

Westfield State University
Psychology 0304: Social Psychology – Information Page

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Course Description: In this course you will learn about how humans process information about their social environments and situations by examining relevant perspectives on learning, such as the cognitive perspective, social learning perspective, and the socio-cultural perspective; the latter emphasizing how our social thoughts and behaviors are encompassed within the larger context of societies we live in. The goals of this class are to examine human social behavior from the viewpoint of the person: traits, motivations, and moods; the situation: threats, cultural norms, pressures, and influences; and the interaction of the person-situation.

In addition to the main text for the course, we will also use scholarly articles, which appear in professional journals and provide the backbone of social psychological research in the field, and “popular” articles, which appear in other nonprofessional sources such as magazines and newspapers, geared toward the general public. These articles will provide the basis for fueling online discussion.

Required Texts:

Baron, R. A. & Branscombe, N. R. (2012). *Social Psychology 13th edition*. Boston: Pearson. ISBN 0-205-24667-2 (Includes online access to Pearson’s MyPsycLab with an Access Code Card.

*Additional readings might be required throughout the semester via PDF articles that you can access in the weekly folders in Plato for the course. These are the article readings that will be used for your weekly discussion board posts.

Course Policies/Organization:

1. The Plato course website contains the syllabus, instructor announcements, discussion board, instructor lectures by chapter, videos, additional readings, and exams. Students are expected to consult Plato several times each week for updated information and announcements, check on what is to be completed for the week, as well as to contribute to the weekly discussion threads and comment on others’ posts. The readings on Plato will keep you up to date on important themes in the course and are considered part of the essential readings for the course.
2. This course is designed into a week-by-week organization of course content, with each week focusing on what you need to know and do for that week. This is a textbook course, meaning you have to read the text for the content information. I will also post the lecture slides to be used in following along with the readings. In addition to lecture material you may also be asked to view a video link (via a web address, YouTube, etc.) which compliments lecture material, for this purpose you’ll need to have the Adobe Flash Player installed – if you regularly watch videos on your computer, you probably already have this installed. If not, visit <http://www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer/> and install it. I suggest you set your screen resolution to the highest possible for your computer. You will need to have your sound turned on to hear the lecture.
3. **Academic Integrity:** In accordance with Westfield State University policies, academic dishonesty/plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable and will be dealt with as specified by University regulations as stated in the Student Bulletin/Handbook. I’ve posted some handouts on plagiarism on Plato (what is it, how to avoid it, etc.), you are expected to be familiar with these.

- a. Students in web-based courses are encouraged to discuss and share information related to course material in the Discussion Board, Student Lounge and “Ask Dr. W” boards. However, once an exam or exam is posted it is forbidden to discuss exam content with anyone, whether a member of this class or not. Any questions or problems associated with the exams/exams should be addressed only to the instructor through an email. Do NOT post Exam/Exam related questions to the Discussion Board, Student Lounge, or “Ask Dr. W” boards. Students are NOT allowed to use their books and notes during exams AND are NOT allowed to collaborate with one another during exams. The penalty for students who discuss course material or who collaborate with one another once an exam opens is failure of the course.
 - b. With on-line courses I have the unique ability to track when you are online, where you go while online, and how long you spend in each area online. Knowing this and in keeping with academic honesty policies, resist the urge to tell me you where online or did an assignment or took an exam and the “computer didn’t track it” or “lost it.” Always double check to make sure your assignments is submitted correctly. User error on your part is not an excuse for not getting something in on time. This is the nature of online courses and requires careful attention by you.
4. **Your Responsibility:** You are responsible for your own learning and performance in this course. You are responsible for knowing what to do in terms of course assignments and when to do them. A complete schedule of course events is provided in this syllabus, so there is no excuse for not knowing when an assignment is due or when an exam is scheduled. You must manage your time effectively. If you put off coursework until the end of the week and run out of time, that is your problem. Furthermore, there is no excuse for failing to take a course exam. This course is accessible from any computer with internet access. **If your home computer malfunctions you can still access the course from another computer and it is your obligation to find another way to access the course and/or to take the exams.** Most public libraries have public computing facilities with internet access. I suggest you plan in advance to be sure you have ready access to a backup computer if you run into trouble – waiting until the last minute and having problems will not be accepted as an excuse. Finally, you must study and learn the course material. Examinations are administered online and you are permitted to use your notes and textbook when taking the exam. However, in general, you may not be able to answer exam questions by looking up specific answers in the book. The exams will consist of many questions that will test your understanding of course concepts, not simply your ability to look up terms in the text. I can almost guarantee that if you wait until the last minute and try to take an exam the night before it closes at 7am the next day that you will do poorly. The most effective strategy is to make study of the course material part of your daily routine. Pay careful attention to when exams are scheduled. **Please note that once you open an exam, if you click anywhere outside of the exam for any reason, such as opening another browser window, you will be locked out of the exam and will be unable to complete the exam.**
5. **Communication:** In online course the main form of communication is online. It is expected that I will be able to reach you by email. When you log into Blackboard, please be sure that the email address you regularly use is included with your other information. One thing that is different about a web-based course relative to a traditional course is that you can’t raise your hand and ask a question of the instructor. The way we deal with questions about course content is through the “Ask Dr. W” and “Student Lounge” options detailed below. There are guidelines I expect all students to follow in communicating with me and other students within the class:
- a. **“Ask Dr. W”** - is the online forum where you can ask me questions and your peers in the course will also be able to benefit from seeing your questions and my

answers. If you have a question or comment about something you have read or studied, you should post your question or comment to the “Ask Dr. W” board or the Student Lounge. All students should read the “Ask Dr. W” board often. If you have the answer to someone’s question or would like to comment further on something, you can post your replies there. Do not email me directly with questions about course content. Post these on the “Ask Dr. W” board for everyone to see. If you have an issue that needs my personal and private attention, contact me following the procedure outlined below. I will do my best to answer your questions within a 24 hour period.

- b. **Student Lounge** – is the forum for you the student to interact with and communicate with other students, not the professor. This is a good place for arranging study sessions with other students or sharing tips, resources, etc. I will not be a part of this resource, nor will I respond to anything posted here. This is a place for you and your peers to converse. This is also where each of you will be posting your bio for everyone to see. Include a pic or two if you’d like and let us know about you! There’s more instructions on this in the ‘Start Here’ folder in Plato.
- c. **Email Dr. Williams** - for questions or concerns that you have about the course or your performance for which you prefer to keep private (between you and me) it is best to use my email swilliams@westfield.ma.edu this way I can readily respond to your inquiries and concerns and this will remain private. Please understand though that if you have a general question about an assignment, a exam, the course, etc. it may be best to use the “Ask Dr. W” forum. I often get students asking the same questions, so this will limit the amount of times I have to answer the same questions and will benefit other students who may be thinking the same thing you are.
- d. **Phone** – My voicemail is active 24/7, but if you call during late pm hours or the weekend I probably won’t get your message until the next weekday.
- e. **In-Person** – This course is 100% web-based. I do not meet with students in my web-course face-to-face. The reason for that rule is fairness to all. There may be people enrolled in the course from all over the world. It is not fair if some people have more access to the instructor than others.
- f. **Discussion Boards** –On a weekly basis in this course I will be posting discussion questions for you to respond to and respond to your classmates comments/posts (see the Discussion Board section of the syllabus under “Performance Evaluation”). These discussion posts are graded and should be conducted in a respectful manner. Respect for the opinions of others is an essential characteristic for a learning community. Although it is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in this course, you are expected to behave and to express your viewpoints in a manner that is courteous and respectful. Please adhere to the same rules and expectations when you communicate online. I encourage you all to share your opinions when asked and to integrate what you’re learning in the course into your responses, as well as to comment on what your peers are writing, but we want everyone in the course to feel comfortable sharing. If ever a problem arises or you have a grievance with another student I recommend first trying to go straight to that student and resolve the issue. If this cannot be achieved then you can bring the matter to me by emailing me directly. The discussion board AND student lounge are not areas for grievances with one another or for “ripping” on your peers.
- g. **Virtual Office Hours** - for the course my office hours will be online during certain periods of time (see the hours at the top of the syllabus). Of course you can contact me also during other times via email and Ask Dr. W discussion

CHOOSE TO ANSWER by clicking into their discussion threads and posting a replies. Your responses should be thoughtful, incorporating what you're learning in the text and via lectures (I expect integration of the concepts/key terms you are learning), as well as your opinion when asked. **Due dates for discussion postings are listed on the last page of the syllabus under the course schedule.**

- c. A rubric for how discussion posts and replies will be graded is provided in the "Start Here" folder on the left-hand menu of the course Plato site. Take time to look over the rubric and make sure you understand what the desired characteristics of your responses are and how exactly your responses will be evaluated. Pay attention to the due date of each discussion post, the system will automatically track and date stamp when you post a response and when you respond to other students' posts.
- d. Original postings to the discussion questions are worth 10 pts. Additionally each response that you write to another student's post (THREE are required) is worth 5 points, for a total of 25 points possible on your responses to other's posts. Your responses to other's posts should be in response to the questions you did not choose to answer for your original posting and should be just as thoughtful and in accordance with the guidelines for postings outline in this document, needs to go beyond just "I agree/disagree" by supporting what you say.

Grading Breakdown:

Exams = 6 exams x 30pts each = 180 pts (minus lowest exam dropped) =150 pts possible (50% of grade)

*Each exam will have 30 questions worth 1pt each and your lowest exam score will be dropped

Discussion Board = 6 weeks of discussion board postings and responses to others' postings x 25pts/ea week = 150 pts possible (50% of grade)

Total points possible = 300

The final grades will be calculated according to the following percentage scale:

97-100	A+	77-79	C+
93-96	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	62-below	F

At any point in the course you can determine your grade by dividing the number of points you have earned by the number of points possible to that date. Of course, you can also talk to me about your grade and current class standing at any point during the course.

Navigating Plato...how to use it effectively:

1. Technical Assistance/Troubleshooting - If you need technical help with anything in Plato once you are in the Plato platform you can always click on the “help desk” button on the left sidebar for technical assistance. For help logging in or trouble getting access to Plato you can go to the WSU website www.wsu.ma.edu and click Plato/Online Learning at the top of the screen and then click on Plato Help on left of the Online Learning page. Alternatively, if something goes wrong you can always post a question in the student lounge where another student may be able to help you or may have encountered the same problem and fixed it, or you can post a question in “Ask Dr. W” (but this may not be the fastest option, as it could take up to 24 hrs before I respond).
2. Keeping Track of Weekly Assignments – for this course you will be using the week by week left-hand menu in Plato. When you open each week you will find a ‘To Do’ checklist for the week which will tell you exactly what you should read for the week, what the assignments are for the week, if there is an exam and the chapter lecture Power points for that week. The checklist is the first place you should go to when you click on each week. It is important that you complete the checklist items for each week in the order that they appear.

Example Social Psychology Course Schedule (this changes semester to semester)

Week	Topic for the week	Reading	Exam/Posted	Discussion/homework DUE
Wk 1	Intro to Social Psych Social Cognition	Ch.1-2; Articles 2 & 9	Exam 1 Covers Ch.1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts due • Post your BIO to the ‘Student Lounge’
Wk 2	Social Perception The Self	Ch.3-4; Articles 5 & 13	Exam 2 Covers Ch.3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts due: Original post; Response posts
Wk 3	Attitudes Stereotyping, Prejudice, & Discrimination	Ch.5-6; Articles 16 & 17	Exam 3 Covers Ch.5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts due: Original post; Response posts
Wk 4	Interpersonal Attraction, Close Relationships & Love Social Influence	Ch.7-8; Articles 20 & 26	Exam 4 Covers Ch.7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts due: Original post; Response posts
Wk 5	Prosocial Behavior Aggression	Ch.9-10; Articles 28 & 31	Exam 5 Covers Ch.9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts due: Original post; Response posts •
Wk 6	Groups & Individuals Adversity & Happiness	Ch.11-12; Articles 25 & 43	Exam 6 Covers Ch.11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts due: Original post; Response posts

Tips for Doing Well in the Course:

1. Use the MyPsychLab resources that you purchase access to!! There are practice quizzes, flashcards, study tips and tracking of your progress as you work through the chapters. There is also audio of each chapter, so you can listen to the chapters, maybe as a first step before reading them and note-taking.
2. Use the SQ3R method of reading and note-taking. Not familiar with this method, check it out on this link: [Using the SQ3R method](https://www.nhti.edu/student-resources/where-can-i-get-help-my-studies/study-skills/reading-and-learning-sq3r-method). Or copy this link: <https://www.nhti.edu/student-resources/where-can-i-get-help-my-studies/study-skills/reading-and-learning-sq3r-method>
3. Put in the time! An online course can be great in that it is flexible and you can work on things on your own time, however it does require self-discipline, organizing and structuring your time effectively. These are things you have to do on your own, as your instructor won't be there face-to-face to remind you.
4. Read and outline the chapters before looking at the lecture slides. This web course is TEXTBOOK HEAVY and reading is A MUST. Lecture slides are just a guideline. You can then ask questions during virtual office hours or post them to the "Ask Dr. W" page.
5. Keep updated with the class by using Plato for important announcements! Utilize the weekly 'To Do' lists to keep track of what you should be doing and when.
6. Avoid cramming for exams, rather study regularly. Your online exams will be timed and you want to use that time wisely.
7. It isn't always about quantity of time spent on material for the course, but the *quality* of that time spent. Ask yourself the following: How much time am I putting into this class? Is the time I'm putting in getting me the results I want? If the answer is "no" then it is probably time to rethink your strategy. Consider the below resources...
8. Use the on-campus Reading & Writing Center (Parenzo 218) for help in preparing and proofreading any assigned papers (if applicable). I can't stress this enough, especially if you know that writing is not your strength. To set-up an appointment for someone to review a draft of a paper with you or to get help setting up your paper you can go online to www.rich17.com/msc or call 413-572-5569.
9. Utilize the on-campus Banacos Academic Center (Next to Parenzo Gym, across from the DC) to help you study and for tutoring. If you know that you're not good at test-taking this can be a vital resource you don't want to ignore as exams in my class are worth roughly 60% of your grade, so doing well on them is essential. These are all FREE services, so take advantage!
10. I am not a fan of students coming to me during the last couple weeks of the semester to ask what they can do to bring up their grades. Concern over your grade in my course should start from Day 1 when you enter my class. What you can do to bring up your grade would be to follow the recommendations below...however this usually cannot be achieved as late as the last couple weeks of the semester, so think and prepare ahead:
 1. You should be on-line in the course website regularly and actively participate.
 2. You should read the readings BEFORE we are scheduled to discuss them on discussion boards and review them after lecture slides, fill-in the blanks, etc.
 3. If you do not do well on the first exam, go to the tutoring center for regular weekly appointments to get help studying and organizing and come see me for some advice.