

Psychology  
*Self and Social Judgment: Undergraduate Seminar*  
Spring 2010

*Wednesdays, 2:00-3:50 pm*  
Meyer Hall Room 771

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### ***Course Description***

An enduring task in psychological inquiry has been to survey the ways in which self-image influences emotion, thought, and action. What is self-esteem, and is it a good or a bad thing? How do concerns over self-image motivate people? Do people really know themselves accurately? How does a person's sense of self develop, and does it differ across cultures? These investigations have also provided insight into the ways in which people come to think about others. Students will be introduced to these and other topics by reading original research articles, and should expect take part in class discussions of the issues raised.

### ***Course Requirements***

Readings. Students are required to read the assigned readings before each class. There will be a mix of original research, book chapters, and review articles. Readings will be distributed electronically.

Presentations. Given that this is a seminar, a large part of your grade is based on your participation in class discussions. The presentations and questions are meant to encourage discussion. This should be taken seriously and will serve as the major portion of your final grade.

Prepare Course Materials: Consider this like show-and-tell. The final project for this class will be a cumulative effort. All students will work together collectively throughout the quarter to gather and create course materials appropriate for the general public. The purpose of gathering these materials is to share examples of how the phenomenon manifest in the real world or to illustrate what these phenomena are through related media. Each week, discussion leaders will bring materials that elucidate the core concepts associated with or only loosely related to that week's topic. Find demonstrations, videos, or real world examples that illustrate the concepts discussed that day.

Class discussions: Given that this is a seminar, a large part of your grade is based on your participation in class discussions. The presentations and questions are meant to encourage discussion. This should be taken seriously and will serve as the major portion of your final grade. As a heads up, there should be no single paper that you do not comment on during class discussion.

Quizzes: Two quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. These quizzes will allow you the opportunity to demonstrate that you are keeping up with the reading and maintaining the knowledge you have gained. Students who are actively engaged in discussion, keep up with the reading, and attend class should not experience problems doing well on these quizzes. The quizzes will be scheduled a minimum of a week in advance of when they will be held.

Talking with the Media—Paper: As social psychologists, we often study topics that are of high interest to the general public, but the findings of which could be considered quite contentious. These are exactly the topics that the media loves to publicize. However, the nature of scientific writing and discourse differs often in dramatic ways from the manner in which it is discussed in public media outlets. If the media is interested in a topic, they will find SOMEONE to comment on the science behind the topic, whether good or bad, empirical or not. And wouldn't it be better if the person the media asked was YOU (or at least someone who is knowledgeable and responsible about disseminating findings?). In this assignment, you will, as an independent project, find one issue discussed in the media related to the course content. You will discuss why the topic is of interest to the general public and why it is contentious.

Talking with the Media—Presentation: Based on your research and analysis that you will, as an independent project, collect into a written paper (see above), you will prepare a short summary presentation to share with the class.

Choose your Academic Hero—Presentation: Some researchers might have a unique style that jives with your own style of writing, thinking, or researching. With a partner, you will choose one researcher who conducts research related to this course. With your partner, you will find 3 papers drawn from different points in their career that all carry a similar theme. You and your partner will describe this theory, or research theme, and discuss how the theory has evolved over time. You will present your findings in a class presentation.

The Big Debate: One of the central themes that arise in research on self and social judgment is the degree to which motivations shape the way we know ourselves and others and the degree to which cognitive errors and biases shape judgment. As a culminating final project, you will, with a group, prepare to wage a debate either espousing the influence of motivation or of cognition. You will compile the most compelling evidence, with your group, and prepare to defend yourself against the other side's attacks. You will submit "briefs" individually on the information you gained and engage in the debate with your group, as a whole class.

### **Grading**

Class Presentations	20%
Course Materials	10%
Discussion Participation	30%
Quizzes	10%
Talking with Media paper	5%
Talking with Media presentation	5%
Choose your Hero presentation	10%
The Big Debate	10%

### **Course Schedule and Readings**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS DUE TODAY</b>
<b>WEEK 1: JANUARY 26</b>	Not meeting as a class	<b>Decide on topics</b>
<b>WEEK 2: FEBRUARY 2</b>	<i>Motivation vs Cognition</i>	
<b>WEEK 3: FEBRUARY 9</b>	<i>Self-Deception</i>	
<b>WEEK 4: FEBRUARY 16</b>	<i>Competence</i>	
<b>WEEK 5: FEBRUARY 23</b>	<i>Character</i>	
<b>WEEK 6: MARCH 2</b>	<i>Insight into the Future</i>	<b>Talking with the Media: Paper and presentation due</b>
<b>WEEK 7: MARCH 9</b>	<i>Costs and Benefits of Insight</i>	
<b>WEEK 8: MARCH 16</b>	<b>Spring Break—no class</b>	
<b>WEEK 9: MARCH 23</b>	<i>Morality</i>	
<b>WEEK 10: MARCH 30</b>	<i>Stigma</i>	
<b>WEEK 11: APRIL 6</b>	<i>Culture</i>	<b>Choose your Academic Hero: Presentation due</b>
<b>WEEK 12: APRIL 13</b>	<i>Self-Esteem</i>	
<b>WEEK 13: APRIL 20</b>	<i>Egocentrism</i>	<b>Class time to prep debate</b>
<b>WEEK 14: APRIL 27</b>	<i>Self and Relationships</i>	
<b>WEEK 15: MAY 4</b>	<b>The Big Debate</b>	

## *Standards for Conduct*

The department of psychology fosters a learning centered environment which values:

- the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge,
- honesty/integrity (for example, academic misconduct; misuse of technology),
- professionalism (for example, appropriate and clear communication),
- respect for others and their viewpoints.

In support of these values, the following factors may also affect the student's evaluation (e.g. grade) in the course.

- *Mutual respect.* Unclear or inappropriate interpersonal behavior and communication in and outside of class is not acceptable. It is expected that students will behave in a professional and respectful way with the instructor and other students. Grades may also reflect class behavior, and those students who behave in a way deemed disruptive or threatening by the instructor may have their grades reduced.
- *Academic misconduct.* Any student who cheats or plagiarizes will be given a grade of "F" for the course and will be referred to Student Judiciaries. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: wearing earphones or hats/hoods to the test session, having a cell phone or other electronic device within view during a quiz or exam, attempting to or leaving the classroom with a copy of the test or answer sheet, or looking at another student's test or answer sheet. Plagiarism involves any attempt to pass off work from another source as your own. This applies to both tests and assignments.