

SOC/PSYCH 240
Social Psychology
Syllabus
Spring 2010

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Instructor Contact Information

Course Description

Ever wonder how people arrive at their decisions and how those decisions impact other people's lives? One of the fundamental elements of this course is to assist you as you think about the dynamic interplay between individuals and society. Social psychology provides explanations of the complex relationship between how people live, why people live in a particular way, and what difference culture and group membership has on people, institutions, and systems. The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with social psychology, providing a solid foundation for future study. This course is designed to assist students with their analytical and critical thinking skills. We'll examine the sociological imagination, and we'll explore the structure of society and the relationships of individuals to these structures. The overall goals of this course are to help students make sense of our social world and to better understand the behaviors of others.

Required Course Materials

1. O'Brien, Jodi (2006). *The Production of Reality (4th Ed.)*. Pine Forge Press, an Imprint of Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.
2. Selected course materials and various readings provided by the instructor, as needed.
3. Other selected web resources provided by the instructor, as needed.

Learning Objectives

- Develop an appreciation of social psychology.
- Understand key concepts, terms, assumptions, and patterns of analysis used in the discipline.
- Analyze the lives of individuals and groups as part of a larger social system.
- Understand how "social issues" connect to individual lives, groups, and institutions.
- Construct knowledge by discussing and interacting with others.
- Describe the major theoretical perspectives in social psychology.
- Critically identify, evaluate, and engage with claims.
- Exhibit improved written communication skills.

Valuing Diversity

I recognize and respect diversity in all of its forms, including ethnicity and race, gender, sexual identity, religion, class, age, and disability, among others. Human differences are our STRENGTHS, as they provide opportunities to learn new things, compare experiences, test our assertions, understand ourselves better, and, hopefully, find common ground. However, differences also sometimes engender conflict. In the midst of that conflict, I ask everyone to assert language and attitudes of respect, sensitivity, and awareness. Disrespectful attitudes will not be tolerated.

Students with Disabilities

All students are required to complete all aspect of the course, but the way in which some students meet those requirements may vary. Students with disabilities who have accommodation needs are required to meet with the Disability Resource Center (in Room B132) to establish their eligibility for accommodation. Telephone: (425) 564-2498. In addition, students are encouraged to review their accommodation requirements with me during the first week or two of the quarter.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability; if you have emergency medical information to share with me; please provide me with such information sooner rather than later so that I may assist you.

ALWAYS Keep Copies of Your Work

Please keep an accurate and organized record of your work in a safe place until the end of the quarter (when final grades are posted). When you turn in a paper, be sure you keep an electronic copy with your files. Further, it is a very good idea to print out this syllabus and save it in your college records (you should always save the syllabi from all of your classes). If you plan to transfer to a 4-year university, they may ask for copies of some of your syllabi, in order to check on the transferability/equivalency of a class.

Policy on Late Work

Part of the beauty of online classes is that they allow students the flexibility to complete the assignments according to their personal schedules. However, I need to grade the work in a timely manner, so I adhere to strict date and time deadlines. If you were enrolled in an on-campus

class, your work would be due at the start of class (say, 9:30am). Think of our due dates in a similar manner - ALL assignments and discussions should be completed by 10am on the listed due date. I am quite a stickler on due dates, so please learn to comply with all deadlines. I highly recommend that you plan to turn in your work early (with plenty of time to spare before the 10am deadline - you can even turn in your work days early!).

You may be wondering why I've set all the deadlines for 10am. Let me explain my reasoning. I could have set the deadlines as 5pm the day earlier, but I've decided to give you a few extra hours to complete the assignment since I know some students like to do their work late at night and others prefer to work in the morning. That is part of my rationale behind the 10am deadline. I also know that I likely won't get to grading before that (by the time I check my email and answer any questions). Most people turn in the assignment the day before (or even earlier), but some people actually like to stay up late or wake up in the morning and work on their assignments. If you don't like the 10am deadline, I suggest you enter the assignment on your calendar the day before it is due and pretend it is a midnight deadline. That works better for some people.

I highly, HIGHLY recommend that you also create a "back up plan" (a friend, family member, or BC computer lab) for what you will do if you lose your primary computer access. Please note that you are responsible for getting your work in on time REGARDLESS of the state of your computer or your Internet Service Provider (ISP). All late work will receive a zero grade. Due dates are indicated on the "Calendar" link on the lefthand side of the course website, so it is extremely important for you to stay on top of the Calendar. *Please do not contact me to see if I will accept your work late...it is your responsibility to plan ahead and avoid waiting until the last minute.*

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for upholding academic integrity and are expected to adhere to Bellevue College academic policies and procedures. Violations such as cheating and plagiarism are serious and will be reported to BC administration for disciplinary action. Further, if you cheat/plagiarize, you fail. (Please be advised that cheating includes copying material from other websites - including Wikipedia and others - and then submitting it as if it were your own.) No excuses will be taken into account.

Grading

<u>Description</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>
Reading Questions/Quizzes	5 @ 40 pts each = 200 points
Discussion & Responses	20 pts per week = 200 points
Reflection Papers	5 @ 40 pts each = 200 points
Formal Essays	2 @ 50 pts each = 100 points
Total	700
<u>Point and Grade Breakdown</u>	

651-700	A
630-650	A-
609-629	B+
581-608	B
560-580	B-
539-559	C+
511-538	C
490-510	C-
469-489	D+
420-468	D
419 and below <	F

Class Discussion Grading and Guidelines

This online class requires daily attention. For the duration of the quarter, your level of participation and self-initiative will dramatically affect your overall grade. Thus, if you are not good at remaining on top of things, or if you don't have good self-discipline about your classes/learning, then you may want to consider dropping this class. As with any online class, this class will require you to remain on top of the readings, assignments, and deadlines. In an online learning context, you are much more of an "independent" learner than you would be if enrolled in an on-campus class. Students who do best in online classes are, typically, those with a lot of maturity, independence, and self-initiative.

Each day of the work week, you will be expected to complete assigned readings before you engage in online discussion. In addition to your online participation, it is also expected you will be actively and thoughtfully engaged in our classroom environment. This level of participation means you actively "listen" to others (i.e. read what they have to say), you are attentive, and you share your informed (i.e. well-read) insights and thoughts. In order to score highly (As or Bs) on the class discussion portion of this course, you will need to do the following: (1) begin to make your discussion posts early in the week (do NOT wait until the last minute, like the night before discussion posts are due) - by posting early in the week, this provides your classmates the best opportunity to read what you have to say and to learn from you; (2) make at least 3-5 QUALITY discussion posts (posts that ADD something meaningful to the conversation); and (3) read most of your classmates' discussion posts. If you have any questions, comments and/or concerns about online discussion, please contact me. The following are some guiding principles.

1. Allow others to share their reasoned interpretations, analysis, and opinions even though you may disagree with them. You can respectfully ask individuals to critically examine their assumptions and beliefs in the face of empirical evidence or faulty logic.
2. Do not demean or diminish the experiences other people are willing to share in the class. You can ask others to conceptualize their experience within a larger social pattern (i.e. are they typical? Unusual?).
3. Have a sense of humor about our social worlds—be willing to accept other people's blunders without assuming they are intentionally trying to be offensive. By the same token, be mindful of inappropriate jokes, puns, and inappropriate innuendos.

4. Be committed to grow and learn about yourself. This includes a willingness to seriously read, study, and interpret empirical as well as anecdotal information.

Critically engage with the reading materials. Characterizing readings as “boring”, “difficult”, or “stupid” is not critically engaging with the materials. While some of the readings may be difficult and not as exciting as you would like, they offer evidence and analysis to help sharpen our understanding of social psychology as well as the world around us. Critically engaging with readings means identifying major claims, evaluating those claims based on evidence and logic, and developing a sociologically informed and thoughtful response to claims based on this analysis. This course requires that you make several postings throughout a discussion posting session. You should aim for at least 3-5 quality posts on each discussion, and you should read the vast majority of your classmates' posts. You must respond to at least two other students during a discussion posting session.

Formal Essays

The purpose of the essays is to discuss the key points from the readings. Essays should demonstrate how the readings increased your awareness and understanding of social psychology and various social phenomena. The goal is to measure your ability to SUMMARIZE (in your own words) and SYNTHESIZE materials. Do NOT simply reiterate or review each reading. Instead, identify the overarching central points of the reading and provide your informed thoughts about them. Your goal is to demonstrate that you’ve engaged with the material and developed your understanding of social psychology. Essays should be written in a formal style (no “text message” grammar, please) with an introduction and clear thesis rather than in a free-flowing journal-like style (more typical of reflection papers). The depth of your essay should demonstrate the degree to which you’ve reflected on the class material. The ideal length for your essay is approximately 800-1200 words (about two double-spaced pages) which means you will have to be concise, clear, and well-organized.

Reflection Papers

Reflection papers are just that—they are a reflection of your lived experience as it relates to the material in class. They are another venue to voice your concerns that you wouldn't normally voice through in-class discussion or essays. Reflection papers should be well developed and carefully constructed. **No late papers will be accepted.**

Reading Questions

Reading Questions are designed to assess your knowledge and understanding of the course readings and materials. In general, you will answer a handful of questions every other week. Your responses should not include your opinion, but rather, your academic understanding of the material. In most cases, you should plan to write about a paragraph for each Reading Question, and you should be as thorough as you can. It is your responsibility to demonstrate to me that you have read and fully comprehend the material.

Extra Help

If you find yourself struggling with anything in this course, **please** make an appointment to see me immediately so we are able to set you up for success throughout the duration of the course.

Reading Lab

The Reading Lab—located in A262—supports students to become better readers. Students can make use of the Reading Lab services by enrolling in a class which the lab supports, by referral from an instructor, or by registering to work independently.

Writing Lab

The Writing Lab—located in A262—is a place for students to go for help with any writing assignment or project, for any BCC class in any discipline or for personal needs such as resumes or college application essays. In addition, students may use the lab as a study space or reference center. Tutors are available at all times, and students who come to the Lab may work with tutors one-on-one.

A Note About Instructor Availability

I have noticed that, sometimes, students who enroll in online classes have unreasonable expectations about their Instructor's availability. Please be aware that I am not online 24-hours a day. In general, I am online for this class a couple of hours per day, DURING THE WORK WEEK. You will rarely be able to reach me in the evenings or on the weekends. I am, obviously, an active member of this course, but I do my coursework during the week, during daytime business hours. Thus, please do not send to me late-night or weekend emails expecting an immediate response.