to figure out which findings *actually answer* my question, rather than simply parrot back an entire piece of research with no indication of your understanding of how that research answers the question I have asked you.

In order to do well on my tests, then, you must *practice* summarizing experimental and survey research, and you must *practice* thinking about what each finding in this research tell us. As you study, you must continually ask yourself: "do I understand what was done here, and what was found?"; "what exactly does this *particular* finding mean?"; "why is this *particular* finding important?"; "what does the *totality* of research on topic X tell us?"

I may also ask you to write a *summary* of any one of the *readings* I’ve assigned from our readings book. Thus, ask these same questions of yourself as you read the readings. Learn how to summarize an entire article in a paragraph or two.

If you would like help figuring out how to do any of this, then see me or one of your TA’s (I will hold weekly office hours, once we get going; your TA’s will hold office hours before and after each midterm, and before the final, but will be available for appointments at other times). Bring to these appointments your *own attempts* at summarizing experiments, or summarizing articles, or determining what experiments mean, or creating a narrative of a given theory’s main concepts.
Basic structure of the course: Below, you will find a list of topics (with associated readings listed in blue) that I expect to cover this term. This syllabus does not contain exact dates other than those associated with tests. I do this in order to allow us flexibility in timing of topics. I will keep you all updated on where you should be in your readings on the announcements section of our website.

A note on the readings: I do not plan to delete any of the readings listed below; in fact extra readings may even be assigned as we go (these will be posted on Avenue; it is your responsibility to keep track of any added content by keeping up to date on the website). Plan carefully so that you do not find yourself “cramming” the readings at the last minute. Please note that I will not always explicitly discuss a given reading. Read and learn all readings anyway.

A note on dates and deadlines: The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Test dates:
Midterm 1: 31 Jan
Midterm 2: 7 Mar
Final Exam: To be scheduled by the Registrar

Topics/Readings List:

Topic 1. Introductory Comments
- Defining stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination
- Effects of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination

Topic 2. Origins and Maintenance of Stereotypes
Read Jones Ch’s 1, 4
- Categorization
- Stereotype Development (Effects of Media, Parents, Direct Experience)
- Stereotype Accuracy
- Stereotype Efficiency
- Stereotype Maintenance

Topic 3. Old-School Theories of Prejudice
Read Jones Ch 6
Read Sheriff, “Experiments in group conflict” (readings book)
- Realistic Group Conflict Theory
- Social Identity Theory
- Relative Deprivation Theory

Topic 4. Effects of Affect, Cognition, and Motivation on Activation and Use of Stereotypes
Read Jones pages 102-110
Read Wittenbrink et al., “Evidence for racial prejudice at the implicit level…” (readings book)
Topic 5. Personality and Prejudice
Read Jones Ch 5

Topic 6. Modern Views of Prejudice
Read Jones Ch 3
Read Dovidio, “On the nature of contemporary prejudice...” (readings book)

Topic 7. Discrimination at its Worst: War & Genocide
Read Einstein & Freud, “Why war?” (readings book)
Read Milgram, “The dilemma of obedience” (readings book)

Topic 8 (IF TIME). Reducing Prejudice
Read Jones Ch 8
Read Gilbert, “No one left to hate...” (readings book)
Read Aronson & Bridgeman, “Jigsaw groups and the desegregated classroom...” (readings book)
Read Burnette, “Talking openly about race thwarts racism in children” (readings book)
Read Dovidio & Gaertner, “Reducing prejudice...” (readings book)