

Social Psychology for Applied Practice (PSY 646)

Professor: Dr. Sarah Beth Bell

E-mail: sarah.bell@wku.edu

Cell: 615-957-1106

Class structure: asynchronous distance learning

Office hours: by appointment to better accommodate student schedules. E-mail me and I will gladly arrange a time to meet with you.



Course catalog description:

Examines the impact of situations, relationships, and attributions on behavioral health and disorder development, diagnosis, and treatment. Explores the application of social psychological theories to the practice of clinical and school psychology.

Professor credentials: My PhD from the University of Kentucky is in social psychology with a focus on social neuroscience. I have three primary research lines: bias and discrimination, pain (physical and emotional), and social determinates of health. Some of my research involves transcranial direct current brain stimulation, where electricity is applied to specific brain regions to make the neurons in those regions more likely to fire. You can learn more about my research here:

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=v-qKuJwAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>.

Structure of course:

This class has five units.

- **Each unit** contains **three lectures**, three core empirical readings, one **multiple choice and short essay test**, and a **short paper** based on specific journal articles and the lectures.
- You only have to write papers for three out of the five units of your choosing.
- Each paper prompt is based on one of the specific core readings, lecture content, and a supplemental article that is specific to the paper prompt.
- The multiple-choice and short essay tests constitute 40% of your grade, and the short papers constitute the remaining 60% of your grade.

Lectures: These are on PowerPoint slides with audio. For each slide, play the audio. The audio for each slide lasts somewhere between 30 seconds and 5 minutes, depending on how complex the topic is. I would encourage you to take notes while you listen to the PowerPoints. You shouldn't have to listen to them more than once if you take notes, though you can if you want to.

Core empirical reading: Each unit has a core reading of **three empirical articles**. There will be three short essay questions on each test to assess your critical thinking about these core papers as well as how they relate to each other and to lecture concepts.

Short papers: In this class, you will be asked to write **three short papers** based on a specific article from the core readings, the lectures, and a specific supplemental article that was not part of the core reading. Please keep in mind that you can choose which of the three units you want to write papers about.

Two paper prompts are offered in each unit. If you are writing a paper for that unit, you only have to choose one of the prompts. Each paper should be 3-5 pages (double spaced in 10-12 point font). Please do not write papers longer than 5 pages – challenge yourself to be concise.

Tests: The tests for this class are multiple choice and short essay. The purpose of the multiple-choice tests is to *reinforce* the concepts from the lecture. Each unit has an open book/open note test offered on a specific day. If you listen to the lectures carefully and take notes, you will be prepared to take the multiple choice part of the test.

Each test for this class also contains three essay questions with a suggested response length of about 150-250 words each. These questions relate to the core readings for the unit as well as the lectures. Examples of what the essay questions will be like would include comparing and contrasting papers, integrating lecture concepts with paper concepts, or critiquing the methodology of the papers.

Test scoring breakdowns are 70% for the multiple choice section and 10% each for the three essay questions. I am always happy to promptly answer clarification questions about the essay prompts during the test day.

Textbook:

You do not need to buy a textbook for this course. Everything you need for this class is free. My lectures draw from *Advanced Social Psychology: The State of the Science* by Roy Baumeister and Eli Finkel, as well as from primary source literature. The primary source literature will be uploaded to BlackBoard.



Blackboard: This asynchronous, virtual class is hosted on BlackBoard. More information on how to access and navigate BlackBoard can be found here:

<https://www.wku.edu/citl/services/tools/blackboard.php>. If you are having any issues figuring out how to navigate BlackBoard, e-mail me and I will help you until it makes sense to you.

You belong.
WKU black student alliance:
https://www.instagram.com/bsa_wku/
WKU pride center:
<https://www.wku.edu/isec/pride/>

Discussion board: This class does not have a discussion board. I have received a lot of feedback that many students do not feel they get much out of discussion boards, so we will focus on other learning metrics.

Finals: There are no finals or term paper in this class. Pedagogy research has informed my teaching philosophy of discrete units and papers as opposed to finals. It

should help you better understand what you are learning from a critical and nuanced viewpoint. I hope it's less stressful, too.

Make up work:

If you are sick or experiencing a major life event, you may be eligible to extend a deadline. However, you must discuss this need with me on the front end. To be fair to everyone, I do not allow make up work that was not discussed two days before the deadline except in cases of emergencies.

Distance learning information:

The content in this distance learning class is exactly the same as how I would present it if I were lecturing live. The difference from an in-person class is that you can listen to the lectures whenever it is a good time for you. Your WKU login and access to Blackboard serves as a way to verify your identity. As in an in-person class, critical thinking will be assessed via your papers that ask you to integrate concepts from multiple empirical articles and the concepts discussed in the lecture. The paper feedback will also help you learn how to best communicate the critical thinking you demonstrate in your papers. An additional way I assess critical thinking is through the essay questions on the test. I am always here to help you, as in person. You can e-mail or text me any questions, or we can talk things out over zoom as we would do at in-person office hours. Having office hours over zoom will also make it easier for us to talk outside of regular business hours if that is what works best for you (for example, after 5PM for people who work full time if needed). I am more than happy to work with you on the best ways to discuss content in this class or discuss your career trajectory more generally – whatever you need.

Disability statement:

A student with a disability may have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as learning, seeing, hearing, or mental health. WKU requires students who need accommodations for this course to contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center (sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please note that pregnancy can be considered to be a disabling event if accommodations are needed.

In my class, I also consider **active COVID-19**, although not part of the ADA definition of disability, to be eligible for accommodations. If you have it, we can discuss any accommodations that might help you complete the class. Please try to ask for accommodations as soon as you realize you may need them, i.e., before deadlines. I will gladly accommodate any disabilities you may have so you can have the best educational experience possible for you.

Plagiarism:

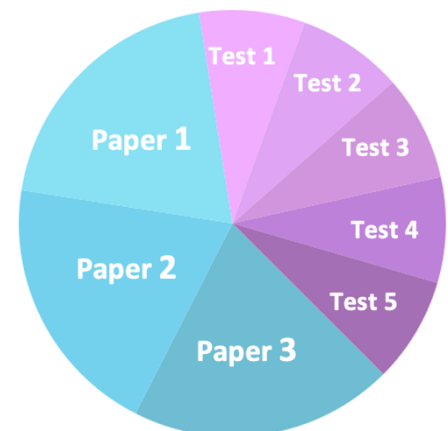
Plagiarism of any form, accidental or intentional, can result in failing the class. WKU's definition of plagiarism can be found at <https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php>. "I did not know that was considered plagiarism" is not an acceptable defense for plagiarizing.

Learning objectives of this class:

- You will learn about research methods that are specific to social psychology as well as generalizable across psychology as a field.
- There is a replication crisis in psychology, where classic studies are being debunked. You will gain critical thinking skills to determine the quality of the research methods used in empirical articles, and how that contributes to the validity and even trustworthiness of the paper's findings.
- You will increase your ability to synthesize literature that includes competing theories.
- External factors strongly influence. You will learn to identify how environment plays a large role in human behavior, and specific information about how changing the environment can change specific behaviors.
- You will be able to identify fallacies that will affect future therapy clients (cognitive dissonance, fundamental attribution error, judgment, and decision making, just to give a few examples).
- Group dynamics play often larger roles than many realize not only on the individual level but also on the societal level. We will discuss different types of group dynamics from a variety of perspectives.
- You will learn theories associated with the many counterintuitive research findings in social psychology.

Grading summary

Three papers	
Combined, they are worth 60% of your grade.	
	You need to write papers for three out of the five units. You get to choose which units.
	Each unit has two paper prompts to choose from.
	Each prompt requires you to read a supplemental article for that paper.
Five tests	
Combined, they are worth 40% of your grade.	
	Each test is multiple choice with three short essay questions drawing from the core readings.
	Answers to each essay question should be 150-250 words.
	The multiple choice part of the test comprises 70% of your test grade, and the essay questions comprise 10% each of your test grade.



Course schedule and topics

Unit 1			
Introduction to social psychology, the self, attitudes and perception			
Dates	1/18 to 2/5	Test Thursday, 2/4	Paper due Friday, 2/5
Core readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. <i>The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology</i>, 58(2), 203.2. James, I. A., Southam, L., & Blackburn, I. M. (2004). Schemas revisited. <i>Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy: An International Journal of Theory & Practice</i>, 11(6), 369-377.3. Paulhus, D. L., & Williams, K. M. (2002). The dark triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. <i>Journal of Research in Personality</i>, 36(6), 556-563.		
Unit 2			
Genes, gender, culture, conformity and obedience, persuasion			
Dates	2/7 to 2/25	Test Thursday, 2/24	Paper due Friday, 2/25
Core readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Coates, D. D. (2012). "Cult commitment" from the perspective of former members: Direct rewards of membership versus dependency inducing practices. <i>Deviant Behavior</i>, 33(3), 168-184.2. Cohen, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (1994). Self-protection and the culture of honor: Explaining southern violence. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i>, 20(5), 551-567.3. Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. <i>The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology</i>, 67(4), 371.		
Unit 3			
Group dynamics, prejudice, aggressive behavior			
Dates	2/28 to 3/25*	Test Thursday, 3/24	Paper due Friday, 3/25
Core readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Correll, J., Park, B., Judd, C. M., Wittenbrink, B., Sadler, M. S., & Keesee, T. (2007). Across the thin blue line: police officers and racial bias in the decision to shoot. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 92(6), 1006.2. DeWall, C. N., Enjaian, B., & Bell, S. B. (2016). Only the lonely. <i>Ostracism, Exclusion, and Rejection</i>, 95-112.3. Sherif, M. (1956). Experiments in group conflict. <i>Scientific American</i>, 195(5), 54-59.		
Unit 4			
Romantic attraction, altruism, conflict and peace			
Dates	3/28 to 4/15	Test Thursday, 4/14	Paper due Friday, 4/15
Core readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fehr, E., & Fischbacher, U. (2003). The nature of human altruism. <i>Nature</i>, 425(6960), 785-791.2. Janis, I. L. (1971). Groupthink. <i>Psychology Today</i>, 5(6), 43-46.3. Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. <i>Psychological Review</i>, 93(2), 119.		

Unit 5			
Psychology and the legal system, psychology and sustainability			
Dates	4/18 to 4/29**	Test Thursday, 4/28	Paper due Friday, 4/29
Core readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loftus, E. F. (1975). Leading questions and the eyewitness report. <i>Cognitive Psychology</i>, 7(4), 560-572. 2. Ofosu, E. K., Chambers, M. K., Chen, J. M., & Hehman, E. (2019). Same-sex marriage legalization associated with reduced implicit and explicit antigay bias. <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i>, 116(18), 8846-8851. 3. Verdugo, V. C. (2012). The positive psychology of sustainability. <i>Environment, Development and Sustainability</i>, 14(5), 651-666. 		

* This unit includes Spring Break, so it is 4 weeks long instead of 3. This is to help make sure that you have time to take a true break from this course.

**Unit 5 is 2 weeks instead of 3, so there are only two lectures, and one is shorter than usual.

Welcome to the course!