

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

Course time: TWF 12:30pm  
Course location: MDCL 1105

**Professor:**

Dr. J. M. Ostovich

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Phone: *Do not phone me.*

Office: PC-415A

Office hours: W 3-4pm; 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):

Jones, M. (2002). *Social Psychology of Prejudice* + reader (packaged with the Jones textbook at the bookstore)

**E-mail Policy:** E-mails **must** originate from your **designated McMaster e-mail account** (either an @mcmaster account or your Avenue account). Should we need to communicate with you about individual matters, the e-mail will be sent to your Avenue account. You should *monitor this account regularly*. E-mail sent from third-party providers (yahoo, hotmail, cogeco, sympatico, etc.) will be ignored. We have this policy for *two reasons*: (1) to ensure that we know with whom we are communicating, and (2) 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 polite and to the point.

**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. If you have a question about something, your colleagues probably have one, too, and will appreciate it if you speak up. Don't be shy!

**Assessment:** Your final mark will be based on your performance on two midterms (@30% each) and one final exam (@40%). The midterms will be non-cumulative (*exception*: overarching themes, e.g., understanding what stereotypes are), and will cover lecture material *and* assigned readings. The final exam will be cumulative.

All tests will be comprised of multiple choice (MC) and short answer (SA) questions. See below, under "How to do well..." for details.

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

**Test-Taking Policy:** Midterms will be run like final examinations. You can bring writing instruments, an eraser (or similar), and essentials like kleenex and bottled water to your desk. You must also bring your student ID card. All other materials, especially electronics, must stay in your bag, at the front or side of the room in which you write your test. Note that *if your cell phone rings or buzzes during a midterm, then you will be docked 5% on that midterm*. TURN IT OFF!

**Missed Tests:** Recently, McMaster has adopted a self-report tool, the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF), to be used to report some (but not all) absences. Please make yourself familiar with the ins and outs of using this form by going to <http://www.mcmaster.ca/health/> and <http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>.

The MSAF *cannot* be used in the following situations:

- (1) when the request for relief of missed work is for non-medical reasons (e.g. religious holidays, personal reasons, athletic events as a student athlete, etc)
- (2) for a medical situation that lasts for more than 5 days, or
- (3) for a second or subsequent time in a term, or
- (4) for a major piece of work (worth 30% or more)
- (5) for the final exam.

The MSAF can be used, once per term, if you are absent from the university for a medical reason lasting fewer than 5 days. Longer absences or absences due to non-medical reasons must be reported to your Faculty or Program office, with documentation. Note that relief from term work may not necessarily be granted. When using the MSAF, report your absence to [ostovij@avenue.cllmcmaster.ca](mailto:ostovij@avenue.cllmcmaster.ca). You must then contact me *within 2 working days* at that same address to discuss arrange for a *make-up test* for the work you have missed (make-up tests are held one week after the original test, during class time). No requests for special consideration will be accepted after two weeks' time has elapsed (i.e., you will receive a mark of zero on the missed midterm).

*If you miss the make-up test*, then you must report your absence to your Faculty or Program office, with the same caveat as described above; otherwise, you will receive a mark of zero 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. If you miss both midterms and their makeups, then you will fail this course (you cannot have a 100% final). 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:

<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)

**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.

**Note as Well:** I do *not* do special favours for one student that I do not also do the whole class. Your final mark is your final mark, unless a marking or mathematical error has been made. 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

This term, my testing method for 3CD3 is changing substantially. Previously, tests in this course were based entirely on written responses (essay tests). However, this Fall, you will be assessed based on some combination of multiple choice (MC), true-false (T/F), fill-in-the-blanks, and very brief written questions (definitions and explanations). Test items will be a mixture of fact-based questions (e.g., “what was the finding?” or “what is the definition of X?”), conceptual questions (e.g., “what does the finding mean?” or “why is this particular finding important?”), and applied (e.g., “given what you know about topic A, how would a child behave in situation B?”). More than half of your mark will be based on responses to MC items; fewer than half will be based on written responses. Because the midterms and final are not yet set, I cannot be more specific about format at this time, but will fill in the details during class and on *Avenue* once I know more.

Below are several tips that will help you perform optimally in PSYCH 3CD3.

First: Read this syllabus *very* carefully!

Second: Read the website carefully as well! Check the website *several times per week*.

Third: Know the *missed tests policy*. Do exactly as this policy asks if you miss a test, or you may be in for a nasty surprise (i.e., a zero!). Makeup tests occur during class time, about one week after the original test.

Fourth: Attend lectures. You cannot do well in this course if you do not attend lectures. Although the textbook and readings do support some lecture material, they provide *minimal support*. Therefore, if you miss lectures, you will miss important information.

Fifth: Read your readings. I won't cover everything mentioned in your readings. However, I expect you to spend some of your study-time identifying important concepts from your readings, and learning them. Independent learning of this sort is an important skill. You will be expected to do this in your upper level courses, and – more importantly – in what academics call “the real world”.

Sixth: Take effective notes. Slides are posted *after* their contents have been lectured on (no exceptions, no possibility of change). If you have trouble taking effective notes, visit CSD, or see me or a TA for advice.

Note that my slides contain only basic information – bullet points, figures, and pictures. You cannot recreate lectures, and therefore cannot succeed in this course, by depending on them instead of attending lecture and/or taking effective notes.

Finally: Think carefully about the information I'm presenting you in lecture. Three things are usually happening: first, I'm telling you the story of some theory or idea; second, I'm giving you details on research that helped tell the story; third, I'm often tying the theory and research to some organizing theme. Therefore, try to figure out

- (1) what's the story? (i.e., the theory), and
- (2) what does the research we learned about tell us about that story?
- (3) is there an overarching theme related to the theory and research? what is it?

If you study with these questions in mind, then you should do well on the midterm and final. If you find that you're not sure what the story is or how the research fits in with or supports the story, then please make use of the discussion board and any office hours offered by me or by your TA's.

## DATES, TOPICS, AND READINGS

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced on our course website.

The most likely change is the timing of topics around midterms.

**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 updated on where you should be in your readings on the news section of our website. I will also remind you of which topics will be covered on each test.

**A note on the readings:** Extra readings may 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:** Friday 7 October (during class time, rooms TBA)

**Midterm 2:** Tuesday 8 November (during class time, rooms TBA)

**Final Exam:** To be scheduled by the Registrar

### **Topics and Readings:**

#### **Topic 1. Introductory Comments**

- *Defining stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination*
- *Effects of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination*

#### **Topic 2. Origins and Maintenance of Stereotypes**

Read Jones Ch's 1 and 4

- *Categorization*
- *Stereotype Development (Effects of Media, Parents, Direct Experience)*
- *Stereotype Accuracy*
- *Stereotype Efficiency*
- *Stereotype Maintenance*

#### **Topic 3. Group-Based (“Old-School”) Theories of Prejudice**

Read Jones Ch 6

Read Sherif, “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). Prejudice Prevention and Reduction**

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)