

# **SYP3000 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF GROUPS (online)**

Department of Sociology  
Florida State University  
Fall 2008

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**Course Website: <http://campus.fsu.edu>**

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**GROUP ONE (A-F)**

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**GROUP TWO (G – P)**

**GROUP THREE (R – Z)**

## **Course Description and Overview**

This course will introduce you to major topics in social psychology and will provide you with leads to pursue further research of interest. Our primary objective in the course is to raise critical questions and challenge common assumptions about the nature and causes of human behavior in different social and cultural situations. We will seek to understand why individuals and groups act the way they do, and how this behavior varies across situations. In particular, we will learn what factors affect or condition the way we perceive others, how we see ourselves, who we form friendships or loving relationships with, what causes us to develop prejudice or to reduce prejudice, whether we conform or deviate from others, how we can successfully influence others, whether or not we will go to the aid of a victim in need, whether or not we will engage in aggression, why our performance is sometimes better and sometimes worse when acting in groups than when acting alone, what accounts for successful leadership, and many other interesting applications of social psychology.

## **Course Objectives**

1. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of how social inequality is perpetuated through social interaction as well as the effects of this inequality in contemporary society.
2. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to define and apply core sociological (as well as social psychological) concepts to an understanding of social life.
3. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to interpret and weigh evidence as to whether asserted conclusions about social conditions or processes are warranted.

## **Required Textbook**

The text is Baron, Byrne, and Branscombe's *Social Psychology*: 12<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Allyn & Bacon 2008; ISBN 0-205-58149-8) available at the FSU and Bill's Bookstore.

## **Course Organization**

Because social psychology is best learned by active engagement with the subject matter, the course will involve participating in class mini-experiments, demonstrations, and discussions in addition to readings and lectures. Also there will be two review weeks in which you will apply the social psychological concepts and principles you learn to your own life. Other than the reading from your textbook, all of these activities will be conducted using the Blackboard web-

based course management system. Even though we will not be face to face in a classroom, your participation in all of these activities is encouraged in order to maximize your learning and enjoyment in the course, and they all count toward your final grade. The due times for assignments mentioned below are Tallahassee times, i.e., Eastern Standard Time (EST). If you live outside of Tallahassee in a different time zone, you will need to adapt the due times so that they correspond to EST.

## 1. Topic Weeks:

We will learn about twelve broad topics in social psychology, each covered during a separate week and involving reading of a separate chapter in our text. During a typical week in the course you will begin by participating in a short Exercise (mini-experiment, survey or demonstration). This assignment will be made available (under the **Exercise** tab on our website) Saturday morning and should be completed any time before 12:00 noon on Monday and prior to reading the assigned chapter and lecturette for the week. Next, you will read the designated chapter in your textbook and a brief lecturette from me (under the **Lecturette** tab on our website) elaborating on the topic of the week. The reading should be completed by Wednesday of each week. Results of the Exercise in which you and other class members participated will be posted along with one or more discussion questions (under the **Discussion** tab) on Wednesday morning. You will give your answer to the discussion questions on the “Discussion Board” **FOR YOUR GROUP** (to find your group discussion board, click on the **Communication** tab, then on **Group Pages**, then on your group) any time from Wednesday morning to no later than 11:55 p.m. on Friday of each week. Finally, a short Test covering the topic of the week will be posted at 8:00 a.m. Wednesday morning and is to be completed anytime before 11:55 PM Friday evening. On Saturday morning, the next week's Exercise will be made available so you can get started on it and the next reading assignment over the weekend.

Completing work on time is critical in this course. I recommend that you make yourself a calendar containing the due dates for course activities so that you can keep on track. **If these deadlines are not compatible with your schedule, please drop this course immediately.**

## 2. Review Weeks:

Two times during the semester, you will have an opportunity review the material covered in the preceding one-third of the course. During these weeks, you will be asked to review and apply what you have learned about social psychology to your own life or to a current social situation. You will either be given a list of concepts and principles and will be asked to describe and analyze examples or illustrations of several of these that you have observed from your own personal observation and experience or you will be asked to answer questions about a particular topic using concepts or ideas that we have covered in class. You will post your examples on your group's discussion board. You will also be asked to comment on other group members' contributions.

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

**11 Exercises (experiments, demonstrations, etc.):** There will be one Exercise for each social psychology topic covered in the course. Each one takes 15-30 minutes and is worth two (2) points. Exercises must be completed *no later than Monday noon EST* in order to receive credit. After doing the Exercise, read the textbook chapter and lecture for each Topic Week. *Note:* The week 1 exercise is not graded.

**12 Regular Discussions:** Each week you will be responsible for posting your answers to discussion questions on the course discussion board. Each week's posting is worth five (5) points. To receive full credit, you must do the following: (1) you must answer *all* parts of the question(s), offering your own unique (i.e., adding your own ideas, not just commenting on someone else's), thoughtful responses that indicate an engagement with the course material, and (2) respond (in a thoughtful and respectful way) to at least one other group member's post. ***Discussion posts must be at least 100 words long and responses to other posts must be at least 50 words long. Students must place a word count at the end of their original post and response.*** Partial (i.e., half) credit will be given to acceptable responses that somehow fall short of the full credit criteria. No credit will be given to those responses that fail to answer the discussion question(s) or fail to relate to the course material or topics. For those weeks with multiple *required* discussion boards (some weeks have optional discussion boards and are labeled as such), you must post to both boards to receive full credit. The above requirements still apply. *Note:* The week 1 discussion IS graded.

**2 Review Week Discussions:** There will be special discussion requirements during each of the two Review Weeks (Weeks 6 and 11) as shown in the following Semester Calendar. The review week discussions are worth ten (10) points each. Like the regular discussions, complete your participation in the review week discussions *before Friday at 11:55 p.m. EST* in order to receive credit. Instructions will be posted on the course website under the 'Documents' tab.

**11 Tests:** There will be a test at the end of each Topic Week consisting of 10 structured questions. The test will be made available from 8:00 a.m. Wednesday to 11:55 p.m. Friday (EST). ***There will be a penalty for exceeding the 15 minute time limit for the tests: 1 point off for each minute or fraction of a minute over the time limit.*** You are responsible for not going over time, so I suggest watching a clock closely. Please do not rely on the blackboard test timer as it can be unreliable and may not appear for every test. *Note:* The week 1 practice test is not graded.

Each weekly test is comprised of 10 multiple-choice questions over the assigned readings and lecture for the week. Note that the tests are generated from a larger test bank comprised of questions over the reading and lecture. So, tests will be different for each student, but this will equalize over the semester. Each test may be taken only once. There will be a time limit of 15 minutes for each test and the test must be completed once started. One point is deducted for each minute or fraction of a minute over the time limit. The grade is automatically posted to the online gradebook. You are responsible for not going over time. As the blackboard test timer is

unreliable and will not always appear, I suggest that you find a timer of your own so that you do not go over the time limit.

## Grading

Fifty-two percent of the course grade will come from the weekly tests and the remainder from exercises and discussions, broken down as follows:

51.9% Tests (11)	110 points
28.3% Regular Discussions (12)	60 points
10.4% Exercises (11)	22 points
<u>9.4% Review Week Discussions (2)</u>	<u>20 points</u>
100%	212 points

Letter grades will be assigned according to the standard 100 percentage point scale:

A (90-100%)

B (80-89%)

C (70-79%)

D (60-69%)

F (59% or below)

The top two percentage points in each grade range (above F) will receive a “+” (e.g., 88 or 89), and the bottom three points will receive a “-“ (e.g., 80-82). FSU does not allow an “A+” grade. Note that late work is subject to a grade penalty, as described below in the “Late Policy.”

**\*\*\*No extra credit work is offered.** You can keep track of your point total by looking at the online gradebook in the course website.

## Important Information

### Incomplete Grades

***Missing work is insufficient reason for a grade of Incomplete (I). An I will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at my discretion. Note that College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course.***

### Late Policy

There will be **no credit** for participation in Exercises or threaded Discussions that are submitted after the due times mentioned in the Syllabus. Once the class has gone beyond an exercise or discussion, there is no value to the class in obtaining late input from individuals on these aspects of the course. Therefore they cannot be made up after the due time even in the event of excusable situations such as sicknesses or other unforeseen conflicts. *A grade of zero is assigned for each missed due time for an exercise or threaded discussion.*

**In the case of Tests, you have one week to complete a missed test.** There is a **10% penalty** for late submissions. Again, we use this system even in the event of excusable situations such as sicknesses or other unforeseen conflicts. If you know that you are going to be unable to do an assignment during the allotted time, let us know well in advance and we will try to make special arrangements for you to complete it early. No late test submissions will be accepted after December 14<sup>th</sup>, the Sunday after the last day of the course.

### First Day Attendance Policy

Like all FSU classes, our course has a first day attendance policy. On the first day of class (August 25), students have 24 hours to log into the course website and enter a password. Students who fail to fulfill the first day attendance policy will be considered “absent” and subsequently dropped. Instructions will be posted under the course announcements.

### Office Hours and Communication

The course instructor and mentors will not be holding online “Office Hours” but you can contact us at any time by e-mail using the “Send E-mail” option in the **Communication** area of the course website. Also, see *Staff Information* for phone and email listings. In general, for questions regarding course topics or course organization, check with Joanna Hunter. For questions or problems regarding exercises, discussions or tests, check with your mentor.

As a rule, we will do our best to respond to your emails within 24 hours. It is not necessary to email us with the same question more than once. If your email relates to an assignment and there has been a technical error or other such mistake, do not worry, we will straighten it out as soon as possible. Remember, no grades are final until the end of the semester, so take a deep breath ☺ Because technology is inherently unreliable, there are bound to be mishaps and we will do our best to straighten them out.

### Special Needs

Please email me during the first week if you would like further study advice or have any special concerns or problems that might be helpful for me to know about. This is especially important for anyone with learning or physical disabilities and problems of any kind involving financial issues, sports participation, or work schedules. Also, all students are encouraged to contact me to talk informally about the course or issues of interest.

### Academic Honor Code

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in The Florida State University Bulletin and the Student Handbook. The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Please see the following web site for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Code.

<http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/>

<http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/codes/honor.html>.

### Academic Dishonesty

Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the instructor's discretion. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the University Judicial Office for official adjudication.

### Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center, 108 Student Services Building (in parking garage #2)  
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4400, (850) 644-9566 (voice), (850) 644-8504 (TDD), [SDRC@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:SDRC@admin.fsu.edu),  
<http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

### Religious Holidays

Students will be allowed to miss course requirements due to observance of religious holidays but they are still responsible for completing those requirements for the day(s) missed. *You must talk with me in advance of missing a class requirement for religious holiday observance reasons.*

### Classroom Courtesy

Even though we do not meet in a traditional classroom, classroom courtesy rules still apply. Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your final grade. I reserve the right to remove any student from the discussion board for reasons including disruptive or disrespectful comments or for other reasons as warranted. Class discussions of the issues we study can stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college course, all discussion board posts must be scholarly. **Failure to abide by these principles can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.**

#### **Scholarly comments are:**

Respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement; related to the class and course material; advance the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs; are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

#### **Unacceptable behaviors are:**

(a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs. (b) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors (see above). (c) Using offensive or inappropriate language, engaging in arguments with other students, and being verbally aggressive. (d) Ignoring your instructor's authority to protect the integrity of the class. Anyone who violates these guidelines will be asked to cease and desist and may be removed from the discussion board and/or dropped from the course.

### Syllabus Changes

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. In the unlikely event that we need to change the dates listed for activities or assignments as the semester progresses, you will be notified by email and through the course **Announcements**.

## Course Schedule

The following calendar delineates the course activities throughout the semester. It is your responsibility, however, to regularly check the **Announcements** area at our course website for the most up-to-date information on due dates and other course related matters.

	<u>Exercises</u>	<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Discussions</u>	<u>Tests</u>
<i>Available by</i>	<i>Saturday 8:00 AM</i>	<i>Saturday 8:00 AM</i>	<i>Wednesday 8:00 AM</i>	<i>Wednesday 8:00 AM</i>
<i>Complete by</i>	<i>Monday 12:00 PM</i>	<i>Wednesday 12:00 PM</i>	<i>Friday 11:55 PM</i>	<i>Friday 11:55 PM</i>
<b>Week 1: August 25-29</b> <b>Welcome to the course</b>	Complete Week 1 Exercise. (Not graded)	Look through textbook  Read Week 1 Lecture	Discussion ground rules. Introduce yourself (graded)	Practice Test (not graded)
<b>Week 2: September 1-5</b> <b>Introduction &amp; Overview</b>	Complete Week 2 Exercise	Read Chapter One: <i>The Field of Social Psychology</i>  Read Week 2 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s). Add any comments or questions you have.	Week Two Test
<b>Week 3: September 8-12</b> <b>Thinking about the social world</b>	Complete Week 3 Exercise	Read Chapter Two: <i>Social Cognition</i>  Read Week 3 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s).	Week Three Test
<b>Week 4: September 15-19</b> <b>Understanding others</b>	Complete Week 4 Exercise	Read Chapter Three: <i>Social Perception</i>  Read Week 4 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s).	Week Four Test
<b>Week 5: September 22-26</b> <b>Understanding ourselves</b>	Complete Week 5 Exercise	Read Chapter Four: <i>The Self</i>  Read Week 5 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s).	Week Five Test
<b>Week 6: September 29-October 3</b> <b>Review Week</b>		Review Chapters One - Four	Answer discussion question(s).	No test.
<b>Week 7: October 6-10</b> <b>Understanding our response to the social world</b>	Complete Week 7 Exercise	Read Chapter Five: <i>Attitudes</i>  Read Week 7 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s).	Week Seven Test

	<b><u>Exercises</u></b>	<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	<b><u>Discussions</u></b>	<b><u>Tests</u></b>
<i>Available by</i>	<i>Saturday 8:00 AM</i>	<i>Saturday 8:00 AM</i>	<i>Wednesday 8:00 AM</i>	<i>Wednesday 8:00 AM</i>
<b><i>Complete by</i></b>	<b><i>Monday 12:00 PM</i></b>	<b><i>Wednesday 12:00 PM</i></b>	<b><i>Friday 11:55 PM</i></b>	<b><i>Friday 11:55 PM</i></b>
<b><i>Week 9:</i></b> <i>October 20-24</i> <b>Understanding Attraction</b>	Complete Week 9 Exercise	Read Chapter Seven: <b><i>Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships</i></b>  Read Week 9 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s).	Week Nine Test
<b><i>Week 10:</i></b> <i>October 27-31</i>	Complete Week 10 Exercise	Read Chapter Eight: <b><i>Social Influence</i></b>  Read Week 10 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s).	Week Ten Test
<b><i>Week 11:</i></b> <i>November 3-7</i> <b>Review Week</b>		Review Chapters Five – Eight	Answer discussion question(s).	No test.
<b><i>Week 12:</i></b> <i>November 10-14</i>	Complete Week 11 Exercise	Read Chapter Nine: <b><i>Prosocial Behavior</i></b>  Read Week 11 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s).	Week Twelve Test
<b><i>Week 13:</i></b> <i>November 17-21</i>	Complete Week 13 Exercise	Read Chapter Ten: <b><i>Aggression</i></b>  Read Week 13 Lecture	Answer discussion question(s).	Week Thirteen Test
<b><i>Week 14:</i></b> <i>November 24-28</i> <b>Thanksgiving: No Assignments</b>				
<b><i>Week 15:</i></b> <i>December 1-5</i>	Complete Week 15 Exercise	Read Chapter Eleven: <b><i>Groups and Individuals</i></b>  Read Week 15 Lecture		Week Fifteen Test