Psychology 703: Social Bases of Behavior

"There is nothing so practical as a good theory"
Kurt Lewin (1951, p. 169)

Spring, 2013
Instructor: Stephen J. Zaccaro
Office: DK 3066B; 993-1355
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 - 4:00; Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00; and by appointment
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Overview: This course provides students with a survey of the topics covering the social bases of behavior. We will examine some of the historical and philosophical foundations of social psychology, as well as theories, models, and research on various social phenomena. We will also become familiar with predominant research methodologies of social psychologists. This class will follow a seminar format. This means that you should read the assigned articles before class time and be prepared to discuss/critique them.

Outline of Topics:

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<td>Self &amp; Self Regulation</td>
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Grading: Your grade in this class will be based on several assignments. The first is annotated bibliography to be completed with another class member on any topic related to social psychology; this topic however should be related to the topic of your applied social psychology project. This assignment will be worth 20% of your grade and is due on March 19th. The second will be an applied social psychology project completed with same person that you worked with on the annotated bibliography. For this assignment your team will chose a social problem to address or a problematic community wide social problem, to change. I will provide some examples of possible topics in class. After you identify the problem you want to address, your tasks will be to (a) identify key constituencies and conduct focus groups to determine social drivers of the behavior/problem you are address, identify barriers to change, and ascertain feasibility and obstacles to potential interventions; (b) prepare a intervention proposal that describes your intervention and the conceptual rational for your intervention; in this proposal you will need to summarize what you learned in your focus groups that informed your proposal. Finally, you will need to include an evaluation plan that can be used to determine whether your intervention worked. Your interventions proposal must be grounded in social psychological theory and research. This proposal will be worth 40% of your grade and is due April 30th. The third assignment will be a
cumulative take-home final examination, to be distributed on April 30 and due on May 14. This exam is worth 30% of your grade.

This class is intended to be a seminar class, with considerable discussion expected among class members. As a fourth assignment, you will be required as part of a team to be responsible for presenting two of the assigned articles each week and leading the class discussion on that article. Each week I will assign a "participation grade" to you that will reflect (a) your individual preparation and participation in the class discussion, and (b) your group's preparation for and facilitation of the class discussion. I will assign the papers to your group for the following week's discussion. This participation assignment will be worth 10% of your grade. I will give further instruction on the first day of class about how to prepare your analysis and facilitation of articles. Please note that all members of the class are responsible for reading all of the articles each week, not just the ones assigned to your group.

Additional details about these assignments will be provided in the first class.

Required Textbooks:


Honor Code: The provisions of the George Mason University honor code apply to all aspects of this course.

Other Important Dates

- Last day to drop with no penalty: January 29th
- Last day to add: January 29th
- Last day to drop with penalty: February 22nd
- Last day of classes: May 6th
- Reading Days: May 7th

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Office (703-993-2474). All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
Readings

Introduction, Definitions, Historical foundations


Social Cognition:


Self Theory and Self Regulation


Attitudes and Attitude Formation


**Persuasion and Social Influence**


**Small Groups**


**Social Biases and Intergroup conflict**


Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships


Helping; Prosocial Behavior


Aggression


Applied Social Psychology


