

# **PSYCHOLOGY 308A: Social Psychology (Fall 2009)**

**Section 001: Tues/Thurs, 2-3:30, Chem 300**

**Section 002: Tues/Thurs 3:30-5, Chem 150**

Professor	Dr. Elizabeth Dunn
E-mail	<a href="mailto:edunn@psych.ubc.ca">edunn@psych.ubc.ca</a>
Office Location	Kenny 2013
Phone	(604) 827-3144
Course Website	<a href="http://www.vista.ubc.ca">www.vista.ubc.ca</a>

## **Teaching Fellows**

<b>Name</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Lara Aknin (Head TF)	laknin@psych.ubc.ca
Gillian Sandstrom	gsandstrom@psych.ubc.ca
Matthew Ruby	matt@psych.ubc.ca

## **Office Hours**

Professor: Wednesdays 1-2pm (Kenny 2013)

TF's: Mondays 1-2pm (Kenny 2220)

**Course Description:** Social psychology uses scientific methodology to address core questions about human social life that most people are naturally curious about (e.g., Why do people behave the way they do? How do culture and social stereotypes shape people's perceptions of each other and the world around them? What makes people happy?). In this course, we will cover a broad range of topics, from self and social perception to aggression, love, and prejudice. While covering rather diverse topics, we will trace consistent themes of social psychology, including the power of the social situation and the importance of subjective construal.

**Format of the course:** Rather than just teaching you about social psychology, we want you to *experience* social psychology in action. Therefore, although this is a large lecture course, most lectures will include an interactive component. In addition, lectures will be replaced with smaller seminar sessions on five Thursdays during the semester, allowing for more active participation. The seminar sessions will take place on September 24, October 8, November 5, November 19, and December 3. On these days, students should go directly to their seminar classroom rather than coming to lecture. Seminar classrooms and TF assignments will be provided on the course website. A Teaching Fellow will lead demonstrations and active, dynamic discussions designed to illuminate the course material. The seminars are an important part of the course and attendance is required.

## **Required Textbooks and Readings:**

- 1) Aronson, E. A., Wilson, T. D., Akert, R. M., & Fehr, B. (2010). *Social psychology* (4<sup>th</sup> Canadian ed.). Toronto: Prentice-Hall.
- 2) Required readings for seminars are available from the course website.

## **Grading**

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 35%

Paper: 25%

Seminar (attendance, participation & reading reflections): 20%

**NOTE** – Marks will be posted on the course website (by student ID# only). It is your responsibility to check these marks for accuracy. If you would rather not have your marks posted, you must make special arrangements with Dr. Dunn during the first week of class.

## Course Requirements & Expectations

- 1) *Exams*: You may be tested on any material covered in lectures, seminars, or readings (including material that only appeared in class or only appeared in the readings). The exams will include multiple choice and short essay questions. Please bring a pencil and eraser to all exams. The midterm exam will be given in class, and the final exam will be scheduled by the university. The final exam will be cumulative, but will emphasize material covered after the midterm.
  
- 2) *Term Paper*: You will write one 4-page paper, in which you will (a) analyze a past experience you have had in terms of a theory covered in the course or (b) break a social norm and then analyze your experience in terms of social psychological concepts. Further information will be provided in lecture on October 6. You **MUST** email your TF a 2-3 sentence paper proposal by October 27 (or earlier). You should not start working on your paper until the topic has been approved. **PAPER IS DUE NOVEMBER 19<sup>th</sup>**. Note that you will be asked to submit an electronic copy to Turn it In ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), as well as submitting a hard copy of your paper. Late submission of either the paper proposal or the paper (including hard or electronic copy) will result in stiff penalties.
  
- 3) *Seminar*: Attendance at all seminars is required. Any absences will be counted as unexcused unless you provide written documentation to your TF within one week (see course policies). Active participation is required in seminars and will affect your seminar grade. If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, please see your TF during the first month of class to discuss this. You will be asked to turn in a brief Reading Reflection at the beginning of each seminar; no late assignments will be accepted. Seminar grades will be based on attendance, participation, and Reading Reflections.
  
- 4) *Lecture Comprehension Checks*: I will reserve the last 3-5 minutes of every lecture to give you time to write down your own brief take-home message from the lecture, as well as a question about something you didn't understand or want to know more about. You should always turn in a comprehension check before leaving lecture. These comprehension checks are extremely important in helping me to ensure that you understand the course material. I will address common points of confusion (and interest) during each subsequent class. Of course, not all submitted questions will be answered in class, but you are always welcome to see me before/after class or during office hours about your question.

**Extra Credit:** Because this course emphasizes active involvement in psychology, I will give you up to 3 extra credit points (i.e., 3% added to your final course grade) for participating in accredited psychology experiments. For information about this opportunity please go to <http://www.psych.ubc.ca/resguide.psy> or go to <http://hsp.psych.ubc.ca> in order to sign up for experiments (you will need to create an account if you don't have one already). As an alternative to participating in studies, you may choose to complete library writing projects, in which you read and summarize a research article; each article summary counts as one hour of research participation. See the HSP website for detailed information including due dates and submission procedures for the library project.

## Communication

*Office hours & appointments:* If you have questions about the course material or would like to discuss issues related to the course in more detail, you are always welcome to attend office hours held by the professor or TF's or make an individual appointment. Note that the TF office hours will be staffed by a different member of the TF team each week. Therefore, if you need to meet with your own TF, you may wish to make an appointment.

**EMAIL POLICY:** I will only provide 1-sentence responses via email. If you have a question that cannot be answered in a single sentence or less, please see me right before or after class or come to office hours and I will be happy to discuss it with you. Emails requiring responses longer than 1-sentence will not be answered. For all

email responses, please permit more than 24 hours before a response can be expected (e.g., you are unlikely to receive a response the night before an exam/assignment). Emails will rarely be answered over the weekend.

*Who to contact for your concerns or questions:* First, if you have a question, please consult the course website; there's a good chance the website contains the answer to your question, especially regarding course logistics (e.g., seminar locations). Second, you can contact your Teaching Fellow, who is your first line of human communication. The TF's are happy to provide information on course material, exams, and assignments. Third, if your question cannot be answered by your TF, you may contact the professor (of course, because there are 3 TF's and only 1 professor, you are more likely to get detailed information from the TF's).

### **Additional Course Policies**

*Lecture notes:* I will post my Powerpoint slides on the course website following each class (usually the morning after). The point of posting the notes is to save you from having to scribble down every detail I present and to help you check the notes you take. The posted notes are not meant to stand alone and will often be hard to follow if you haven't been in class. I would recommend that you take your own notes in class, writing down key points, and then use the posted notes as a supplement. Notes will never be posted before class; the lectures will often contain twists, turns, and surprises that would be ruined if the notes were given ahead of time. If you do not own a copy of Powerpoint, you can download a free copy of Powerpoint Viewer (but this will not allow you to edit the slides, which you may wish to do, as the slides will be posted on the web in the same format in which they are presented in lecture).

*Attendance :* If you miss all or part of any seminar or lecture, it is your responsibility to speak with one of your classmates to find out what course materials and announcements you missed. Attendance will be taken in seminar and will influence your grade. Absences will be considered unexcused unless you provide your TF with a doctor's note within 1 week of the absence.

*Exams:* If you are severely ill and have to miss an exam, you or a caregiver must (1) notify me before the exam start time and then (2) provide a doctor's note within one week; unless both conditions are met, you will receive a zero. Note that there will be no make-up midterm (if you miss the midterm due to documented illness, your final exam grade will also count as your midterm grade).

*Term Paper:* Absolutely NO extensions will be given on the paper. Sudden illness will not be considered grounds for an extension as you will have weeks to complete the paper.

*Special Accommodations:* The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre and students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let me know in the first week of class if you will require any special requirements as such. Absences due to *varsity athletics, family obligations, vacations, work scheduling, or other similar commitments WILL NOT receive special accommodation.*

*Section-hopping:* Please attend your own assigned section of this course. Although attending the other section is better than not attending at all, there is no guarantee that exactly the same material will be covered in both sections. Thus, exams for the two sections may be different. You must take the exam for your assigned section.

*Electronics:* Please turn off and put away electronics that make sounds (e.g., phones, headsets). Laptop computers are acceptable for note taking purposes only (please do not use them to display other material as this is distracting for other students). No electronics will be permitted in any exam (e.g., electronic dictionary).

*Grade Scaling:* In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, all psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions. According to departmental norms, the mean grade in a 300-level class is 70 for a good class, 68 for an average class, and 66 for a weak class (with a standard deviation of 13). Scaling is likely to be used in order to comply with these norms; grades may be scaled up or down as necessary by the professor, department, or school. Therefore, grades are never official until they appear on a student's academic record.

*Psychology Department's Position on Academic Misconduct*

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are very serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. In the first place, the Department has implemented software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams by analyzing the patterns of students' responses. In addition, the Department subscribes to *TurnItIn*--a service designed to detect and deter plagiarism. All materials (term papers, lab reports, etc.) that students submit for grading will be scanned and compared to over 4.5 billion pages of content located on the Internet or in TurnItIn's own proprietary databases. The results of these comparisons are compiled into customized "Originality Reports" containing several, sensitive measures of plagiarism; instructors receive copies of these reports for every student in their class.

In all cases of suspected academic misconduct, the parties involved will be pursued to the fullest extent dictated by the guidelines of the University. Strong evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question. According to the University Act (section 61), the President of UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, or a notation added to a student's transcript.

All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original work done independently by individuals. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult your instructor. For details on pertinent University policies and procedures, please see Chapter 5 in the UBC Calendar (<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar>) and read the University's Policy 69 (available at <http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/policy69.html>).

**BOTTOM LINE: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**

Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, & Assignments  
(note that adjustments to this schedule may be made at any time!)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Thurs Sep 10	Course Introduction & Groups	Text Ch. 8
Tues Sept 15	Groups & Methodology	Text Ch. 2
Thurs Sep 17	Social Perception	Text Ch. 4
Tues Sept 22	Social Cognition (Gillian)	Text Ch. 3
Thurs Sept 24	<b>Seminar 1 : Social cognition &amp; perception</b>	Gilbert (2006), Chapter 4: “Stumbling on Happiness”
Tues Sept 29	Self-Knowledge	Text Ch. 5
Thurs Oct 1	Authority	Text Ch. 7
Tues Oct 6	Conformity (Lara) <i>PAPER ASSIGNMENT GIVEN</i>	
Thurs Oct 8	<b>Seminar 2: Social Norms</b>	“Pluralistic Ignorance and Alcohol Use”
Tues Oct 13	MIDTERM EXAM	
Thurs Oct 15	Attitudes (cognitive dissonance)	Text Ch. 6
Tues Oct 20	Attitudes (persuasion)	
Thurs Oct 22	Culture (Matt)	
Tues Oct 27	Stereotyping and prejudice <i>PAPER PROPOSAL DUE (strict deadline!)</i>	Text Ch. 12
Thurs Oct 29	Stereotyping and prejudice	
Tues Nov 3	Prosocial behaviour	Text. Ch. 10
Thurs Nov 5	<b>Seminar 3: Prosocial behaviour</b>	Nelson & Norton (2005): “From Student to Superhero”
Tues Nov 10	Aggression	Text Ch. 11
Thurs Nov 12	Attraction	Text Ch. 9
Tues Nov 17	Relationships	
Thurs Nov 19	<b>Seminar 4: Evolution &amp; Attraction (PAPER DUE)</b>	Buss et al. (1992): “Sex Differences in Jealousy”
Tues Nov 24	Applications: Law	Text “Social Psych in Action 3”
Thurs Nov 26	Catch-up Day	
Tues Dec 1	Happiness & Course Review	
Thurs Dec 3	<b>Seminar 5: Applying Social Psychology</b>	