Course time and location: MW 2:30 and F 4:30 in TSH 120

<u>**Professor**</u>:
Dr. J. Ostovich
<u>Contact</u>: Do **not** contact me directly. All email goes to <u>psy2c03@mcmaster.ca</u>; otherwise, it is deleted.
<u>Office</u>: PC-415A
<u>Office hours</u>: M 1-2pm; F 3-4pm; but **email the course address by 4pm the day before** to say you're attending; otherwise, I'll be at *Starbucks*.

<u>**Teaching Assistants**</u>:
Anna Park, Aamna Qureshi, & Victoria Stead
<u>Email</u>: Use <u>psy2c03@mcmaster.ca</u> for initial contacts. That email address will bring you to Victoria, who will coordinate all email communications, and act as point person for making sure that you have the support you need. This email address will be checked and cleared daily from Monday to Friday.
<u>Office hours</u>: Monitor website discussion boards (under "administrative") for days, times, and locations; also by appointment.

<u>**Please note**</u>: This syllabus – including scheduling, topic order, topics themselves, and assessment strategy – is subject to change if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss, blizzard). Changes will be announced on the course website.

<u>**Course Description**</u>: 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.

<u>**Required Textbook**</u>: Aronson, Wilson, Fehr, & Akert. *Social Psychology*, 6th Canadian Ed. I strongly recommend *against* using anything other than the edition listed here; content of other editions may differ, which could 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.

<u>**Other Required Readings**</u>: All materials posted on *Avenue to Learn* (A2L) are testable. This includes the syllabus, the course FAQ (section headers "Assessment" and "Miscellaneous", though there's plenty of other helpful information in there) and all materials posted under "Learning Support" (in *Content*). These are testable on all three tests. Read them and learn them!

<u>**Participation**</u>: In-class, discussion board, and office-hour 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!

<u>**Policy re. the Recording of Lectures:**</u> 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.

<u>**Evaluation**</u>: 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.

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: There are **no makeup tests** in this course. You must report your absence to McMaster and to psy2c03@mcmaster.ca **within 48 hours of the missed test**. Failure to comply with this **48-hour-rule** could result in a **mark of zero** on the missed test.

In order to receive an accommodation (i.e., value of midterm placed on final exam), we must receive an official university email indicating that you've complied with university regulations (see below), 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 here. Any deviation from these regulations will result in a mark of "0" for the missed work.

Note that you may only use a *documentation-free* MSAF for work valued at *less than* 25%. This means that, in this course, you **must follow the regulations described in part 2** of the *Requests for Relief* section. Please have documentation from your faculty sent to psy2c03@mcmaster.ca, **not** to Dr. Ostovich's personal email address.

How to report an absence to teaching staff**:** Your email to psy2c03@mcmaster.ca should do the following: (a) *briefly* explain that you've been forced to miss the test (vomit and diarrhea detail is *not* necessary!); (b) request relief for the missed work, and (c) indicate 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 both midterms? If you **miss both midterms**, then **you will almost certainly fail** this course (a 100% final is a death sentence). You are advised to seek (1) a meeting with Dr. O., and (2) academic counseling if this happens to you.

A Note About How Tests Are Marked: We scan your scan-sheets into a program that provides us with psychometric analysis of the quality of each item. I go through this analysis and make the following determinations:
   (1) whether an item was doable (i.e., whether an acceptable proportion of students could get the item correct)
   (2) which incorrect alternatives were most likely to be chosen for a given item
   (3) if an incorrect alternative was chosen often, was there something about the item that caused that to happen? (note that MC items are *meant* to fool you into choosing what we call "distractors"; if I wrote a good distractor, then that's not a problem; however, if I decide that the distractor only worked because the item was poorly worded, then that's a problem)
   (4) did the item predict performance on the test (that is, did students who got an A on the test get it right more often than students who got a C or F on the test?)

Items that do not satisfy me, psychometrically, are removed from consideration. That is, if the test has 24 items, and I find that one of them is not psychometrically sound, either because of wording issues or because it failed to predict performance, then I will remove it from the test, which will now be out of 23. If you got that item right, then that's too bad for you; usually, items I remove are so psychometrically unacceptable that either no one got them right, or the pattern of scoring suggest that anyone who got the item right guessed. **Do not complain** about the removal of questions that I've deemed unusable! The decision to remove is based on science, not the roll of a dice or my evil desire to screw you over (in fact, the opposite is at play!).

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.

E-mail Policy: E-mails must originate from a valid McMaster account (please use *MacMail* rather than the *Avenue* system for all e-mail communication). As per McMaster policy, e-mail sent from third-party providers (e.g., hotmail, cogeco, google) will be deleted. Please also keep in mind that e-mails to your professors and TAs 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, is *preferred to email communication*. By asking questions on the discussion boards (rather than over e-mail), you are (1) giving other students the chance to benefit from your question, and (2) provide an encoding (learning) experience for students who wish to answer your question (this is *strongly* encouraged!).

The discussion boards are meant to be a "safe place" for asking and answering questions. Students who are rude or inconsiderate (e.g., "trolls") may be banned from using them.

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 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.

A Note About Facebook Course Groups: These are not great for two reasons.

(1) They can create *mass hysteria*. As a student of social psychology, you will soon recognize this process! But, since you haven't completed 2C03 yet, here's the reasoning: Very few people who disagree with your complaint (these are usually about a test) will speak up, but most of the people who share your complaint will chime in. This will lead you to the incorrect conclusion (through a *pluralistic-ignorance*-like process) that "everyone" is upset about X or Y, and you will therefore get all emotional (this is counterproductive when you're trying to *learn* from a mistake) and make a fool of yourself when you complain to us and insist that the whole class agrees with you (this class has about 300 students … there is no way that "everyone" or even "most people" share your complaint, especially when at least half of them are have earned As and Bs on the test you're upset about). If

you have a problem with any aspect of the running of this course, email psy2c03@ instead … that's where problems are addressed; Facebook is where problems are created.

(2) They can, through a sort of "broken telephone" process, convince you that incorrect answers are correct. What a shame that you used Facebook to ask your question, instead of the TA- and instructor- monitored A2L website!

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 dishonestly. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, at http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

How To Learn Optimally 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 TAs 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.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS
This schedule is *subject to change*. Any changes will be announced on our course website.
The dates for lecture topics are approximate and may change as we go.

TESTING	VALUE & OTHER INFORMATION	DATE/LOCATION
MIDTERM 1	30%; Part I materials	Wednesday 4 October during class time, rooms TBA
MIDTERM 2	30%; Part II materials; non-cumulative *except* for lecture material on research methods	Wednesday 8 November during class time, rooms TBA
FINAL EXAM	40%; cumulative for lecture; non-cumulative for textbook; focus is on Part III, but Parts I and II are also well represented!	TBD by the Registrar's Office

Lectures/Readings Schedule

Part I: Introduction, Research Methods, and Social Influence

WEEK OF	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS
4 SEPTEMBER	Introductory Stuff Research Methods	Chapters 1 and 2
11 SEPTEMBER	Conformity 1: Basic Concepts Conformity 2: Bystander Intervention	Ch. 7 (skip pages 198-202) Pages 298-304
18 SEPTEMBER	Conformity 3: Obedience to Authority	
25 SEPTEMBER	Persuasion 1: Persuasive Tactics Persuasion 2: Changing People's Minds	Pages 198-202 Pages 146-157 (start at "*How Do Attitudes Change*?" and stop just before "*Changing Our Attitudes … Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*")

Part II: Social Phenomena that Help or Hurt Others

WEEK OF	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS
16 OCTOBER	Altruism	Ch. 10 (*you've already read pages 298-304 and may skip these pages now*)
23 OCTOBER	Aggression	Ch. 11
30 OCTOBER	Prejudice	Ch. 12

Part III: Social Cognition and Close Relationships (dates more approximate than in Parts I and II!)

WEEK OF	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS
13 NOVEMBER	Self and Self-Esteem Attribution	Ch.'s 3 and 5 Ch. 4
20 NOVEMBER	Dissonance	Ch. 6 (*you've already read pages 146-157, and may skip these pages*).
27 NOVEMBER	Groups Close Relationships	Ch. 8 Ch. 9

A note on the readings*:* If you suspect that you've uncovered a mismatch between lecture and text materials, please post about it on the "readings" discussion board, and we will look into it for you. Often, what seems like a mismatch is really just the result of the textbook and professor focusing on different levels of analysis – that is, the mismatch represents differences in what each source considers important, rather than an error by one source or the other.

McMaster policy 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.