

SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY 2C03: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour
McMaster University
Fall 2013

Course time and location: MR9:30, T10:30 in TSH120.

Professor

Dr. J. M. Ostovich

Email: psy2c03@mcmaster.ca for all course-related email; do **not** use the *Avenue* system.

Phone: *It is pointless to phone me.*

Office: PC-415A

Office hours: By appointment; monitor homepage for additional information.

Teaching Assistants

Mackenzie Becker, Stephanie Northover, Cara Tighe

Instructional Assistant

Karen Cogliati: email psy2c03@mcmaster.ca for all course-related questions.

Please note: This syllabus – including scheduling, topic order, topics themselves, and assessment strategy – is subject to change if circumstances warrant.

Table of Contents:

Course Description

Textbook

E-mail and Website Policies

Lecture Recording Policy

Participation

Evaluation Scheme (p. 2)

Test-Taking Policy

Missed Tests Policy (p. 3)

Notes on Final Marks Calculations and Academic Integrity

Tips on How to Do Well in This Course (p. 4-5)

Dates, Topics, and Readings (Schedule; p.5- 6)

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 to how research findings are used to advance our understanding of human social behavior.

Textbook (required): Aronson, Wilson, Fehr, & Akert. *Social Psychology*, 5th Canadian Ed. I strongly recommend *against* using anything other than the edition listed here; content of other editions may differ, which will affect you on tests. If you *do* use a different textbook, then it is up to you (*not me or your TA's*) to figure out which pages and chapters to read. E-mails asking us for help with this will be deleted.

E-mail Policy: Email must originate from your **mcmaster.ca** account. Should we need to communicate with you, we will send an email to that account. You should therefore monitor that account regularly. Email sent from any other account (e.g., gmail, hotmail) 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 email. Note that emails to your professors and teaching or instructional assistants are professional communications: they should include correct spelling and punctuation, and use an ***informative subject line*** so that they do not get lost or ignored.

NB. Do not use the *Avenue* email system to contact us: the system is antiquated and irritating, and often results in miscommunication. We therefore do not check email on that system.

Website Policy: You are expected to check our course website on *Avenue to Learn* regularly 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*. Questions asked on the discussion boards allow other students with the same questions the chance to see the answer, and 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. This will involve lost access to slides and other important course information.

The website also has a **chat** function that we'll be using, on occasion, for online office hours. As with the discussion boards, inappropriate behavior on chat could result in being banned from the course website.

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: If you feel that recording lectures will help you perform optimally in the course, then feel free to do so. **HOWEVER:** Consider the lectures **copyrighted material: you cannot post recordings anywhere online**, including on our *Avenue* website.

Participation: In-class, discussion board, chat, and office-hours participation are strongly encouraged. If you have a question, your colleagues probably have one, too, and will appreciate it if you speak up. Don't be shy!

Evaluation: Your final mark will be based on your performance on two multiple choice (MC) midterms (@30% each) and one MC final exam (@40%). The midterms will be non-cumulative (*exception:* research methods), and will cover lecture material *and* assigned readings, *especially* readings on topics not discussed in class. The final exam will be cumulative, but otherwise exactly the same as the midterms.

See below, under "How to do well..." for more detail on test content.

Test-Taking Policy: Midterms will be run like final examinations. You may bring writing instruments, an eraser (or similar), and essentials like *Kleenex* and water to your desk. You must also bring your student ID card. All other materials, especially electronics (e.g., your cell phone), must stay in your bag. 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: Report your absence to McMaster and to psy2c03@mcmaster.ca **right away!!** That is, **within 2 days of the missed test**. Otherwise, accommodations may not be granted. Make-up tests are held one week after the original test, during class time; hence the need for speedy communication re. absences. No requests for special consideration will be accepted **after one week** has elapsed (i.e., you will receive a mark of zero on the missed midterm).

How to report an absence: The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) can be used to report some (but not all) absences. Please familiarize yourself with MSAF regulations by visiting <http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>. In short: 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, regardless of how your absence is reported.

What if you miss the make-up test? If you miss the make-up test due to a prolonged illness or prolonged family crisis (or similar), then you must report your absence for both the test and its make-up to your Faculty or Program office **within 2 days of the makeup test**; 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 the value of the midterm will be added to the value of the final exam. 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:

Percentage (Grade)	Percentage (Grade)	Percentage (Grade)	Percentage (Grade)
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, depending on overall performance in the course. Students *who do not pass the cumulative final*, or whose final exam mark is their *lowest mark* in the course, will *not* have their mark adjusted up under any circumstances.

Note as Well: I do *not* do 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, well in the advance of the final exam, for study help.

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>.

How To Do Well in this Course.

This course tests your knowledge using multiple choice (MC) items. The MC items have been designed to test your knowledge in the following domains: **facts** (e.g., "what was the finding?" or "what is the definition of X?"); **concepts** (e.g., "what does the finding mean?" or "why is this particular finding important?"); and **application** (e.g., "given what you know about topic A, how would a person behave in situation B?"). Below are several **tips** that will help you perform optimally in PSYCH 2C03. You can find more tips in our **course FAQ** (see website).

First: Use your resources. Read this **syllabus** very carefully! And read our *Avenue to Learn website* carefully as well, including your course **FAQ**. Check the website *several times per week*.

Second: 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.

Third: Attend lectures. You cannot do well in this course if you do not attend lectures. Although the textbook does support the lecture material, lectures often go beyond, or have a different focus than, the textbook. Therefore, if you miss lectures, you will miss important information.

Fourth: Read your textbook and any other assigned readings. You 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. Note that your textbook comes packaged with an **online learning tool**. This may help you to more easily learn the textbook materials. Independent learning 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”.

Fifth: Learn how to take effective notes. Slides are posted *after* their contents have been lectured on. In order to do well in the real world, you will have to know how to cope with large amounts of incoming information, without slides to guide you. If you have trouble taking effective notes, then please visit CSD/SAS, or see me or one of your TA’s for advice.

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

Sixth: Visit with a TA or with Dr. Ostovich if you’re having trouble. **Do not wait** until you’ve done poorly on both midterms to set up a meeting: at that point, **it’s too late**. You should monitor your performance and visit with someone at the first sign that something is amiss!

Finally: *Think carefully* about the information I’m presenting you in lecture. Usually, lectures are structured such that (a) you’re learning about some theory, and (b) I’m describing the research that helped develop that theory.

Tests are meant to assess the extent to which you:

- (1) fully understand theories and concepts
- (2) can accurately recall any given experiment (*hint*: break experiments down into their main components: methods, independent variable, dependent variable, results)
- (3) understand how the methodology of an experiment allowed it to test (or prevented it from testing) the idea it was meant to test
- (4) understand how an experiment enhanced, changed, negated, or supported the theory associated with it
- (5) can apply any given theory, concept, and/or experiment to new and real-world situations

In order to do well on tests, then, you must engage in *active studying*. That is, you must *spend time thinking about the material*, rather than merely memorizing it. My best advice is that you spend some of your study time thinking about *why* I’ve presented a topic the way I have, and why I’ve chosen to discuss the research I’ve discussed in class. If you study theory, concepts, or experiments in isolation (i.e., merely memorize them), then you have no hope of demonstrating your understanding of the course on tests..

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 scheduled directly before and after midterms.

Basic structure of the course: This course is divided into three (3) sections. Below, you will find a list of topics (with associated readings listed in [blue](#)) that I expect to cover in each of these sections. At the end of each section of lectures, you will write an exam. Here are the pertinent dates:

Midterm 1: Monday 7th October during class time (rooms TBA)

Midterm 2: Tuesday 5th November during class time (rooms TBA)

Final Exam: To be scheduled by the Registrar

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 dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of 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.

A note on the readings: This is a new textbook for this course, and “bugs” (e.g., mismatches between lecture and textbook interpretations) will not yet have been worked out. If you notice a seeming mismatch, please post your question on the “readings” discussion board, and we will look into it. Sometimes, what seems like a mismatch is really just the result of the textbook and professor discussing different levels of analysis (e.g., larger vs. smaller picture) – thus, the mismatch represents differences in what the source considers important, rather than an error by one source or the other.

Topics and Readings

This syllabus *does not contain exact dates* other than those for tests. I do this in order to allow us flexibility in timing of topics. If you attend lectures, then you will know when the next topic is coming up! (another reason to come to class!).

Section 1: 5 September to 7 October

Topic 1. Introduction and Research Methods. [Read Ch’s 1 and 2.](#)

Topic 2. Conformity. [Read pages 193-219 and 222-232 \(from Ch 7\) and 327-332 \(from Ch 10\)](#)

Topic 3. Persuasion. [Read pages 220-232 \(from Ch 7\) and 163-174 \(from Ch 6\).](#)

Section 2: 8 October to 5 November

Topic 4. Prosocial Behaviour. [Read Ch 10 \(note: you’ve already read pages 327-332 and may skip these pages\).](#)

Topic 5. Aggression. [Read Ch 11.](#)

Topic 6. Prejudice. [Read Ch 12.](#)

Section 3: 7 November to 4 December

Topic 7. Self and Self Esteem. [Read Ch’s 3 and 5.](#)

Topic 8. Attribution Theory. [Read Ch 4.](#)

Topic 9. Dissonance Theory. [Read Ch 6 \(note: you’ve already read pages 163-174 and may skip these pages\).](#)

Topic 10. Group Behaviour. [Read Ch 8.](#)

Topic 11. Close Relationships. [Read Ch 9.](#)