

SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY 3CD3: INTERGROUP RELATIONS
Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour
McMaster University
Winter Term 2016

Course time and location: MWR 1:30 in MDCL 1105

Professor:

Dr. J. M. Ostovich

Email: jmostovich@mcmaster.ca; never use the *Avenue* mail system to contact me or TAs.

Phone: *Do not phone me.*

Office: PC-415A

Office hours: Thursdays, 2:30-3:30pm (sign up on the appropriate *Avenue* discussion board; if no one signs up, the office hour will not be held).

Teaching Assistants:

Laura Cirelli (cirellk@mcmaster.ca)

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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”).

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*.

E-mail Policy: E-mails must originate from a valid McMaster account. Note that *Avenue* and *mcmaster.ca* cannot “talk” to one another. That is, *Avenue* will reject *mcmaster.ca* emails, and *vice versa*. Therefore, emails from *Avenue* must go to *Avenue* only, and emails from *mcmaster.ca* must go to *mcmaster.ca* only. I recommend that you ***never send an email from the Avenue system***: that way, all emails will reach their destination. Email sent from third-party providers (e.g., hotmail, cogeco, google) will be ignored. McMaster has this policy for *two important 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 (1) include correct spelling and punctuation, (2) have an *informative subject line*, and (3) be brief.

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*, due to my high volume of email from 700+ students per term. Questions asked on the discussion boards 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).

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. You are especially encouraged to record lectures if you find my pacing a bit fast. HOWEVER: Consider the lectures **copyrighted material**: you **cannot post recordings anywhere online**, including on our *Avenue* website.

Evaluation. Your final mark will be based on two non-cumulative midterms (@ 30% each) and one cumulative final exam (@40%). Tests will cover lecture materials *and* assigned readings, *even* readings not discussed in class. For dates, see below, under "schedule".

The tests will combine multiple-choice and very short answer items (definitions, brief explanations, fill in the blanks). Test items are designed to be challenging. They will assess your knowledge of details (key terms, definitions, data/results of studies and experiments) and your conceptual understanding of research and theories presented in the course. Rote memorization of the material will be not enough for most students to get more than a D or C in the course.

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

Test-Taking Policy. Electronics must stay in your bag, turned off. If a phone rings or vibrates during a test, you will be penalized **5%** off your *final grade in the course*. The only things allowed on your desk and/or outside of your bag during testing sessions are pens, pencils, erasers, something to eat or drink if needed, tissues if needed, and your student ID.

Missed Tests/Absences: Report your absence to McMaster and to Dr. Ostovich **within 2 days of the missed test**. Failure to comply with the **two-days rule** could result in your earning a mark of zero on the missed test. Make-up tests are held one week after the original test, during class time; hence the need for speedy communication.

In order to receive any sort of accommodation (e.g., makeup test), I must receive an official university email indicating that you've complied with university regulations, as well as your personal email requesting accommodation.

How to report an absence to McMaster: In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should *carefully* review and follow the regulations outlined in the undergraduate calendar, "[Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](#)". Please note that these regulations changed in Fall 2015. Any deviation from these regulations will result in a mark of "0" for the missed work.

Note that you may only use an MSAF for work valued at *less than 25%*. Therefore, *you cannot use the MSAF for any work you'll be doing in this course*.

How to report an absence to Dr. Ostovich: Send an email to Dr. Ostovich that does the following: (a) *briefly* explains why you've been forced to miss the test (less detail is best!); (b) requests relief for the missed work, and

(c) indicates whether you have submitted documentation to the university, and if not, when that will be happening. The content of your email will be kept confidential.

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 original 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 for the missed work. If you can provide an acceptable excuse for having missed the make-up, then we will figure something out for you. 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, 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 academic dishonesty, please refer to Mac's Academic Integrity Policy, at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>.

How to Do Well in This Course

Tests will be comprised of some mix of multiple choice (MC), fill-in-the-blanks, and brief written responses. Items will be a mixture of fact-based questions (e.g., "what was the finding?" or "what is the definition of X?" or "what was the main argument of reading Y?" or "what is the key term used to describe A?"), conceptual questions (e.g., "what does the finding mean?" or "why is this particular finding important?" or "how do you know that the interpretation of this finding is correct?"), and applied questions (e.g., "given what you know about topic A, how would a person behave in situation B?" or "Person X did Y. Why?").

Please keep in mind that there is little readings-related support for some of the things we will be discussing in class. Testing will focus very heavily on lecture content, but readings *will be tested*, even if I don't explicitly address them in class. In order to do well in this class, *you must attend lecture*, and *you must do the readings!*

Check out our *Avenue to Learn* website for an **FAQ** with more details on what you can do to optimize your performance in this course.

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: Thursday 4 February (during class time, rooms TBA)

Midterm 2: Thursday 10 March (during class time, rooms TBA)

Final Exam: To be scheduled by the Registrar

Topics and Readings.

Topic 1. Introductory Comments.

Topic 2. Origins and Maintenance of Stereotypes. [Jones Ch's 1 and 4](#)

- *Categorization*
- *Stereotype Development (Effects of Media, Parents, Direct Experience)*
- *Stereotype Threat.* [Walton & Spencer. \(2009\). Latent ability: Grades and test scores systematically underestimate the intellectual ability of negatively stereotyped students. *Psychological Science*, 20\(9\), 1132-1139. Available on course website.](#)
- *Stereotype Accuracy*
- *Stereotype Efficiency*
- *Stereotype Maintenance*

Topic 3. Group-Based (“Old-School”) Theories of Prejudice. [Jones Ch 6](#)

- *Realistic Group Conflict Theory*
- *Social Identity Theory*
- *Relative Deprivation Theory*

Topic 4. Effects of Affect, Cognition, and Motivation on Activation and Use of Stereotypes. [Jones pages 102-110](#)

Topic 5. Personality and Prejudice. [Jones Ch 5](#)

Topic 6. Modern Views of Prejudice. [Jones Ch 3](#)

Topic 7. Discrimination at its Worst: War & Genocide. [Staub \(1999\). The origins and prevention of genocide, mass killing, and other collective violence. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 5, 303-336. Available on course website.](#)