



RPSY305 – Social
Psychology
Master Course Syllabus

Course Overview (QM Standards 1.2)

Course Description: This course examines the interaction of individuals in group situation, the products of collective activity, and their influence upon the individual. The primary goal is to explore the various ways in which people interact with others, with groups and with the larger society as a whole. Participants also seek to discover why people behave the way that they do. Social psychology addresses a large array of topics related to human interactions: attitudes, attraction, aggression, helping others, conformity and obedience. This knowledge has real-world applications in such fields as business, health, law and the environment.

Course Goals:

- Students will examine and discuss experiments and other empirical research relevant to the field of social psychology.
- Students will compare and contrast the research methodologies used in the scientific study of human Social Behavior.
- Students will identify, describe, and discuss major issues and concepts in the field of Social Psychology
- Students will describe how Social Psychology can be applied to real-world problems and issues

Pre-Requisites (QM Standard 1.6)

There are no course prerequisites for this course other than being an RBA (Regents Bachelor of Arts) student.

Minimum Technical Requirements and Online Resources (QM Standards 1.5 & 1.7)

In addition to a web browser (preferable Firefox) that is Blackboard compatible, you will need the other WVROCKS supported technologies outlined in the student policies section. You should know how to access and use Internet, WVROCKS, and Microsoft Office programs, and you will need to have consistent access to these technologies. You should know how to use email with attachments. You will also need a flash drive.

Online Resources: This course makes use of many online resources. I have made every effort to make sure the links I have are up-to-date. However, due to the changing nature of the web, you may find that a resource is temporarily unavailable or has been removed. If this should happen, please send me an email and I will find an alternative resource or modify the assignment accordingly.

Instructor Information (QM Standards 1.8 & 5.3)

Individual instructors complete this information.

Virtual Office Hours

I am available in my virtual office by appointment only. Send me an email to set up an appointment.

Personal Commitment

My personal commitments to you as a participant include:

- I will reply to course mail messages within 24 hours;
- I will read all discussion postings and will reply where appropriate within 3 days
- I will acknowledge my receipt of every course mail message immediately upon reading it. If I am unable to respond to the request or concern at the time of initial reply, I will give you an estimated time for my next reply.
- If I am going to be away from the course space for more than a day or two, I will send a message to you indicating the length of my absence.
- I will regularly update information regarding due dates in the course announcements.

Optional/Required Course Materials (QM Standard 4.6)

Required:

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., Akert, R. M. & Sommers, S. R. (2016). *Social Psychology* (9th ed.), Pearson; ISBN: 9780134012346

Grading Policy:

Each module consists of a series of assignments, worksheets, discussions and reviews, each having specific point values designated in the table below. For each assignment, you will be given the rubric or grading criteria from which you will be evaluated. The grading scale is as follows:

A = 464-515 pts.

B = 412-463 pts.

C = 361-411 pts.

D = 309-360 pts.

F = < 309 pts.

Course Module Topics:

Module 1: Introduction to Social Psychology & Methods to Social Psychology

Assignment: You will now conduct your own informal observational study in which you will observe the behavior of others in a public setting for **30 minutes**. I suggest you use your institution's dining facility as a site but you are free to choose any public place that allows you to observe the behavior of many people engaging in normal activities for the setting. Please try to pick a time when there will be plenty of people present at your selected location. What behaviors do you wish to observe? If in a dining hall or fast food restaurant you may include food selection, seat selection, manners/etiquette, and departing behaviors. You get to select the behavior or behaviors you wish to observe. Please be sure to record your observations, maintain confidentiality, and explain what you are doing if someone asks you. Don't forget to operationally define your variables. You might also have students include operational definitions, when appropriate, and note the challenges of observational studies.

For this assignment, you will:

- 1) Select a site, choose behavior(s), include operational definitions when appropriate
- 2) Observe for 30 minutes; record your observations
- 3) Write a summary of your observational experience, answering the following questions: What was your setting? What behavior(s) did you observe? What was challenging about doing your observational study? What was fun or interesting about completing your study? What do you think are the benefits of doing this type of study? If you were to do the study again, would you change anything? If yes, what would those changes be? If no, why not?

Discussion - Do all behaviors seem equally likely to be prone to situational influence? How easy is it for you to believe that a person's behavior is influenced by the social situation when they get drunk at a fraternity party? When the person steals a car for a gang initiation? When a man allows a cult leader to engage in sexual relations with his wife and young daughter? What is it about the situation that makes it easier to believe in the power of the situation over personality in some of the situations listed above? Please include information from the text, lecture notes or other sources when submitting your answer. Please remember to reply to two of your peers before Sunday night.

Module 2: The Self & Social Perception

Module 3: Attitude & Attitude Change

Module 4: Interpersonal Attraction

Module 5: Conformity & Group processes

Module 6: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Module 7: Prosocial Behavior & Aggression: Why do people help others; Why do people hurt others?

Module 8: Selected Applications of Social Psychology