Instructor: Dr. Meier-Marquis  
Contact info: meierj@stthom.edu; 713.525.3183  
Office info: ORK Psychology Department 129; office hours MW 4 – 5; TTH 3 - 5

TEXT: Kassin, Fein, Markus (most recent edition) Social Psychology  

Learning Objectives/Outcomes:  
Students will:  
1. Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories relevant to the area of social psychology.  
2. Apply classic social psychological theories outside of the classroom setting in a series of experiential assignments.  
3. Develop skill in expressing themselves orally and in writing in a series of exercises.

Outside readings and assignments will be given: This is a lab Psychology course. Expect some class time to be devoted to lab exercises, as well as outside class time. It is the student’s responsibility to make copies of the outside readings before they are discussed in class. Keep in mind that this is a summer course and that the pace is going to be exceptionally fast. I don’t cut any material because it is a short semester. You have been warned!

PURPOSE OF THE CLASS: This course is designed to provide the student with an overview of topics relevant to social psychology. The course content will focus on four main topics, including how we perceive ourselves and others, how we influence others, how we establish and maintain social relations, and how theories relevant to social psychology can readily be applied to areas related to business, law, and health.

As a final note, I want to warn students that time and effort must be devoted to truly understand social psychology. Many of the topics that we will cover over the course of the semester are near and dear to all of our hearts. Because we are discussing topics that are sometimes all too familiar to us in our own lives, we think we already have a grasp of what the research results will hold. Sometimes this is true, but often times it isn’t. The first exam grades often come as a major blow to students, as they don’t do nearly as well as they think they should have. When I have asked students why they didn’t fare well on the first test, they reply that they really didn’t study because the course material is “all just common sense”. As we will discuss OFTEN in this class, common sense notions often do not withstand the test of empirical research. My belabored point is this; do study the lecture and textbook material even if you think that you already
“know” the topic at hand because of your own first-hand experiences. Often times you will be surprised at the subtle nuances that change the situation entirely.

**BlackBoard:** UST offers Blackboard for instructional technology support. I will place course documents and announcements on our class site. Please note: I will often send emails to the students through the Blackboard accounts and I will often post announcements on the course site. Please check often and make sure you check your sthom email account.

**EVALUATION:** Your grade in this class will be based on three equally weighted midterm exams and shorter written assignments over exercises completed outside of class. Additionally, there will be an OPTIONAL cumulative final that students can opt to take if they have missed one midterm exam or if they would like to replace one midterm exam grade that is low. For students who opt to take all four exams, I will count the 3 highest scores out of the 4 tests.

**EXAMS:** *Learning objective: test your knowledge of fundamental principles of theoretical approaches in social psychology AND test you ability to apply course material.*

Each exam will be worth 50 points and will include material from class lectures and the assigned readings from both textbooks. The midterms will consist of multiple choice and short-answer/essay questions. I tend to favor more applied-type questions rather than factual/definitional-type questions on the multiple-choice portion. I will provide study guides prior to the exams that will cover the topics covered on the upcoming exam, as well as a sample question so you can see how I word questions.

**Make-up exams are not offered except for students celebrating religious holidays and students absent of Official University business (documentation must be provided).** Make-up exams that are offered in these limited cases will consist of short-answer and essay questions. Please note: In order to make-up an exam, students must contact me three (3) class days VIA EMAIL before the scheduled exam. If a student misses an exam for reasons other than those listed above, or fails to make appropriate arrangements three class days prior to the exam, he or she will receive a zero on that exam.

Exams start at the beginning of class time. Students who arrive late may not be allowed to take the test.

**ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS:** There will be a handful of class exercises to be completed in and outside of class. Assignments will vary as to the total points each is worth. Assignments will be given during class and typically will be due one week later. If you miss class, you still must complete the assignment in the time specified. All assignments must be typed and double spaced. Grades will be based on not only the substance of what you say, but how you say it. Pay attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity of expression. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments must be written individually. Expect approximately 4 - 5 lab assignments this semester. We will
discuss each assignment the day it is assigned. Below are assignments that you will definitely have this semester, but more may be announced.

**IAT (Implicit Association Test) – Learning objective: apply course material**

You will take two IATs and write a short paper regarding the test itself, including a description of the way it is administered, your thoughts about the test itself (if it is valid) and your reaction to your results (did you agree or disagree with results and why). It is NOT necessary to share your actual results in the paper, just your reaction to the exercise.

**Video reflection exercises: Learning objective: Learning fundamental principles on theoretical principles AND develop proficiency in expressing ideas in writing.**

There are a series of films that students are assigned and asked to watch and then write a reflection paper over the films. The first assignment requires that you watch a video on Films on Demand on our library website under databases. Select one of the short videos posted under Social Psychology that you find interesting. Then look in your Social Psychology text to find the topic that is most relevant to the film clip. Write a short paper (one page) that discusses the video and the topic in social psychology that it is most closely related to. Discuss whether the film extended your knowledge of what was covered in the text.

**Conformity/Persuasion assignment and paper – Learning objective: Applying course material.**

Chapter 6 covers material on Attitudes and Persuasion (see the section titled “Persuasion by Communication”, in particular, but also “Alternative Routes to Self-Persuasion”). Chapter 7 deals with Social Influence (see the section on “Compliance”). You will be asked to use the material from chapters 6 and 7 to persuade two individual to engage in a behavior or act that that person would normally no do (think legal acts and moral acts – do not use your knowledge for evil). You must use two different techniques presented in the textbook or during lecture. You are to write a paper that documents the two different techniques that you used, describing each in detail in terms of what it is, how you applied that particular technique, what you thought the outcome would be, and what the actual outcome was. Your paper will be graded based on the quality of the writing and your level of understanding about the topic. I expect papers to be typed, double-spaced, and approximately two full pages.

**Class presentation (25 points)-
Learning objective: Develop proficiency in oral communication**
Develop a topic related to *gender representation in the media* – we will discuss this assignment as the semester progresses. The presentation must be original (that is, you can’t copy someone else’s presentation that you found on-line. If you do happen to ‘borrow’ someone else’s project you will receive a zero for this project). Students are allowed to work in pairs (no more than two students per group, no exception). There are many different ways that you could present – PowerPoint, your own video shoot of a commercial or music video, a collage, etc. Please note that if you elect to show a video clip, you must do more than simply show the clip. You have to have information that accompanies your video.

You must turn in a paper that outlines your presentation on the day of your presentation, highlighting which student is responsible for each section. Students are expected to attend all three days of the presentation, whether or not they are presenting. Students who skip classes on the day of the presentations will lose points off their final grade (-5 points per absence).

Find something that you are interested in for your topic. Possible ideas can be found on:

- Media Education Foundation website ([www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org)). YouTube has many of the videos shown on Media Education Foundation as short clips. As one possible idea, you could select a clip from this website to show and then do a short presentation on the topic. There are study guides that accompany almost every video that MEF has produced, so you could get additional ideas from the study guides. Please note in our class that we will already be covering some of the videos at length – including *Killing Us Softly III*, *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*, and *Tough Guise*. There are many more videos available though.

- *Films on Demand*, listed in our own library databases, has many Psychology videos that highlight sexual stereotypes in the media.
  - Possible videos: Racial stereotypes in the media; Images in the media; The cult of the beautiful body, buying into sexy tweens, Beauty: Survival of the prettiest; Body image for boys

Another source of information is looking for media that offer counter images of males and females. For example, you may start with the Dove Campaign.

**DETERMINATION OF FINAL GRADE:**

Your course grade will be based on the sum of your two midterms and cumulative final (for a total possible of 150 points) and your grades on the class exercises. The points will vary for each assignment but expect approximately 75 points for these assignments; 25 of those points are allotted to the media assignment and the remaining 50 will be evenly split between the other assignments. As a note - 75 points is worth 1.5 test points – don’t miss out on these relatively easy points. The approximate total point and course grade distribution area as follows:
A = 209 – 225; A- = 202 – 208; B+ = 195 – 201; B = 186 – 194; B- = 180 – 185; C+ = 173 – 179; C = 164 – 172; C- = 157 – 163; D+= 150 – 156; D = 141 – 149; D- = 135 – 140; F < 135 points.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Regular class attendance is essential. The lectures are designed to help identify and clarify key concepts and research findings outlined in the textbook. I also cover research examples not covered in the text that you will be required to know for the midterms. In short, it’s a very good idea to attend class regularly. I will not take class attendance but I do notice, in the long run, who is attending on a regular basis and who is not. Probably even more importantly, during in-class discussion days, I will notice which groups seem to have the readings finished ahead of time and are engaged in fruitful, relevant discussions. Regular attendance and active in-class participation could make the difference in determining whether a student will be bumped to the next higher grade if on the borderline.

Academic Integrity is a part of a UST education. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams and/or classroom assignments, plagiarizing work, and sharing work without authorization. Students suspected of academic dishonesty will receive a zero on the assignment itself and be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs.

Disability Services: Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will need to also contact Counseling and Disability Services.
EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Tentative schedule: subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to stay current on changes to the syllabus, which will be announced in class as they arise. Please note that due dates for lab assignments will be announced in class but they will generally be one week after the assignment is given.

M 8/24  What would you do?
Syllabus overview
Chapter 1: What is Social Psychology
W 8/26  Chapter 1: What is Social Psychology?

M 8/31  Chapter 2: Doing Social Psychology Research
W 9/02  Chapter 2: Doing Social Psychology Research

M 9/07  Labor Day
W 9/09  Chapter 3: The Social Self

M 9/14  Chapter 3: The Social Self
Lab: TedTalk: Vulnerability
W 9/16  Chapter 4: Perceiving Persons

M 9/21  Chapter 4: Perceiving Persons
W 9/23  Chapter 4: Perceiving Persons
Lab: TedTalk: Fake it Until You Make It (Amy Cuddy)

M 9/28  Test 1 – chapters 1 - 4
W 9/30  Challenge game test 1
Chapter 5: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

M 10/05  Chapter 5: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
W 10/07  Chapter 5: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
Lab assignment: Gender representation in the media (see list of ideas)

10-12  Fall break
W 10/14  Chapter 6: Attitudes
Lab Assignment: IAT

M 10/19  Chapter 6: Attitudes
W 10/21  Chapter 7: Conformity

M 10/26  Chapter 7: Conformity (video)

W 10/28  Lab: Persuasion: Using Psychology for the Common Good
Chapter 7: Conformity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 11/2</td>
<td><strong>Test 2 – chapters 5 - 7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 11/4</td>
<td>Challenge game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 11/9</td>
<td>Chapter 9: Attraction and Close Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 11/11</td>
<td>Chapter 9: Attraction and Close Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 11/16</td>
<td>Chapter 10: Helping Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 11/18</td>
<td>Chapter 10: Helping Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 11/23</td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 11/25</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 11/30</td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 12/2</td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 12/7</td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final exam: TBA

**TAKE-HOME CUMULATIVE FINAL HANDED OUT LAST DAY OF CLASS; THE FINAL WILL INCLUDE TWO NEW MATERIAL AND OLDER MATERIAL. WE WILL MEET ON THE DAY OF OUR SCHEDULED FINAL TO FINISH EXAM AND TURN THEM IN.**