PSYC 231: Social Psychology – Section DL1

Spring 2023

Asynchronous

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Office Hours: Zoom meeting, by appointment

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## Course Description

Welcome! This course is designed to provide you with information on a wide variety of topics relevant to social psychology, the study of the people in social context and groups. This course is **completely online** with **no scheduled class meetings,** which means a great deal of responsibility rests on each student’s shoulders. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. This course meets the Mason Core requirement in the Social and Behavioral Sciences category.

## Blackboard Login Instructions

Access to [MyMason Blackboard](http://mymason.gmu.edu/) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Click on the link for PSYC 231-DL1. The class website in Blackboard will contain access to videos, assignments, the discussion board, exams, and other course resources. All course activities will take place in Blackboard, so it is important to login and begin to explore the various components in the first days of the semester. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check [the IT Support Center](http://itservices.gmu.edu/) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](https://coursessupport.gmu.edu/Students/) for help and information about Blackboard.

## Required Textbooks

Pearson

Social Psychology, 10e

By Aronson, Wilson, & Sommers

You may purchase or rent a digital copy of the textbook. The exams will be provided to you via Blackboard.

There are several tools (flashcards, e-text, audio text, etc.) available to you through the Pearson account to use throughout this course. These should all be available to you through the course once you complete the necessary steps with Pearson. In addition to these tools, I have also posted PowerPoint slides under the course content area of Blackboard. The majority of these slides have been created by the previous instructor for teaching this course “live” and in person. I have added these to Blackboard in case it is helpful to you to see bullet important points for each chapter. Please note, these slides were created based on an earlier version of the textbook.

If you choose to buy the digital text, you can purchase it on the Pearson+ website here: <https://www.pearson.com/store/en-us/pearsonplus/p/9780137477197.html>

## Course Learning Outcomes

You will develop the following skills.

1. Generate hypotheses about human behavior in social situations.
2. Design ways to test their hypotheses about human behavior.
3. Describe the ways in which the human brain uses automatic pilot thinking to make everyday life easier.
4. Synthesize information from social psychological research about how the use of automatic pilot thinking leads to conformity, prejudice, and other group processes.
5. Describe the ways in which we can use high effort thinking to improve our understanding of human behavior in social contexts.

## Institutional Learning Outcomes (Mason Core)

## 1. Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors;

## 2. Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs;

## 3. Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present.

## Technology Requirements

* **Blackboard:** Mason Blackboard (https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu) will be used to view announcements, access course material, check grades, and complete homework assignments.
* **GMU Email:** Official communication will be conducted via GMU email. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly.

**Course Schedule**

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| **MODULES** | **MATERIALS AND CONTENT** | **ASSIGNMENTS** | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE BY 11:59 pm EST** |
| **Module 1**  **01/23 - 2/14** | **Introduction, Research Methods, Social Cognition, Social Perception**   1. Chapter 1 - Introducing Social Psychology 2. Chapter 2 -Methodology: How Social Psychologists Do Research 3. Chapter 3 - Social Cognition 4. Chapter 4 - Social Perception | 1. **Introductions** 2. **Group Activity #1**   (ch 2, 3, and 4)  **1. Part 1**  **2. Part 2**   1. **Exam #1** (ch 3 and 4)   (\*\*Exams can be found in the assigned Module) | **1. Introductions**   * **Tuesday 1/24**   **2. Group Activity #1**   * **Part 1 – Tues. 1/31** * **Part 2 – Tues. 2/07**   **3. Exam #1**   * **Tuesday 2/14** |
| **Module 2**  **02/15 - 3/07** | **The Self, Cognitive Dissonance, Attitudes and Attitude Change**   1. Chapter 2 -Methodology 2. Chapter 5 - The Self 3. Chapter 6 - Cognitive Dissonance and the Need to Protect Our Self-Esteem 4. Chapter 7 - Attitudes and Attitude Change: Influencing Thoughts and Feelings | 1. **Discussion Board and Peer Review #1 Cognitive Dissonance** (ch 2, 5, and 6)   **1. Part 1**  **2. Part 2**   1. **Self-assessment quizzes** (ch 5,6, and 7) 2. **Group Activity #2** 3. **Reflection Paper #1** (ch 7) | **1. Discussion Board and Peer Review #1**   * **Part 1 – Sunday 2/19** * **Part 2 – Friday 2/24**   **2. Self-assessment quizzes (3 total)**   * **Tuesday 2/28**   **3. Group Activity #2**   * **Friday 3/03**   **4. Reflection Paper #1**   * **Tuesday 3/07** |
| **Module 3**  **3/08 - 3/28** | **Conformity, Group Processes, and Interpersonal Attraction**   1. Chapter 2 - Methodology 2. Chapter 8 - Conformity and Obedience: Influencing Behavior 3. Chapter 9 - Group Processes: Influence in Social Groups 4. Chapter 10 - Attraction and Relationships: From Initial Impressions to Long-Term Intimacy | 1. **Discussion Board and Peer Review #2 Conformity** (ch 2, 8, 9, and 10):   **1. Part 1**  **2. Part 2**   1. **Exam #2** (ch 9 and 10) 2. **Reflection Paper #2** (ch 8 and 9) 3. **Group Activity #3** | 1. **Discussion Board and Peer Review #2**   * **Part 1 – Monday 3/13** * **Part 2 – Friday 3/17**   2. **Exam #2**   * **Tuesday 3/21**   3. **Reflection Paper #2**   * **Tuesday 3/28**   4. **Group Activity #3**   * **Monday 3/27** |
| **Module 4**  **3/29 - 4/18** | **Prosocial Behavior and Aggression**   1. Chapter 2 - Methodology 2. Chapter 11 - Prosocial Behavior: Why do People Help? 3. Chapter 12 - Aggression | 1. **Exam #3** (ch 11) 2. **Reflection Paper #3: Prosocial Behavior** (ch 11) 3. **Reflection Paper #4: Aggression** (ch 12) | 1. **Exam #3**   * **Friday 4/07**   2. **Reflection Paper #3**   * **Friday 4/14**   3. **Reflection Paper #4**   * **Tuesday 4/18** |
| **Module 5**  **4/19 - 5/7** | **Prejudice**   1. Chapter 2 - Methodology 2. Chapter 13 - Prejudice: Causes, Consequences, and Cures | 1. **Discussion Board and Peer Review #3 Stereotyping** (ch 7, 8, and 13):   **1. Part 1**  **2. Part 2**   1. **Reflection Paper #5: Stereotyping** (ch 13) 2. **Final Paper Group Activity** | 1. **Discussion Board and Peer Review #3**   * **Part 1 – Monday 4/24** * **Part 2 – Friday 4/28**   2. **Reflection Paper #5**   * **Wednesday 5/3**   3. **Final Paper Group Activity**   * **Sunday 5/7** |

## Assignments and Exams Description

**Introduction (0 points):** Get to know your fellow classmates! Please include a picture of yourself and a brief description of what you would like to share about yourself to the class discussion board.

**Exams (3 x 10 points each; 30 points total)**: There are 3 exams – they are on specific chapters. You will have unlimited attempts for each exam. The highest score will be your grade for that exam. You will have three hours to complete the exam. Exams are open book. \*\*\*Exam due dates and chapters are in the course schedule above\*\*\*

**Self-assessment Quizzes (3 x 5 points each; 15 points total)**: For module 2, you should complete the self-assessment quizzes for chapters 5, 6, and 7. These quizzes are designed to check your understanding of the content. Your grade will be based on completion of these quizzes, not based on how many you got correct or in correct. You will have unlimited attempts for these quizzes. There is no time limit.

**Reflection Papers (5 x 20 points each; 100 points total):** There are three individual reflection papers. Descriptions for each assignment and grading criteria will be in the assignment link in Blackboard. Each paper will be submitted through the assignment link in Blackboard by 11:59 PM on the due date (see the schedule in the syllabus). I will provide feedback and a grade on each paper. Papers should be 1-2 pages, double-spaced. If you exceed 2 pages, that’s okay!

**Discussion Board Posts and Peer Review (3 x 20 points each; 60 points total):** There are three different online discussion board and peer review activities. The purpose of these activities is to synthesize and apply the information that you are learning in each module. It is most beneficial to you if every student in the course receives peer feedback. In order to facilitate this, if a classmate already has two pieces of feedback, move on to a classmate who has not yet received feedback. Your grade for this activity is based mostly on your peer review, and much less on the content of what you originally submit... You will receive 2 points for creating your original. You will receive 18 points (see rubric) for providing feedback.

**Group Activities (4 x 20 points each; 80 points total):** The goal of the group activity is to use the information throughout the course to develop hypotheses about a social situation, identify independent and dependent variables using these hypotheses, and then design a study that will test your hypotheses. I have assigned you to groups randomly. Each person in the group will be graded individually, but you will submit the products during each module as a group. In total, you will do the following throughout the semester:

1. Describe a social situation.

2. Generate hypotheses about why people may behave in the way that they do in that social situation.

3. Describe what theory or theories that you have learned in class that led you to your hypothesis.

4. Describe an experiment designed to test your hypothesis. In this experiment, you need to describe you independent variable, you dependent variable, how these variables will be measured, who the participants will be, how the participants will be selected, and what they will actually do.

5. Describe the internal and external validity of your experiment. Do you think that your experiment has higher internal or external validity?

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## Course Policies

To succeed in this class, you will need to work hard to keep yourself on a timeline that allows you to complete material in a timely fashion. Almost all assignments and exams will be available at the beginning of the semester, so students who want to work ahead can do so. On the other hand, assignments and exams will have due dates, and assignments/exams that are completed late will be penalized in scoring (see below). Thus, if you fall behind, it will be hard to do well in the class. You will need to familiarize yourself with the online content associated with this course. Part of this will require reading all of the handouts and instructions provided. The instructor, ITS at George Mason, and online support at Pearson are available for assistance, but if you have difficulty with any of the resources, please be sure to read the associated instructions and handouts prior to requesting assistance.

**Late Assignments:** All assignments must be turned in on the due date given on the assignment sheet. I will take off one point for each day that an assignment is late.

**Communications Statement:** Official Communications via GMU E-mail: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content.

**Instructor-Student Communication:** The instructor is available by email throughout the entire session. You may email with questions, comments, and/or concerns. Throughout the semester, all emails will be answered within two business (i.e., M-F) days – although responses will usually come within one or 24 hours business day, please allow two business days or 48 hours. If I will be away from email for more than one day, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder.

Before sending an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) unless the email is of a personal nature:

* 1. Syllabus
  2. Ask Professor forum
  3. On-demand Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features, and Technical Requirements.

Feel free to respond to other students in the Ask Professor forum if you know the answer.

## Grading Scale

Your grade will based on points earned through several activities. Each graded activity is described above. Your grade is calculated out of a total of 285 points. **Please note:** In order to maintain a consistent and fair grading policy for everyone enrolled in the course, I will *not* make changes to any of the grading policies outlined above.

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| A  256 – 285 points (90% - 100%) | B+  248 – 255 points (87% - 89%) | B  228 – 247 points (80% - 86%) |
| C+  219 – 227 points (77% - 79%) | C  199 – 218 points (70% - 76%) | D  171 – 198 points (60% - 67%) |
| F  170 points and below (< 60%) |  |  |

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## University Policies and Resources

* + 1. **Academic Honesty:** George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. The University’s Honor Code can be found [here](https://oai.gmu.edu/full-honor-code-document/). Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. It is every student’s responsibility to familiarize themself with the Honor Code. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. **Please contact me if you have questions about what is or is not plagiarism before you turn in an assignment.**
    2. **Enrollment:** Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes (available from the Registrar's Website: registrar.gmu.edu). After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.
    3. **Communications:** Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

1. **Student services:** The University provides range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).
2. **Accommodations:** If you have any specific needs (e.g., related to vision, hearing, learning, or medical conditions) or any religious or cultural practices, please let me know by the second week of class so that I can make the appropriate arrangements. Disabilities must be documented by the Disability Resources Center (703-993-2474) for reasonable accommodations to be provided. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS)](http://ods.gmu.edu/) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester.
3. [The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)](http://caps.gmu.edu/) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance. Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380. Web-site [here](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/).
4. [Diversity](http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/): George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth**.** An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds, and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard, and respected.
5. **Title IX:** Notice of a mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee”, and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling & Psychology Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing [cde@gmu.edu.](mailto:cde@gmu.edu)
6. **Religious Holidays:** A list of religious holidays is available on the University Life Calendar page. See the [Religious Holiday Calendar](http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/). Any student whose religious observance conflicts with a scheduled course activity must contact the Instructor at least 2 weeks in advance of the conflict date in order to make alternative arrangements.

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