

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY

PSY 216 - SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (3 CR.)

Course Description

Examines individuals in social contexts, their social roles, group processes and intergroup relations. Acquaints students with a scientific understanding of how the presence of other people, interactions with other people, and other situational factors influence human thoughts and behaviors. The assignments in the course require college-level reading, analysis of scholarly studies, and coherent communication through written reports (including the production of at least one APA-formatted individual writing assignment). Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

To acquaint students with a scientific understanding of how the presence of other people and other situational factors influence human thoughts and behaviors. Previous psychology study is recommended.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

Prerequisite: PSY 200 or department consent. ENG 111 is suggested.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- Articulate the major methods of research that social psychologists use and explain different ethical considerations in conducting social psychological research
- Explain research on social perception, including perception of the self, of other individuals, and of social groups
- Describe social influence processes, including attitude formation and change, conformity, obedience, and group processes, and how they processes are found in everyday life
- Identify processes involved in social relations, including attraction, altruism, conflict, and aggression
- Recognize similarities and differences among different cultures regarding social psychological processes

Major Topics to be Included

- Research methods in social psychology: experiment, survey, correlational research, and observational research
- Ethics in social psychological research: informed consent, deception of research participants, consequences of deception
- Self-concept, self-esteem, self-control, self-serving bias, self-presentation
- Attributions of causality, fundamental attribution error
- Social cognition: priming, belief perseverance, heuristics and biases, self-fulfilling prophecy
- Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination: definitions; explanations, including social, cognitive, and motivational; consequences
- Attitudes: definitions, formation, and the links between attitudes to behavior and behavior to attitudes
- Conformity: definition, explanations of why and when people conform
- Obedience: definition, explanations of why and when people obey orders
- Group processes: definition, social facilitation, social loafing, deindividuation, group polarization, groupthink
- Attraction: causes and correlates of friendship, attraction, and love; Sternberg's model of love
- Altruism: Explanations of helping, including social exchange, norms, evolutionary, and altruism; influences on helping, including bystander effect, situational pressures, and interpersonal factors

- Aggression: definition; theories of aggression, including biological and learning; causes and correlates of aggression; reducing aggression
- Conflict: definition, social dilemmas, perceptions of fairness, conflict resolution

Optional Topics to Be Covered

- Evolutionary psychology as related to social psychology
- Clinical applications of social psychology
- Social psychology and law
- Materialism/consumerism; social psychological applications to business
- Social psychology and health