

# **Sociology 31: Introduction to Social Psychology**

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“Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both” (C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*).

“The body is not a self as such; it becomes a self only when it has developed a mind within the context of social experience” (G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*).

## **Course Description:**

This class will introduce you to the basic concepts of social psychology. Social psychology seeks to illuminate the connections between society and the individual, paying particular attention to how social forces shape individual attitudes and behavior. The relationship between the individual and society is complex and fascinating. We will begin by examining symbolic interactionism and other theories of social psychology. Next, we will look at the role of language in the creation of social reality in order to see how individuals use language and symbols to create and understand their social environments. We will then discuss the processes of socialization and the creation of the self and identities within individuals. This will help us to understand how individuals become social, how they create and sustain identities, and the various types of identities that individuals can have. We will then discuss some topic areas in social psychology: social interaction and social relationships, conformity and obedience, deviance, helping and altruism, and social movements and collective action. We will use our foundation of social psychology to further our understanding of these areas of social life.

## **Course Objectives:**

This course seeks to foster critical thinking on the topic of how individuals and society interact and affect one another. In this class we will learn how individuals become social beings and how they construct the social world through everyday interaction. We will also begin to apply our knowledge of social psychology to the occurrences of our everyday lives in order to enrich our ability to understand the world around us.

**Course Evaluation:**

There are five components of the evaluation for this class.

1: Students will be asked to present one of the articles (not the chapters from Symbols, Selves and Social Reality). This is a group presentation and we will form groups on the first day of class. When doing this presentation, each group will bring in 5 discussion questions and will give a short (10 minute) presentation on the main points of the article.

2: Students are expected to attend and participate in class and this will comprise part of their final mark.

3: There will be 3 quizzes given in class. These quizzes will test the reading material. The highest 2 of the 3 marks will be used in the calculation of the student's final grade. The quizzes will be on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>.

4: There will be a paper due on the last day of class. For this paper, you will be expected to find a newspaper article and apply the concepts of social psychology to the article. How would the theories of social psychology be useful in helping us understand what is happening in this article? At least two of the areas of social psychology should be incorporated into this discussion (concepts from at least 2 of the days). The paper should be 4-6 pages long. (We will discuss this more as the quarter progresses).

5: There will be a final exam which will consist of short answer and essay questions. This exam will be in the exam period after the session (August 4<sup>th</sup>).

<b>Presentation:</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Participation:</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Quizzes:</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Paper:</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b><u>Final Exam:</u></b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Course Books:**

The main text for this class will be:

Sandstrom, Kent L., Daniel D. Martin, and Gary Alan Fine. (2003) Symbols, Selves, and Social Reality. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company.

There will also be a course reader which will have readings from the following sources:

Aronson, Eliot (ed.). (1999) Readings About The Social Animal. New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Branaman, Ann (ed.). (2001) Self and Society. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Brissett, Dennis and Charles Edgley. (1975) Life as Theater: A Dramaturgical Sourcebook. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.

Farberman, Harvey A. and Erich Goode. Social Reality. Prentice-Hall, Inc: Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Kollock, Peter and Jodi O'Brien. (1994) The Production of Reality. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Shibutani, Tamotsu. 1973. Human Nature and Collective Behavior. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books. \_

**Course Schedule:**

**Day 1: Introduction to the Course**

**Day 2 : What is Social Psychology? Theory**

**Readings:**

- SSSR Chapter 1 (P. 3-15, 20-32)
- “A Conception of and Experiments With ‘Trust’ as a Condition of Concerted Stable Actions” By Garfinkel in The Production of Reality.

**Day 3: Language and the Creation of Social Reality \*\*\*\*Quiz 1\*\*\*\***

**Readings:**

- SSSR Chapter 2
- “The Name of the Situation as Affecting Behavior” By Whorf in The Production of Reality.
- “Life as Theater: Some Notes of the Dramaturgical Approach to Social Reality” By Messinger, Sampson, and Towne in Life as Theater.

**Day 4: Socialization**

**Readings:**

- SSSR Chapter 3
- “Becoming a Marijuana User” By Becker in The Production of Reality.

**Day 5: The Self and Identity**

**Readings:**

- SSSR Chapter 4
- “The Looking Glass Self” By Cooley in The Production of Reality.
- “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” by Goffman in Self and Society.

**Day 6: Social Interaction and Social Relationships \*\*\*\*Quiz 2\*\*\*\***

**Readings:**

- “Marriage and the Construction of Reality” By Berger and Kellner in The Production of Reality.
- “‘Cooling Out’ Men in Singles Bars and Nightclubs” By Snow et. al. in Intersections: Readings in Sociology.

**Day 7: Conformity and Obedience**

Readings:

- “Opinions and Social Pressure” By Asch in Readings About the Social Animal.
- “Behavioral Study of Obedience” By Milgram in Readings About the Social Animal.
- “On the Personification of Adversaries” By Shibutani in Human Nature and Collective Behavior.

**Day 8: Deviance \*\*\*\*Quiz 3\*\*\*\***

Readings:

- SSSR Chapter 6
- “A Study of Prisoners and Guard in A Simulated Prison” By Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo in Readings About the Social Animal.
- “On Being Sane in Insane Places” By Rosenhan in Life as Theater.

**Day 9: Helping and Collective Action**

Readings:

- SSSR Chapter 8
- “‘From Jerusalem to Jericho’: A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior” By. Darley and Batson in Readings About the Social Animal.
- “Experiments in Group Conflict” By Sherif in Readings About the Social Animal.

**Day 10: Conclusion and Review**

**Day 11: FINAL EXAM**