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Textbooks:

Social Psychology: Goals in Interaction (4th edition), by Kenrick, Neuberg, & Cialdini.

Readings in Social Psychology (7th edition), edited by Wayne Lesko.

(These books are offered in a package at the bookstore new, or separately used.)

Social Psychology:

(3 credit hours; prerequisite PSY 101 plus three additional hours in PSY or SOC): "The scientific study of the individual in relation to other individuals, groups and cultural settings with special emphasis upon symbolism, socialization, value orientation, dynamics of behavior, perception of group structure and dynamics, intergroup relations and intergroup tensions."

This course investigates the mental processes, situational factors, individual differences, and group phenomena that influence **the way people interact with other people**. The range of topics covered by social psychology is limited only by the degree to which the topic involves **the influence of people on other people**.

In other words, social psychology is a **broad field** that tries to **scientifically** investigate the **mental** and **behavioral** aspects of our interactions with other people. It looks at the ways people *influence one another*, at the ways people *think about one another*, at the ways we come to *think about ourselves*, at the ways aspects of our *personalities come to influence our actions* around other people *and our thoughts about other people*, and so on. Some of the specific topics that we'll cover in this class are: **conformity and social influence** (how others get us to do what they want us to); **person perception** (how we process thoughts about people and come to our conclusions about them); **self** (how we come to think about ourselves and get others to think of us); **attitudes** (how we develop and act upon likes and dislikes, including prejudices); **aggression** (how we come to act violently against others); **helping** (how we come to assist others); **attraction** (how we come to like or dislike others); **group processes** (what happens when people form groups); and perhaps **health behavior** (how our social actions influence our physical and mental health).

The course takes a psychological perspective of most of these topics, although in social psychology there are both psychological and sociological viewpoints. Some of the topics, for example, allow us to do as much sociology as psychology (we'll clarify the difference between the two in class). One of the main aspects of a psychological approach, however, is the methods of study – **strictly scientific**. Since most students haven't had much exposure to research methodology, or the scientific method, we'll spend a little of our time reviewing how social scientists do their work. There won't be any heavy statistics to deal with, though, so the course should be anxiety-free.

The departmental **Course Learning Outcomes** state that successful students should be able to:

- * outline the factors that affect personal motivations and perceptions of self, others, and situations;
- * describe situational factors that constrain human action;
- * analyze the complexity of action in social contexts by combining person and situation factors;
- * describe the methods used to obtain knowledge about social behavior; and
- * demonstrate an application of social psychological knowledge to the real world.

Additional objectives:

- * In general, seek to understand the patterns that social psychologists have discovered and discussed, the ways these patterns have been broken down into component parts, the explanations given for the patterns, the way they've been researched, and the consequences that come from knowing the material.
- * A secondary objective, as always, is to contribute to your general education: developing the attitudes and behaviors (especially those expressed through written communication) that are necessary to survive and thrive in college and beyond, and to become college educated people.

Grades:

There will be four short-essay styled quizzes and your combined quiz grade is worth **40%** of the final course grade. We'll have one formal term paper worth **20%**, a few pass-fail homework assignments worth **20% total** (combined), and a (cumulative) final exam worth **20%** of the final course grade. You'll need a total grade of "90" for an A- (which is usually difficult to achieve), "80" for a B-, "70" for a C-, and so on when all is completed.

(Anyone using documented testing accommodations must inform me one week before the quiz.)

The term paper and written homework assignments will be detailed in class. The following guidelines apply to all assignments. (Also see the last page of this syllabus for some tips on writing.)

The term paper should be 1000 – 1500 words in length. All assignments will be graded for thought content, clarity, and English (grammar, syntax, spelling, organization, etc.). *All assignments (including homework) should be typed or submitted electronically.* Computers are available for your use at the MCC Learning Center. Papers should be double-spaced, neatly ordered, and stapled together. See the tips for writing at the end of this syllabus. If you're not in class you may submit assignments by E-mail as attached documents (RTF, Word, PDF, or Open Office; *not* Works); see my E-mail address on page one.

If you are not satisfied with the grade on the term paper or homework, you may rewrite it and hand in an improved version. The rewritten work is eligible for a maximum one letter grade improvement (i.e., a change in grade is not guaranteed, and the maximum improvement will be one full letter, such as from B- to A-, or on homework from P to P+), however, I will not provide comments or justifications for the rewritten work. (This option does not apply to tests, and you forfeit this option on late assignments. Rewrites are due within one week after you get your graded assignment back.)

Assignments turned in late will be devalued one-third of a grade (e.g., from B to B-) for each class period, and are ineligible for rewriting (for a grade change). However, due-date extensions can be given for consecutive *excused* absences.

For return of your final examination and last homework assignment, bring a self-addressed, stamped envelope (large enough to hold whatever you wish returned).

Michael S. Ofsowitz:

Born and raised here in the Rochester area. Studied psychology and sociology at The University of North Carolina-Charlotte, before going to Tulane University (New Orleans) for graduate study in social psychology. I joined Monroe Community College in the Fall, 2002, and spent 13 of the preceding years teaching to (mostly) Americans in Europe (in military environments) with the University of Maryland. I teach psychology (intro, social psych, behavior mod, superstitions, development) and have taught sociology (intro, social problems, social psych, self, American society). I'm recently widowed, have one child (a son), enjoy French food, forests, and comedy. I'm an assistant professor here at MCC. Feel free to call me anything polite (Mike, Michael, Mr. Ofsowitz, professor, or "teach"; ... just about anything but "sir"). I have a web site at <http://web.monroecc.edu/mofsowitz>.

OUTLINE OF LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENTS:

(The dates below represent the start of each week only, except quiz dates. "Chapter" refers to assigned readings in the Kenrick et al. textbook. "Article" refers to the numbered article in the Readings book. You should read all material prior to the class scheduled so that you'll be prepared to participate in class discussions. You should re-read the "chapter" assignments after class so that it'll really sink in. Though it already seems like plenty, I might provide a few additional readings in class. Most class handouts will be available on MCC e-Reserves.)

- Sept. 8:** Introduction to social psychology (**chapter 1 through p.16, and pp.28-32; skim chapter 14**).
- Sept. 15:** Science in social psychology (**chapter 1, pp.16-28, articles 1 & 3**).
- Sept. 22:** The person and the situation (**chapter 2, article 9**).
- Sept. 24:** **Quiz**.
- Sept. 29:** Social cognition (**chapter 3, articles 5, 7, & 8**).
- Oct. 6:** More on social cognition.
- Oct. 8:** **Quiz**.
- Oct. 13:** The self (**chapter 4, article 13**).
- Oct. 20:** Attitudes and persuasion (**chapter 5, articles 10, 11, & 12**).
- Oct. 27:** Social influence and conformity (**chapter 6, articles 25, 26, & 27**).
- Oct. 29:** **Quiz**.
- Nov. 3:** Friendship, attraction, and maybe love (**chapters 7 & 8, articles 19, 20, & 22**).
- Nov. 10:** Prosocial behavior (**chapter 9, articles 28 & 29**). And a lesson on writing papers.
- Nov. 17:** Explaining human aggression (**chapter 10, articles 32, 33, & 15**).
- Nov. 24:** **Quiz**. (and then THANKSGIVING break)
- Dec. 1:** Prejudice and discrimination (**chapter 11, articles 16, 17, & 18**).
- Dec. 8:** Group dynamics (**chapter 12, articles 34 & 36**).
- Dec. 15:** Loose ends (*perhaps* a discussion of courtroom activities [**articles 41 & 42**], and health behavior [**article 43**]). Wrap-up (**chapter 14**), and review.
- Exam week:** Cumulative final exam. (Date to be set by college.)

The fine print

A note on attendance, absences, and make-ups:

I take attendance at the *start* of class, and it shows me that you're interested enough in class to be here. There's no official attendance policy and your grade isn't based on attendance, but if you ever need a break or are on the borderline between two grades, you'll want me to think that you're interested in class and are trying, and attendance helps send that message. If you're in class but sleeping, or playing with your phone, you are not really there, and I may count you absent. If you miss class, you should find out from other students what went on. Ask them for copies of notes, detailed explanations of the material, or, if available, tape recordings. Be willing to help your fellow students, too. I'm available to clarify any problems you might have understanding course material or assignments whether or not you were absent, but I won't provide reviews for missed classes. Due to the nature of the course, any absence may lead to lower grades. If you miss class on a test/quiz day you *must* have a valid excuse and *must* contact me. Make-up tests must be completed within one week from the original test date, unless valid excuses (medical emergency, business travel, military deployment) keep you from returning to the classroom. (Such absences require documentation.) I'm not good about returning calls, but you may leave messages, or try to contact me "live" at 292-3223; I do reply to E-mail. If you miss the final exam and fail to contact me by the weekend immediately following the exam, anything can happen to your grade; an incomplete is not a default.

Incomplete (grade of I):

The grade of I, or incomplete, is available for special cases where the student is unable to finish the course by the scheduled end of the term. To receive an I, students who are having problems finishing the course as scheduled must fulfill the following requirements: 1) 60% of the graded assignments must be completed at the time of the request; 2) 60% of the class sessions must have been attended by the end of the course; 3) the student must provide evidence of a valid reason for not finishing the graded assignments by the end of the course; 4) the student must request an incomplete in writing, prior to the last day of the course, and this request must include the reason for the extension and a date by which the work for the course will be completed (which should not exceed one week from the expiration of the reason for the I). Granting the grade of I, and setting a date for its completion remain at the total discretion of the instructor. For students who are unable to finish the course as scheduled, alternatives to the grade of I include the W (withdrawal, see below) and the F (failure).

Plagiarism and cheating:

Plagiarism is academic dishonesty. In other words, it's a big word for cheating. If you're caught plagiarizing, or cheating in some other form, you may wind up failing the assignment and being reported to the college. The Psychology Department's policy on plagiarism, available in the "courses" folder of the M-drive, describes the conditions that define plagiarism for this course. The most common form of plagiarism is using someone else's work as if it were your own. That is, by copying the *work* of another person and presenting that work as if *you* wrote it, you are plagiarizing. To avoid plagiarism you should learn how to paraphrase and how to use *quotation marks*. If you put someone else's *ideas* into *your own words* (and not just a rearrangement of the original words) you don't need the quotation marks but you still need to cite your source. Citing your source is necessary, but often not sufficient to avoid plagiarism.

Under no circumstances should you ever use the work of a fellow student in any of your written work. You must write your own product. Anything else is down-right cheating.

I highly recommend that you get an English manual of some sort to help you avoid some of the common mistakes that result in accusations of plagiarism. *Diana Hacker's Pocket Style Manual* is one such guidebook. I also have a web page at <http://web.monroecc.edu/manila/webfiles/mofsowitz/plag.html> that will be of help.

Respect:

- **Don't make unnecessary noise in the classroom, or use a phone during class. Really. Nothing bugs me more than to see you playing with your cell phone while I'm teaching, and nothing bugs your classmates more than you making noise while they're trying to listen to something else.**
- Try to be patient with fellow students and assume they have good intentions. They're not all as bright as you, obviously ☺. And listen to what they're saying.
- Don't dominate discussions: allow time for others, who might be shier than you, to respond.
- We're playing with ideas in class, so don't assume people believe what they're talking about.
- Take a joke, but don't insult anyone (or at least insult everyone equally and in good taste).
- Treat the classroom as a confidential situation, and don't gossip about it.
- Speak in the first person; recognize that your opinions are your own and that you don't speak for others.
- Be nice (respect others), try to learn something (respect college), and take responsibility for your future (respect yourself). If need be, at least fake it, and consider it a professional responsibility.

Quirks about the way I grade:

A checkmark (✓) is a good sign. It means “yes,” or “right,” or “good.” If I actually write “good,” I really mean it; I use superlatives (“great paper,” “excellent”) as rarely as I use my cell phone (which I usually can’t even find). On the whole, when I grade your written work, I point out weaknesses and errors in the optimistic hope that you’ll learn to correct them in the future. It also expresses my assumption that your self-esteem is not so important, or so fragile that it’ll crush under the weight of a short series of corrections from a college teacher. Actually, I’d like nothing better than to give you good grades. I’d bet your doctor would like nothing better than to report good health. Like your physician, though, I’m duty bound to inform you of problems and deficiencies; use the information wisely.

Withdrawals:

To withdraw from this course, pick up a withdrawal form at the Registration Office. After completing the form, come discuss the withdrawal with me and get my signature. Return the withdrawal form to the Registration Office, Counseling Center at Brighton, or the Student Center at Damon. You will then receive a grade of “W” for the course.

You should not assume that failing to attend class will result in an automatic withdrawal from a course. Your non-attendance may result in a grade of F and thus jeopardize your average. However, I might withdraw you from the class if you stop coming.

Transfer issues:

If you transfer this course to a four-year college and *do not* receive credit for “Social Psychology,” I will help you appeal to the psychology department at your new institution.

Learning Centers:

Monroe Community College has a number of Learning Centers at Brighton (for example, Accounting, Math, Psychology, Writing, the Electronic Learning Center, etc.) and at Damon (for example, the Integrated Learning Center, Electronic Learning Center, etc.). Learning centers are staffed with instructional personnel and may be equipped with computers and software to assist students.

It is recommended that you use the Learning Centers to get additional help with concepts learned in the classroom and with homework. Please refer to your MCC student email to review your referral and objectives for your use of the Learning Center(s).

The Writing Center at Brighton is located in 11-208; it accepts walk-in and appointment sessions. If your writing is at all weak, I *highly* recommend that you make use of the tutoring services at the Writing Center. It’s there to help you. Watch the feedback I give you on homework assignments: I might refer you to the Writing Center, and I expect you to go there for tutoring if I do. If you have broader reading, study habit, or language problems, I recommend the Interdisciplinary Learning Center in 11-211. The Electronic Learning Center is located in room 11-106.

Emergency closings:

If the College is **closed** due to inclement weather or some other emergency, all Rochester area radio and television stations will be notified no later than 5:30 a.m. In addition, the homepage on the MCC website (www.monroecc.edu) will display a message indicating the College is closed. Please do not call the College to avoid overloading the telephone lines.

Class cancellation information is available daily on the web or through the telephone. Simply go to the MCC website (www.monroecc.edu) and under the “Quick Links” window on the homepage click on “Class Cancellations.” Additionally, class cancellation information is available by dialing 292-2066, press “1” for the Brighton campus or “2” for the Damon campus. If possible, please use the web as there could be delays in the voice recordings based on the number of cancellations.

SOME TIPS FOR WRITING ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

1. Always *think* before writing. Don't write a paper without thinking first. Jot down your ideas, then sort through them; discard those of little value, and arrange the others in some logical order, using an outline for organization.
2. Avoid *plagiarism* at all costs. When you copy words, an idea, or other information from another source, you *must* give credit to the original source. Failure to give credit for ideas, information, or words is called plagiarism, and may lead to failure on the assignment, or if intentional and repeated, failure in the course. (When you use the exact same words as you find in another source, such as a textbook, use quotation marks ["..."] in your paper around the copied selection when the selection is three successive words or more. If you alter the exact wording only a little, you can be in big trouble, so either copy exactly and quote, or paraphrase cleanly.) See tip five, below, for sources showing you how to give credit where credit is due, and also the "PLAGIARISM" link on my web site.
3. Begin your essay with a clear introduction. Your introduction should do two things: 1) it should introduce *the reader* to the topic, clarifying whatever concepts you introduce; and 2) it should show *the reader* what your intentions are for the remainder of the paper. End the essay with a conclusion that summarizes the paper, and draws it to a natural, clean close.
4. Be clear about what you are writing. Clarity demands that you understand what you are talking about and that you communicate it to a reader who is not reading your mind, but is reading your writing. A terse style, or one using terminology carelessly, does not make for clear writing. Also, try avoiding wordy phrases. If necessary, work on your use of punctuation, past and present tense problems, the active voice, and other aspects of the English essay (see point 5).
5. Use an English handbook to learn what you need to learn about basic writing mechanics. In addition to the rules, they show plenty of examples. Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual* is a good source, as are the *Harbrace College Handbook*, Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*, the *American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual*, the *Chicago Manual of Style* and other such sources (including <http://www.refdesk.com/factgram.html>). Use a dictionary *and* spell-check for spelling and a thesaurus to improve your vocabulary. Visit the Writing Learning Center for tutoring.
6. Avoid sexist or biased language. Find substitutes for "he or she," s/he, he/she, his/her, etc. (For example, rewrite to form a plural.) Use unbiased phrases when referring to different types of people (no "damn Commies" when you should use "Russians"). Be polite to groups of people.
7. *Proofread* what you've written. Once you're down to your final draft (which should not be your first or even second draft, but maybe your *third* or *tenth*), give it a final, careful proof. Make corrections on the final draft in pencil before you turn it in. If you find too many errors, rewrite once more.
8. Double-space everything. This means using a 2-line spread for a 12-point font. (And use an 11 or 12-point font; nothing *too small* (8) or *too large* (14). An 11-point Times New Roman is usually a good choice.) Do *not* add extra space between paragraphs as in a business letter. *Indent* the start of each *paragraph* half an inch. Leave margins around the entire text of the paper (about 1" – 1.5"). Do *not* align the text to the right margin of the paper (don't "right-justify" or "full justify").
9. Number all the pages in the upper-right corner, flush with the right margin. Follow the APA style of providing a condensed title to your pages, just to the left of the page number in the upper-right corner. The condensed title is a short version of your paper's title.
10. In my classes only: you don't need a cover sheet or title page. Make sure your name appears somewhere on your paper. Staple the pages together yourself (don't ask me to do it for you; I'm not your secretary). No plastic folders! Paper (e.g., manila) folders are acceptable.
11. **Follow the guidelines above!**