PSCH 3301: Social Psychology

[August 24, 2015 – v.1.1]

I. Basic Course Information

I-A. Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of social psychology, an area of investigation which focuses on the way our thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals and groups are influenced by other people. Topics include social cognition, conformity, obedience, persuasion and propaganda, attribution, aggression, prejudice, liking, loving, and helping.

I-B. Student Learning Objectives for this Course

The student will be able to:

- Recognize the central concepts of social psychology theory and research in such areas of study as conformity, social cognition, social influence, and mass communication.
- Recognize social psychology's role in understanding social problems such as aggression and prejudice.
- Recognize how techniques of effective persuasion can be applied to one's own life and work.
- Recognize how important concepts and findings in areas related to love, liking, and interpersonal sensitivity can be applied to enhance one's own life and relationships.
- Identify the basic methods of social psychological research that justify the field's standing as a science.

I-C. Psychology Program Student Learning Objectives

This course is an element of the RGC psychology program. It is expected that the graduating student in this program will demonstrate the capacity to:

- Recognize the central concepts in the department's main areas of focus: abnormal psychology; social & personality psychology, and developmental psychology.
- Recognize and apply basic psychological research methods.
- Communicate effectively in written assignments and oral presentations concerning psychological subject matter.

I-D. Meeting Time and Location

This course is a web course. Quizzes and discussions will be given on Tuesdays between 5 PM and 11 PM.

I-E. Instructor

The instructor for this course is Dr. Wesley Wynne.
Email: wwynne@sulross.edu
Office phone: 830-279-3044
Office: A105 in Uvalde
Student Availability Hours (Official Version):
During the entire semester: Tuesdays 1- 2 PM and 3:30-7:30 PM by phone at 210-288-1393.

From beginning of classes through October 15: Mondays 1- 2 PM and 3:30-7:30 PM in Uvalde A105 or by phone at 830-279-3044.
From October 16 until end of classes: Thursdays 1- 2 PM and 3:30-7:30 PM by in Uvalde A105 or by phone at 830-279-3044.

Student Availability Hours (Common Sense Version):
Just email me to set up an appointment.

I am often available in Uvalde A105 at various days and times and am available for appointments and drop-ins, as well. On some days I will be traveling to Eagle Pass or Del Rio to teach teleconference courses at those locations. For that reason, it is advisable to call me at 210-288-1393 in advance to confirm that I will be teaching from Uvalde and thus available to meet at the Uvalde office.

I-F. Course Materials

Required Text

- *Social Psychology, 9th Edition, by Aronson, Wilson, and Sommers. ISBN-13: 978-0133936544*

Recommended Text

- *Writing: Grammar, Usage, and Style*, by Eggenschwiler & Biggs. ISBN: 978-0764563935.

By law, Sul Ross is required to tell you the following: "A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer." In fact, bargains on textbooks are often found on the websites of many Internet booksellers. Major online vendors typically accept major credit cards, checks, and money orders.

💣 Illegal copies of textbooks are prohibited at all times in classrooms and labs.

II. Assignments

II-A. Chapter Quizzes (30%)

Weekly chapter quizzes will be posted on Tuesdays and will be available between the hours of 5 PM and 11 PM. They will consist of approximately 20 to 30 questions and will take no more than 30 minutes. The lowest three grades will be dropped without penalty.

II-B. Reflection Paper (20%)

Students will write a five-page paper on a topic to be determined. The paper will be due in November.

II-C. Discussions (20%)

Beginning early in the term, students will participate in a series of short, weekly discussions on Blackboard. Take part in these online discussions regularly. All posting should be thoughtful and literate.

Thoughtful contributions will receive credit; lame contributions will not. Below is an example of a credited versus an un-credited contribution on the topic of “Love and Friendship” in a course on human sexuality:

Example of a Thoughtful Contribution - Credited:

I really enjoyed this chapter because it made a lot of my own "theories" make sense. One topic that really interested me was people marrying for money instead of love. My sister is the type of person that would marry for money instead of love and that is something that I never understood. She recently moved to California and has totally adopted a typical California attitude. Along with this, she has surprised the entire family. She is a very pretty girl, 20 years old and dating a man who is 32, very rich, but very unattractive. He is controlling and manipulative and is constantly making her change her ways of life. But he takes her to very expensive restaurants and buys her very expensive things and she thinks that makes it all better. She thinks he is so "cool" because he drives a $70,000 car. She even admits that she is only with him for his money. I have never understood how someone could live so unhappily just because they want to be rich. What upsets me the most is that we weren't brought up that way, and I don't understand where she got it.

Example of an Insufficient Contribution – No Credit Awarded:

I don't know. I don't think I believe in love because people just want to take advantage of you and stuff. I get tired of it.

II-D. The Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will cover all of the material in the course. The final exam will be given on Tuesday, December 8 at 6 PM.

💣 All assignments *must be completed and submitted in order to pass any course taught by Dr. Wynne*, regardless of a student's overall grades on other assignments. Students who do not complete all assignments will receive an F as a final grade for this course. (In courses with discussion forums or weekly quizzes, up to three discussion forums and three quizzes may be missed without risking this penalty.)

II-F. Assignment Schedule

Date	Topics and Assignments
August 24	Course Introduction; Ch. 1 on Introducing Social Psych
September 1	Ch. 1 Quiz; Ch. 2 on Methods of Research
September 8	Ch. 2 Quiz; Ch. 3 on Social Cognition
September 15	Ch. 3 Quiz; Ch. 4 on Social Perception
September 22	Ch. 4 Quiz; Ch. 5 on the Self
September 29	Ch. 5 Quiz; Ch. 6 on Justification of Actions
October 6	Ch. 6 Quiz; Ch. 7 on Attitudes
October 13	Ch. 7 Quiz; Ch. 8 on Conformity
October 20	Ch. 8 Quiz; Ch. 9 on Group Processes
October 27	Ch. 9 Quiz; Ch. 10 on Interpersonal Attraction
November 3	Ch. 10 Quiz; preparation of reflection paper
November 10	Reflection Paper Due; Ch. 11 on Prosocial Behavior
November 17	Ch. 11 Quiz; Ch. 12 on Aggression
November 24	Ch. 12 Quiz; Ch. 13 on Prejudice
December 1	Ch. 13 Quiz; preparation for final exam
December 8	Final Exam

III. Grading

III-A. The Calculation of Grades

Grades for each assignment, and for the course itself, are calculated as follows: A: 90% or above; B: 80%-89%; C: 70%-79%; D: 60%-69%; F: 0%-59%.

On assignments with curved grades, the top score will be converted to a 100. All other grades on the assignment will be expressed as a percentage of the top score. For example, if the top score on an exam is a 20 out of 25 items available, the 20 will be converted to a 100. If you get 15 of the 25 questions correct, your grade will be a 15/20, which is equal to a 75 (in other words, a C).

The times and dates when assignments are due and when evaluations are given will not be altered to fit your schedule. You will be expected to alter your schedule to fit class responsibilities.

In the interest of more thorough coverage of certain topics, the professor may decide to omit some of the assigned material from coverage on any particular exam. You are responsible to learn of any announced omissions.

III-B. The Interpretation of Final Grades

The rigor of grading varies somewhat from course to course, from instructor to instructor, from discipline to discipline, and from school to school. It is important to understand that the level of effort needed to achieve a particular grade in another course, under another instructor, in another discipline, or at another institution, might not be an accurate gauge of the amount of effort needed to achieve the same grade in this course.

The following is a general description of grades:

The grade of A is awarded for performance that is excellent to some degree – anywhere from very good to brilliant. It indicates a masterful level of performance which is far above the average. It is the grade representing a level of performance usually attained by only the top ten or fifteen percent of a typical class.

The grade of B indicates superior performance. B work is by definition better than most. It is good performance, but not outstanding. Consistent B-level performance is something to take a measure of pride in, especially if it the best one can do.

The grade of C represents adequate performance, enough to get by with, but little more. The grade of C is the grade achieved by most people; hence, it is the embodiment of mediocrity. Unless it is the consequence of one's genuine best effort, it should seldom be regarded as a satisfactory grade for persons with ambition or conscientiousness about their work in the endeavor being graded. It is the grade that pleases individuals who are content with being third-rate in their academic efforts.

The grade of D means that there are serious deficiencies in performance that makes the work product less than adequate, a marginal failure. Repeatedly earning Ds, unless they are balanced by As and Bs, is an indication of failure. Being able generally to attain only Ds is an indication that further education in the field of performance being graded may hold no value for you.

An F means that the deficiencies in performance are so serious that the resulting work product is completely unacceptable. A 59 and below means that failure has occurred, yet there are degrees of failure. A grade in the 50s indicates some likelihood that adequate performance could have been achieved under different circumstances, but typically a grade of below 50 means that the student was so lacking in effort, understanding or competence that failure was almost a foregone conclusion without major behavioral changes or remediation of some kind.

III-C. The Basis of Final Grades

Grades in this course are based on performance alone. They will not be rounded upwards. It is important for every student to understand that evaluation is not based ultimately on how hard someone has worked to earn a particular grade, or whether someone needs this course to graduate. Nor are grades based on personal & family needs, or on personal conceptions about what seems to be fair. All grades, including your final course grade, will be based *solely* on your academic work in this course, according to the criteria described in this syllabus.

III-D. The Reporting of Final Grades

For non-graduating students, final course grades will be posted on Banner at noon on the Monday after commencement (and for graduating seniors, at noon on the Friday before commencement). Final exams is a hectic time for students and the faculty alike, so please respect the privacy of all your professors during and after this period. Please do not initiate contact with me concerning grades between the start of the final exams period and when grades are reported. If I need information from you during this time, I will be the one to initiate contact.

Unsolicited voicemails and emails from any student during this period are liable to be ignored. This policy is based on years of experience: most communications from students during final exams and the grading period are based on needless anxiety rather than reasonable concerns. Please understand that any issues of grading that truly must be resolved may still be resolved *after* final grades are reported. Access to assignment grades and other course content will also be available to you on Blackboard until the week after commencement.

IV. Student Confidentiality

Because of privacy laws, all school-related issues -- academic, disciplinary, and personal -- must be handled between the university and the student directly. A

student's parent, spouse, boyfriend, best friend, case worker, parole officer, et cetera has absolutely no standing to intervene for a student or inquire concerning grades, disciplinary matters, or any other issues. Do not ask such persons to contact university faculty and staff to serve as a liaison, make inquiries, or settle disputes on your behalf.

V. Academic Integrity

V-A. The Honor Code

As members of the academic community, no student should tolerate cheating. According to the honor code, it is the responsibility of each and every student to report obvious cheating or any suspicious behavior that may compromise the integrity of the grading process. The confidentiality and anonymity of students who report such incidents will be respected.

To report cheating, call 830-279-3044. If there is no answer, leave a detailed description of what you witnessed.

V-B. Policy on Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty and the penalties pertaining to it are described in the SRSU student handbook. In this course, all communication among students while taking exams is prohibited.

Communicating material included on an exam with or in the presence of someone who has not yet taken that exam is also prohibited.

No student may print, photograph, copy, or in any other way reproduce material from any exam. The consequence of violating this directive will be immediate dismissal from the course with a grade of F.

Except in online courses, unless specifically authorized, no student shall take an exam at any computer outside of the designated testing facility.

Students may not share books, notes, or any other form of communication during exams. Do NOT sit next to another student who is taking the same test in the lab unless no other seats are available. No student taking an exam should have open any website other than the Blackboard site. Close all other windows. Failure to follow these instructions may, at a minimum, result in a zero for the exam and might result in an F for the course.

The possession of any course-related material in an exam room during an exam period in which the material in question is forbidden is *ipso facto* evidence of scholastic dishonesty. In plain language, if you bring material, such as a textbook, into a testing situation where you are not supposed to have that material with you, you are thereby committing a violation, even if you were not referring to the material or intending to use the material to cheat.

Plagiarism, as every student should know, involves taking the work of others and claiming it as your own. It will not be tolerated. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, excellent guidelines can be found online at *www.plagiarism.org*.

Using an illegal copy of textbook materials constitutes academic dishonesty. If a student is found to be using illegally copied textbook material during an open-book exam, the penalty will be failure of the exam. In addition, the student will have the choice of immediately surrendering the illegal copy to SRSU faculty/staff or receiving a failing grade for the course.

The penalty for serious academic dishonesty is severe: a student who turns in a plagiarized paper or cheats on an exam may receive an F for the entire course. A

plagiarized paper will be given a zero on academic grounds alone, yet the student may face the additional disciplinary penalties for academic dishonesty. You and you alone are responsible for understanding and avoiding academic dishonesty in all your work.

VI. Student Etiquette

VI-A. Student Etiquette In Web-Based Courses

Even though web courses do not involve such responsibilities as showing up on time and being quiet in class, there are other responsibilities that pertain. One of those is checking your email regularly. All students have a Sul Ross email account and your instructors or fellow online students may send notices to you at that email address. For this reason, it is important for you to check your Sul Ross email account on a regular basis – preferably daily, but at least twice a week.

Also, in web courses, you are a participant in discussions. It is helpful and good to reply to the postings of your fellow classmates and join in an active conversation.

In the computer labs when people are testing, it is absolutely essential that all students behave so as to minimize noise and disruption, including whispering.

VI-B. Student Etiquette In Traditional and Teleconference Courses

Please, do not just attend. Participate actively when you have something to add to the class discussion. However, before addressing the class or the professor during a class discussion, ask yourself: Will my comments have value to other students in this course? Are my comments relevant to the material being discussed? Remarks such as “I can’t find the assignment I turned in on Blackboard” or “I got a bad grade on the test. Can you tell me what I need to do to improve it?” are two examples of things *not* always appropriate to bring up during class in some circumstances. They should be discussed privately with the professor.

Please remember to follow all the conventional classroom rules, such as: Show up to class on time. Do not leave class early. (If you must leave early or show up late in special circumstances, notify the professor *in person* ahead of time.) And absolutely do not get up and leave the classroom during lecture to go get food, take calls or for other trivial reasons.

Please remember that Sul Ross has a policy on appropriate campus attire. The policy refers to “the responsibility to dress in a manner which will not detract from the academic atmosphere of the library, classrooms, and other facilities.” Students whose attire detracts from the academic atmosphere of the classroom to an extent that becomes disruptive will be notified of the problem by the professor and thereafter expected to dress more appropriately.

Misuse of cell phones, especially text messaging, has become a problem with some people. Turn your cell phone OFF before entering the classroom or testing lab. Do NOT merely set the phone to vibrate—buzzing is just as disruptive as ringing. Do NOT set it to silent and leave it in view—any incoming calls or texts messages will distract you and possibly others around you. If you feel you absolutely must leave your phone on to take an important call or wait for an important text message (doctor report, et cetera), please sit near the door and let the instructor know ahead of time of the situation.

Also, the use of laptop computers in the classroom will not be allowed. Studies have shown that laptops in class are frequently disruptive to other students and can even be counter-productive to the learning process of the students who use them.

Disruptions caused by tardiness, cell phone use, talking, and other disruptive behaviors may result in a student's expulsion from the classroom and, for repeat offenders, permanent dismissal from the course. Any student who has disrupted other of my courses will receive less leniency because of prior inappropriate conduct.

Attendance will sometimes be taken, usually but not always at the beginning of class. Students who are not present for roll call will be counted absent. Sul Ross policy allows that students may be automatically dropped with an F from courses if they have excessive absences, defined as nine hours of absence from a course (this translates to 3 absences from an evening course, 6 absences from a daytime course, and 3 absences from a summer course). The professor will enforce this policy when a pattern of negligent behavior is observed. Students who without authorization arrive late or leave class early for any reason without approval may be counted absent for the entire session.

In the computer labs when people are testing and in all courses taught by teleconference, it is absolutely essential that all students behave so as to minimize noise and disruption, including whispering.

VII. Policy Concerning Problems with Blackboard during Exams and While Submitting Assignments

VII-A. Blackboard Exams

Blackboard is seldom to blame for problems during exams. When genuine problems occur with Blackboard technology, the problem affects multiple people at the same time. Yet some students frequently report that Blackboard has "frozen up" or will not let them proceed with a test. So far I have identified the following reasons for this problem:

- Students will not use the Firefox browser when taking a quiz. If you do not use Firefox, you will have problems.
- Students try to go back and change the answers to test items that they have already answered. You cannot do this. Trying to do so by hitting the back button on your browser, or by other methods, will cause you to forfeit a test grade.
- Students misinterpret the following statement that appears at the start of each quiz: "This Test can be saved and resumed later." Yes, if later means in five minutes. But you will have only twenty-five minutes from the time you log on to the time you log out. Taking longer than that will result in a zero for the quiz.
- Students try to cheat by first previewing a quiz, then logging out and claiming that they were frozen out of the quiz. They do this in the hope of getting the chance to then retake the quiz and earning a higher score. That will not happen.
- Students misuse the mouse by repeatedly clicking on a browser button to move to the next test item, or hold down the mouse button for an extended period of time. These behaviors may cause you to forfeit a test grade.

Tests will not be reset for individual students in the great majority of circumstances. Therefore, please avoid the behaviors listed above in order to successfully use Blackboard for taking tests.

VII-B. Using the Blackboard Dropbox

The Blackboard Dropbox feature is a reliable way for students to submit papers electronically. However, it is critical for students to know the difference between uploading (adding) a paper to the Dropbox and actually submitting (sending) a paper to a professor using the Dropbox. Until you see a confirmation message announcing *"Receipt: Success: The file has been sent to selected users with role of Instructor*" you have not successfully submitted your file.

VIII. Statement on Intellectual Tolerance and Academic Freedom

Psychology is a field of inquiry that touches upon many controversial issues, including sexuality, evolution, gender, race, ethnicity, individual differences, parenting, divorce, crime and public policy, drug use, religion, and multicultural issues, among others. Professors and students often have strong opinions and make forceful arguments concerning these phenomena. It is often educationally productive to address and debate these matters in the context of classroom instruction and course assignments. Social taboos discouraging open discussion are inappropriate in this context and must be laid aside in the interest of intellectual inquiry.

Your grade will not be influenced in any way by expressing points of view that are in disagreement with the professor's. If time permits, students are encouraged to express their opinions and arguments whenever relevant to the subject material. The professor is free to do likewise.

Students who experience excessive anxiety or discomfort during the discussion of a sensitive topic (e.g., domestic abuse) should not hesitate to leave the classroom for a time if necessary and should never feel embarrassed for doing so. This can be an adaptive response to an emotionally difficult situation.

In contrast, other individuals are offended in principle by the mere exposure to concepts, opinions and arguments with which they disagree. The response of such persons is sometimes to try and close off discussion or to become hostile or vindictive toward others. Such persons are not encouraged to take psychology courses at Rio Grande College until they have resolved the personal issues preventing them from engaging in serious intellectual discourse.

IX. Teaching Philosophy

A college degree signifies accomplishment; it will increase a person's prestige and can help its holder acquire a job. However, once the job is taken, success depends on what has been learned—a college degree by itself is merely a sheet of paper. If a student takes full advantage of the opportunity of education, the sheet of paper signifies skills and knowledge that will improve one's value as a worker and as a member of the community. If not, the student might find himself or herself with a sheet of paper only, without additional skills, useful knowledge, or value to employers. RGC psychology courses are designed to provide students with knowledge and skills that will help them in their careers, in their relationships, and in their capacity to be responsible members of a community.

The early 20th Century American writer Albert Jay Nock had this to say about his college experience:

> We were made to understand that the burden of education was on us and no one else, least of all our instructors; they were not there to help us carry it or to praise our efforts, but to see that we shouldered it in proper style and got on with it.

I believe that through encouragement and deserved praise, college professors can and should ease the burden of education for their students. Yet students who enroll at SRSU-Rio Grande College must remember they are expected to perform upper-division college-level work. No course in the psychology curriculum is remedial. As Albert Jay Nock understood, a professor's responsibility is to lead students to knowledge; it is, however, each student's responsibility to learn.

X. Contacting the Professor

The most effective way to contact the instructor is by email at *wwynne@sulross.edu*. To protect student privacy, send from your Sul Ross or Blackboard-registered email account. Email etiquette requires that you sign your name in *every* email you send and that you specify the particular course or issue to which you are referring. Do not expect to receive a response without extending this courtesy.

XI. Contacting Technical Support

Most technical problems that students experience using Blackboard can be avoided by using *Firefox* as your web browser rather than *Internet Explorer*. Firefox maybe downloaded for free at www.mozilla.com/firefox.

If you have a problem with technical issues such as downloading a file or taking an exam, contact an Office of Information Technology (OIT) staffer for assistance or call the OIT Helpdesk. The Helpdesk is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days of the week.

- From on-campus, call 8765.
- From off-campus, call (888) 691-5071.

If you are downloading syllabi and other documents, you should update your computer for compatibility with Microsoft Office 2007. The free update is available at: http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=941B3470-3AE9-4AEE-8F43-C6BB74CD1466&displaylang=en

XII. Special Accommodations

Our institution complies with state and federal laws concerning people with disabilities. If a student needs accessibility services, it is the student's responsibility to initiate a request. This may be done by contacting Ms. Kathy Biddick at 830-279-3003. The address is 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, Texas 78801.

XIII. Miscellaneous

On some written assignments, students may be asked to use a pseudonym to insure anonymity in a discussion or for blind grading. The pseudonym should be known only to you unless and until the professor needs it. To protect your confidentiality, share it with no one.

All written assignments submitted electronically must be saved in one of the following formats: .doc, .docx, or .rtf. All major word processing programs allow at least one of these options. Written assignments submitted in other formats will not be accepted; therefore, please contact the technical staff for assistance with this task

before your submission deadline if you need help saving your document in .doc, .docx, or .rtf formats.

In web-based courses, due to the difficulty of coordinating schedules and meeting times, it will not be possible for students to review their performance on weekly assignments unless they are willing to visit the professor's office in Uvalde. Otherwise, to improve their performance and to prepare for the final exam, students should review the course materials. If any student is concerned about the accuracy of a test item or a grade, the student may arrange an office appointment with me at the end of the semester; the student will be provided with an opportunity to review their performance on all assignments at that time.

XIV. Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. [If the course requires students to take proctored exams or to purchase additional software or equipment, those requirements are described herein above.] The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.