



Social Psychology

PSY 321-001

Fall 2025

Course Information

Prerequisites/Corequisites: Introduction to Psychology (PSY 210)

Meeting Times: Mondays and Thursdays, 2:30 PM - 3:50 PM

Delivery Mode: Face-to-Face

Location: Faculty Memorial Hall 413

Instructor Information

Instructor: Abriana M. Gresham, Ph.D. (*she/her*)

Office: Cullimore Hall 313

Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Email: abriana.gresham@njit.edu

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Course Description, Learning Outcomes, and Course Design

Social psychology is the study of how individuals affect and are affected by other people and by their social and physical environments. Social psychology helps us to understand and explain how our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the actual, imagined, and implied presence of others. Social psychology is the recognition that human responses are influenced by social situations, in addition to, the products of our individual personalities. Social psychologists study interpersonal and group dynamics and social challenges, such as prejudice, implicit bias, bullying, criminal activity and substance abuse. They research social interactions and the factors that influence them, such as group behavior, attitudes, public perceptions and leadership. This course will provide students an introduction and overview of research and theory in social psychology.

Students who meaningfully engage in this course throughout the semester should be able to:

1. Recognize major concepts, principles, and theories in the field of social psychology.
2. Describe the scientific methods used to obtain knowledge in the field of social psychology.
3. Read and comprehend scientific writing in social psychology.
4. Leverage the social psychological literature to critically analyze claims.

This course was designed with the goal of creating an **accessible, evidence-based, and exciting** learning environment. I have created a course structure with significant flexibility and purposeful activities that are meant to promote deep processing and long-term retention of material. Material will integrate real-world examples and applications with the goal of facilitating your capacity to view your own world through the lens of the course material. Furthermore, this course is meant to bolster transferable skills of science literacy and critical analysis. These skills will serve you whether or not you plan to pursue social psychology or the social and behavioral sciences.

Course Materials

You will need all of the following in order to adequately participate and succeed in this course:

1. **PC/Internet Access:** You will need a regularly accessible computer with internet access.
2. **Canvas:** You will need to access our course website on Canvas regularly. All assignments will be submitted via Canvas and all course materials will be accessible via Canvas.
3. **Required Readings:** There is no assigned textbook for this course. Instead, course content will be posted to Canvas in PDF form for you to access. Required readings will consist mostly of primary texts (i.e., peer-reviewed journal articles). However, there may also occasionally be book chapters, news articles, videos, or other relevant material given as readings. It is expected that you complete the relevant reading prior to each class meeting. In order to help hold you accountable to this goal, one of your assignments is to complete Reading reflections prior to each class (see Assignments).

If you have issues obtaining any of these materials, please contact me immediately.

Assessment & Grading

Your mastery of the course material will be assessed through the following:

1. **Reading Reflections:** Reading reflections will be due at 2:00 PM before every class. Each reflection should be completed after you complete the corresponding reading. There are 25 possible reading reflections to complete. Only your best 20 will count toward your final grade. *In total, reading reflections will comprise 35% of your final grade in the course.*
2. **In-Class Quizzes:** During every class meeting, there will be a quiz. The quiz content may include questions from any point in the course and can range from simple definition questions to deeper critical thinking questions. There are 25 possible quizzes to complete. Only your best 20 will count toward your final grade. *In total, in-class quizzes will comprise 35% of your final grade in the course.*

3. **Critical Analysis Project:** Throughout the semester, you will work on a project that critically analyzes a piece of popular media (e.g., podcast, movie, article, Tik Tok, etc.). The goal of this project is to understand the pervasiveness of inaccurate information in popular media and “debunk” these inaccurate claims using your growing knowledge of social psychology. There are three graded components of this project. *In total, the critical analysis project will comprise 30% of your final grade in the course.*
- a. **Proposal:** The proposal portion of this project will be due at 2:00 PM on 9/18/2025. In this part of the project, you will find a piece of popular media that makes some claims related to social psychological concepts. You will briefly summarize the claim made by the piece of media and then answer a series of questions designed to start your critical thinking journey with respect to the piece of media’s claim.
 - b. **Annotated Bibliography:** The annotated bibliography portion of the project will be due at 2:00 PM on 11/3/2025. In this part of the project, you will submit a list of at least 5 peer-reviewed journal articles that provide evidence that might “debunk” the claim presented in your piece of media. For each article, you should write a summary of the article and discuss how it refutes the claim made in your piece of popular media.
 - c. **Video Presentation:** The video portion of the project will be due at 2:00 PM on 12/1/2025. In this part of the project, you will submit a short video presentation that communicates your findings with your classmates. Your presentation can be as creative as you like but must be under 10 minutes in length, summarize the claim of the original popular media piece you selected, summarize the literature you reviewed that refutes that claim, and discuss the implications of the claim being widely accepted by the public.

Complete guides for every assignment are posted to Canvas. Please ensure you read these guides in full as they contain important information about each assignment you will complete throughout the course.

During the first class you will complete a Welcome Survey and an Academic Engagement assignment. These two assignments are not graded but they are very important to complete as it gives me valuable information about your needs and interests throughout the course. Additionally, the Academic Engagement assignment is utilized by NJIT as your official Verification of Presence required by the Department of Education.

Every graded assignment will be marked on a scale from 0 - 3. The purpose of this grading method is to reduce the focus on minutiae, increase focus on substance, and encourage mastery of material over time. The points generally translate into the feedback below.

3	2	1	0
Meets Expectations	Needs Some Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement	Inadequate

Your final course letter grade will be assigned in the following way:

Letter Grade	Description	Final Course Percentage
A	Superior	90.00% - 100.00%
B+	Excellent	87.00% - 89.99%
B	Very Good	80.00% - 86.99%
C+	Good	77.00 - 79.99%
C	Acceptable	70.00% - 76.99%
D	Minimum	60.00% - 69.99%
F	Inadequate	< 60.00%

There will be no consideration for extra credit or rounding. The structure of the course is designed with built-in flexibility to reduce stress around particular assignments or deadlines and allow for life to happen. It will be incredibly rare for me to adjust any grade unless an error was made in the grading process or there are extreme extenuating circumstances which will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Course Policies

I. Conduct and Climate

This course welcomes students of all identities and backgrounds. I strive to cultivate an inclusive space where all lived experiences are valued and validated. In doing so, discrimination, harassment, and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. If you engage in these sorts of behaviors, you will be asked to leave the classroom and/or be referred to the Dean of Students. Disagreement and debate are a normal and healthy part of academic inquiry, and I encourage students to voice alternative points of view and challenge the material presented in class by myself or their peers. However expressions of dissent must be communicated respectfully. I welcome feedback if something in the course design or classroom climate is not inclusive or supportive so that I can continue to adapt and provide the most inclusive, supportive, and welcoming classroom environment possible.

Please note that as your instructor, I am considered a *Responsible Employee* under Title IX, which means I am legally required to report any disclosures of sexual violence, harassment, or discrimination to the university's Title IX office. This mandate is in place to ensure students have access to support, resources, and formal options for addressing harm. However, I also know that mandated reporting policies and practices can feel intrusive, disempowering, and cause significant harm for those already experiencing adversity. If you need support but would like to remain confidential, my recommendation is to reach out to campus resources that are not required to report, such as the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services. My goal is first and foremost to support your safety and autonomy. I'm happy to help you connect with the right resources without discussing any specific incident, if that is best for you.

II. Accessibility, Accommodations, and Support

I am committed to ensuring that all students have the resources needed to fully engage in and succeed in this course. If you are in need of official accommodations due to a disability please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (OARS) at oars@njit.edu or stop by their office in Kupfrian Hall 201, to discuss your specific needs. OARS will work with you to determine whether you qualify for official accommodations and, if so, they will explain the steps to communicate the request for official accommodations to me. Even if you do not have a documented disability or qualify for official accommodations, please reach out to me at any time to discuss any problems you are having with accessibility of course material or support needs you may have.

III. Communication and Office Hours

Contact with me outside of class should occur via email or Canvas or in person during office hours or another scheduled meeting. I will respond to email and Canvas messages as quickly as possible, typically within two business days and usually much quicker. Although you are welcome to email me at any time, please note that I typically will not respond to emails received after business hours, on weekends, or on recognized university holidays until the next business day.

My office hours are held on Thursdays, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM in my office, Cullimore Hall 313. These hours are time set aside specifically for you to drop in. During office hours, you can come by to ask questions about course material, get feedback on assignments, discuss ideas, brainstorm educational or career goals, or just check in. You don't need to have a specific question or concern to come to office hours. They are set aside as a resource to deepen your educational experience whether it is specific to our course material or not. Students who come to office hours often feel more confident with the material, submit stronger assignments, and build more meaningful connections with their instructors. You do not need to schedule a time to come to office hours in advance- if you come to my office during office hours, I will be there! If you have

a scheduling conflict that prevents you from attending my office hours feel free to reach out and we can schedule an alternative time to meet.

IV. Attendance Policy

It is expected that you attend every class. However, attendance will not be formally taken. Instead, your attendance will be, to some degree, reflected in your participation in in-class assignments (i.e., quizzes) which have built-in flexibility for needing to miss class for any reason. Additional exemptions for in class quizzes may be made for properly documented absences (e.g., observations of religious holidays) if requests are made in writing at least two weeks in advance of the missed class.

V. Late Work Policy

In general, late work will not be accepted. This is because the timing of the assignments is very important (i.e., reading reflections should happen before class and are not as useful if they are completed afterward). In addition, deadlines are highly predictable and there is significant flexibility already built in to account for unexpected incidents that typically might result in late work. Deadline extensions may be granted for properly documented conflicts (e.g., observations of religious holidays) if requests are made in writing at least two weeks in advance of the deadline.

VI. Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the code of Academic Integrity policy that is found here: [NJIT Academic Integrity Code](#). Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Office of the Dean of Students. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing, or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students at dos@njit.edu.

In our course, I expect that all submitted assignments represent your own original work and that any used sources are properly cited. Similarly, material produced by generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) may not be submitted as your own original work. Any use of generative AI tools in your working process (e.g., brainstorming, proofreading) must be properly identified and cited. This is because the purpose of assignments is not just to produce a final product, but to give you practice applying concepts, strengthening your critical thinking, and building skills you'll carry into future courses and beyond. If AI or other outside sources do the work for you, you miss out on that practice. Being transparent about your process (including if you use generative AI tools

for support) helps me understand how you're approaching the work and ensures I can give you feedback that supports your learning and growth.

I also recognize that students often engage in academic dishonesty or over-reliance on generative AI tools due to fear of failure. I hope that during this semester, the flexibility of the course structure and grading scheme will allow you to authentically engage with the course material without fear of failure. If you are struggling with the material or find yourself considering engaging in academic dishonesty in an attempt to avoid failure, please reach out to me. I will be more than happy to provide guidance that can meaningfully contribute to your learning process and help you succeed with integrity.

VII. Publishing or Distributing Course Materials

Students may not post, publish, sell, or otherwise distribute these course materials without my express written permission. Such materials include, but are not limited to, course lecture slides or assignments. Audio or video recording of class sessions by students is prohibited under NJIT policy.

VIII. Course Changes

This syllabus is a guide and every attempt has been made to provide an accurate overview of the course and its requirements. However, certain circumstances may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester either in response to extenuating circumstances or in order to improve the course. These changes may depend, in part, on course progress and our needs as a class community. Any changes will be communicated in a timely manner via email, Canvas announcement, or in class.

Helpful Resources

I. Center for Counseling and Psychological Services

The Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (C-CAPS) works to promote mental health and facilitate students' personal, academic, and professional growth. C-CAPS is located in Campbell Hall, 205 and can be contacted at counseling@njit.edu.

II. Office of the Dean of Students

The Office of the Dean of Students (ODS) includes a variety of offices and services dedicated to student support including those focused on the code of student conduct, violence prevention, advocacy, crisis support, and leaves of absence. ODS is located in the Central King Building, L71 and can be contacted at doc@njit.edu.

III. Career Development Services

Career Development Services (CDS) help students with career planning and preparation. CDS is located in Fenster Hall, 400. You can contact them via the forms on their webpage, njit.edu/careerservices.

IV. The Office of Global Initiatives

The Office of Global Initiatives (OGI) is the primary resource on campus for international students. They are located in Fenster Hall, 180 and can be contacted via email at global@njit.edu.

V. Office of Accessibility Resources and Services

The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services works to provide reasonable accommodations and support for students with disabilities. Their office is located in Kupfrian Hall, 201 and they can be reached by email at oars@njit.edu.

VI. NJIT Library

The NJIT library offers a variety of services including help searching for, obtaining, reading, and citing peer-reviewed research articles. The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences has a dedicated subject liaison who can help with anything related to research, including finding, reading, and citing peer-reviewed journal articles. The subject liaison is Michelle Kudelka who can be contacted at michelle.kudelka3@nit.edu.

VII. The Learning Center

The Learning Center (TLC) provides tutorial services, academic support workshops, and academic coaching. TLC is located in the Central King Building, G-22. They can be contacted at tlc@njit.edu.

VIII. The Writing Center

The Writing Center is available to assist with writing assignments and oral presentations. The Writing Center is located in the Central King Building, G17. Questions can be directed to Dr. Catherine Seimann, catherine.siemann@njit.edu.

Course Schedule

Class	Date	Pre-Class Reading	Pre-Class Assignments	In-Class Topic	In-Class Assignment
UNIT 0: WELCOME TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY					
0	9/4	NONE	NONE	Welcome to Social Psychology	Welcome Survey Academic Engagement Assignment
UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY					
1	9/8	Wilson, T. D. (2022). What is social psychology? The construal principle.	Class 1 Reading Reflection	Defining Social Psychology	Class 1 Quiz
2	9/11	Bolger, N. et al. (2003). Diary methods: Capturing life as it is lived.	Class 2 Reading Reflection	Methods in Social Psychology	Class 2 Quiz
3	9/15	Henrich, J. et al. (2010). The weirdest people in the world?	Class 3 Reading Reflection	Issues in Social Psychological Research	Class 3 Quiz
UNIT 2: SOCIAL THINKING					
4	9/18	Cohen, C. E. (1981). Person categories and social perception: Testing some boundaries of the processing effects of prior knowledge.	Critical Analysis Project- Proposal Class 4 Reading Reflection	Social Cognition I: Mental Machinery	Class 4 Quiz
5	9/22	Marks, M. J., et al. (2025). Do people differentially recall sexual information according to actor gender? Extending the confirmation bias paradigm.	Class 5 Reading Reflection	Social Cognition II: Motivated Thinking	Class 5 Quiz
6	9/25	Feldman-Barrett, L. (2020) How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain.	Class 6 Reading Reflection	Emotion	Class 6 Quiz

		[VIDEO]			
7	9/29	Carney, D. R. et al. (2007). A thin slice perspective on the accuracy of first impressions.	Class 7 Reading Reflection	Social Perception	Class 7 Quiz
	10/2	NO CLASS - WELLNESS DAY			
8	10/6	Ramírez-Esparza, N. (2012). Cross-cultural Constructions of self schemas: Americans and Mexicans	Class 8 Reading Reflection	The Self I: Self-Concept	Class 8 Quiz
9	10/9	Wong, T. K. & Hamza, C. A. (2025). Online self-presentation, self-concept clarity, and depressive symptoms: A within-person examination.	Class 9 Reading Reflection	The Self II: Self-Presentation	Class 9 Quiz
UNIT 3: INFLUENCE AND CONNECTION					
10	10/13	March, D. S. et al. (2018). On the prioritized processing of threat in a Dual Implicit Process Model of evaluation.	Class 10 Reading Reflection	Attitudes I: Formation and Structure	Class 10 Quiz
11	10/16	Dillard, J. P., & Anderson, J. W. (2004). The role of fear in persuasion.	Class 11 Reading Reflection	Attitudes II: Persuasion and Dissonance	Class 11 Quiz
12	10/20	Cooper, S. et al. (2023). Conformity to masculinity norms and mental health outcomes among gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, and queer men and non-binary individuals.	Class 12 Reading Reflection	Conformity I: Social Norms and Pressure	Class 12 Quiz

13	10/23	Haslam, S. A. & Reicher, S. D., (2012). Contesting the “nature” of conformity: What Milgram and Zimbardo's studies really show. <i>Bonus Reading;</i> Gray, P. (2013). Why Zimbardo’s Prison Experiment Isn’t in My Textbook.	Class 13 Reading Reflection	Conformity II: Compliance and Resistance	Class 13 Quiz
14	10/27	Dutton, D. G. & Arthur, A. P. (1974) Some evidence for heightened sexual attraction under conditions of high anxiety.	Class 14 Reading Reflection	Close Relationships I: Attraction and Connection	Class 14 Quiz
15	10/30	VanLange, P. A. M. & Rusbult, C. E. (1995). My relationship is better than- and not as bad as- yours is: The perception of superiority in close relationships.	Class 15 Reading Reflection	Close Relationships II: Maintenance and Dissolution	Class 15 Quiz
UNIT 4: HELPING AND HURTING					
16	11/3	Schroeder, D. A. et al., (1988). Empathic concern and helping behavior: Egoism or altruism?	Critical Analysis Project- Annotated Bibliography Class 16 Reading Reflection	Prosocial Behavior I: Why We Help	Class 16 Quiz
17	11/6	Plötner, M. et al., (2015). Young children show the bystander effect in helping situations.	Class 17 Reading Reflection	Prosocial Behavior II: Helping in Context	Class 17 Quiz
18	11/10	Finkel, E. J. & Hall, A. N. (2017). The I3 Model: A metatheoretical framework for understanding aggression.	Class 18 Reading Reflection	Antisocial Behavior I: Roots of Aggression	Class 18 Quiz

19	11/13	Skinner-Dorkenoo et al. (2021). How microaggressions reinforce and perpetuate systemic racism in the United States.	Class 19 Reading Reflection	Antisocial Behavior II: Subtle and Systemic Harm	Class 19 Quiz
UNIT 5: GROUP PROCESSES					
20	11/17	Aggarwal, P. & O'Brien, C. L. (2008). Social loafing on group projects: Structural antecedents and effect on student satisfaction.	Class 20 Reading Reflection	Group Behavior	Class 20 Quiz
21	11/20	Tropp, L. R., Wright, S. C. (2001). Ingroup identification as the inclusion of ingroup in the self.	Class 21 Reading Reflection	Identity and Belonging	Class 21 Quiz
	11/24	NO CLASS - INSTRUCTOR DISCRETION			
	11/25	NO CLASS - INSTRUCTOR DISCRETION			
	11/27	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING RECESS			
22	12/1	Handron, C. et al., (2017). Unexpected gains: Being overweight buffers Asian Americans from prejudice against foreigners.	Class 22 Reading Reflection	Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination	Class 22 Quiz
UNIT 6: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES					
23	12/4	Parker, I. (2007). Critical psychology: What it is and what it is not.	Critical Analysis Project- Video Presentation Class 23 Reading Reflection	Being a Critical Consumer of Research	Class 23 Quiz
24	12/8	Group 1 Videos	Class 24 Reading Reflection	Discussion and Integration I	Class 24 Quiz
25	12/11	Group 2 Videos	Class 25 Reading Reflection	Discussion and Integration II	Class 25 Quiz

