

**PSYCHOLOGY 3313: W01 - SOCIAL ATTITUDES
FALL-2025**

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. James W. Downing
LH 302

Office Hours:

In Person: Wednesdays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm,
 Thursdays, 9:30 am – 11:30 am,
 Fridays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Virtual: Wednesdays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm,
 Thursdays, 9:30 am – 11:30 am,
 Fridays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm, or by
 Appointment

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

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PREREQUISITE:

Enrollment in this course requires successful completion of Introduction to Psychology (PSY 1320 and Introductory Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (PSY 2307) or consent of the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Pratkanis, A., & Aronson, E. (2001). Age of propaganda: The everyday use and abuse of persuasion (Rev. ed.). New York: W. H. Freeman.

Spitale, S.C. (2022). How to win the war on truth: An illustrated guide to how mistruths are sold, why they stick, and how to reclaim reality. Philadelphia, PA: Quirk Books.

“If we value independence, if we are disturbed by the growing conformity of knowledge, of values, of attitudes, which our present system induces, then we may wish to set up conditions of learning which make for uniqueness, for self-direction, and for self-initiated learning.” Carl Rogers

Memo to: Students in PSY 3313:1, Sul Ross State University

From: Jay Downing

Social Attitudes, what in the world are social attitudes? I hope you will come to see the value of understanding and studying them. If you wonder why you do some of the things you do in your life, look no further than your attitudes toward people, places, and things. Most of the time, social psychologists study the emotional aspect of an attitude or how one affectively responds to some attitude object. In short, do we like, dislike, or feel neutral towards the object? To me this course's title implies the chance for each of us to do anything we wish that will add significantly to our own learning about attitudes. You will quickly find that attitudes are differentiated from beliefs, opinions, values, and habits. This course gives each of us an opportunity to read and think about such things as these: the meaning and measurement of attitudes; attitude strength and structure; attitudes and their function for individuals; methods of changing attitudes; predicting behavior from attitudes and its converse, predicting behavior from attitudes; resistance to persuasion; implicit measurement of attitudes; modeling the brain when studying attitudes; and techniques of propaganda and resisting its effects. I know this is only an initial list, but it gives some idea of the range in which each of you can develop your own curriculum. Given that we are in the buildup to a mid-term election next year, there will be many chances for us to apply what we have learned to the world outside of the classroom.

Next, I will list some of my own thoughts for the course thus far. I have had a fair amount of time to think about the course and the plans are subject to change if you wish, within the limit of my own schedule and yours.

“I don't like that man. I must get to know him better.” ~Abraham Lincoln

Reading List

I have tried to make up a broad-gauge reading list for this class. The reading list includes a wide range of readings from social psychology, political science, and communication. I have included both books and journal articles for your consideration.

The Spitaler text is an up-to-date examination of the many different areas of study that

make up research on social attitudes, persuasion and propaganda. **I expect you to read, study, and understand all the material from (the text, How to Win the War on Truth: An Illustrated Guide to How Mistruths are Sold, Why They Stick, and How to Reclaim Reality and the text, Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion) you purchase for the course as well as any other things we decide to read.**

The reading list includes a listing of the major studies done in this field. I am happy for suggestions to add to the list. Nothing on the reading list is required reading. It instead represents instead a rich storehouse from which you may draw the kinds of things that have the most meaning to you. You may also want to go well beyond this list into other areas of social attitudes that have special interest to you.

“The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitudes.” ~Viktor Frankl

Requirements

There are several aspects of the course which will be required. These are as follows: I wish to have a log of the readings you have done for the course turned in at the end of each week in what I call a “Reading Log”. In the log you will write entries that indicate the way you have read the selection. A natural question is, “What will go in the reading log?” In the reading log you should write entries that indicate the way you have read the selection. For example, you might list a book or a chapter from the texts or another book and state, “Chapters 3 and 6 were read thoroughly.” You might list another book or chapter from the base texts or the reading list and state “Skimmed the book and found it was over my head.” You might list another book or article and say, “I got so much out of this that I read it twice and made careful notes on Chapters 5 through 12.” You might state, “I was repelled by the whole point of view and only read enough to become convinced that I was disgusted with the author.” In other words, **what is wanted is an honest account of what you have read and the depth to which you have read the material you covered.** You do not only have to read books, but research articles are also fair game too. The works you cite do not necessarily have to be on the reading list. If you find books or articles that apply to the study of social attitudes, please let me know about them so I can include them on the list.

I do want to read entries for everything you read for this course during the fall term. As you get into the texts, please write a separate entry for each chapter in each text as you complete your reading log each week. Your first reading log post is due by Sunday, September 3, at midnight. Introduce yourself in the first reading log post, comment on the introduction to the “How to Win the War on Truth” text and the syllabus.

The **second requirement** is that you write a paper, which I refer to as a “Personal Change Paper”. This paper may be as brief or as lengthy as you wish about your own ideas about the most significant areas of social attitudes to you and the ways those ideas have changed or not changed as a result of this course. In this paper, use the space to show me what you have learned about the field and yourself because of your efforts in the course. In the past, this paper has generally been five to seven pages in length, not including the title page and references. Your paper should have at least four (4) references other than the texts. Use at least two (2) peer-

reviewed journals (which can be electronic). Use the APA reference manual for format guidelines. Go to library or SRSU Writing Center for help, or use the internet resources provided on Black Board for this course. Please ask for help early on so that you do not get overwhelmed. See the attached PERSONAL CHANGE PAPER CHECKLIST at the end of the syllabus for specifics on components of the paper. **The personal change paper will be due by midnight on Sunday, December 7.**

A **third requirement** is that you write one reaction report every other week based on any readings, any experience, or any discussion you may have had. This report can be as long or as short as you desire. It should, however, be limited to your reactions, by this I mean your feelings. I want you to feel as free as possible in these reports in expressing your feelings about anything you want to write about, whether or not it has anything to do with the course. Your first reaction report is due by Sunday, September 7, at midnight. Subsequent reaction reports are due on Sunday at midnight on September 21, October 5, & 19, and November 2 & 16. **The submission period for your reaction reports will close at midnight on the Sundays they are due.**

A **fourth requirement** is that you complete a cognitive map of the field of social attitudes as you see it. You will learn about how to make one as we move along in the course. This cognitive map is something you will work on over the course of the semester and will complete as a final project to demonstrate your knowledge. Its purpose is to let you demonstrate your understanding of the field to me, your classmates, and yourself.

A **fifth requirement** is that you turn in to me a statement of your own evaluation of your work and the grade that you think is appropriate. This statement should include: a) the criteria by which you are judging your work; b) a description of the ways in which you have met or failed to meet those criteria; and c) the grade you think is appropriate to the way you have met or failed to meet your own criteria. If I find that my own estimate of your work is quite at variance with yours, I will have a personal talk with you to see if we can arrive at some mutually satisfactory grade which I can in good conscience sign and turn in.

The **final requirement** is to be your personal reaction to the course as a whole. I would like this submitted to me in the portal I set up for it. You are at liberty, however, to let me know, "Please do not open until the final grades have been turned in." If you mark the submission in this fashion, I assure you I will honor your request.

In this reaction, I would like you to state very honestly what the course meant to you, both positively and negatively. I would like any criticisms you have to make of the course and suggestions of ways in which it might be improved. This in short is your opportunity to evaluate the course, the instructor, and the manner in which the course has been carried out. It will in no case have any influence on your final grade but if you are fearful that it might have such an influence, please mark your submission as suggested, and I will not open it until all the grades have been turned in. **The personal reaction to the course will be due by midnight on Sunday, December 7.**

Other activities will come up during the term and you are expected to complete them fully and on time.

I feel it is important that students learn about deadlines. Therefore, I do not accept work after its due date.

Failure to complete any of the requirements will result in a failing grade being assigned for

the course.

A passing grade in the course will not be turned in until all of these requirements have been fulfilled.

Attendance is very important in this class. I reserve the right to drop a student from the class with a failing grade if he or she misses three class days.

Attendance and Course preparation:

Class attendance is governed by the SRSU policy stated in the schedule of classes. Students will be dropped with an “F” when you have accumulated six (6) or more absences OR the equivalent in a web-based course. *Class attendance in this course includes logging onto Black Board during the first week of class, monitoring your SRSU email and Black Board announcements on a daily basis, taking exams, posting, and completing other assignments on time, as well as communicating in a timely and clear manner with the professor regarding challenges experienced related to the course.*

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes.” ~William James

Course Schedule Template (Social Attitudes, Fall 2025)

HTWTWOT- stands for the “How to Win the War on Truth” text

AOP- stand for the “Age of Propaganda” text

Unit	Week	Dates (Mon-Fri)	Topic	Activities/ Assignments All Due Dates @ 12 PM CST
Start Here	Week 1	Aug 25 – Aug 29	Post-Truth Nation	Introduction, Course Overview, & Discussion READ the Introduction to HTWTWOT (pages 1-12), Syllabus & Handouts, (by Friday 8/29) SYLLABUS QUIZ and START HERE orientation to BLACK BOARD (by Sunday 8/31 <i>midnight</i>) READING LOG POST 1 <i>Introduce yourself and Introduction, Syllabus, and Handouts</i> (by Sunday 8/31 <i>midnight</i>)
Unit 1	Week 2	Sep 1 – Sep 5 (short week due to Monday, Sep 1, Labor Day Holiday)	Propagating the Faith	READ Chapter 1 of HTWTWOT , Propagating the Faith (by Friday 9/5) READING LOG POST 2 Over Chapter 1 by Sunday 9/7 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 1 by Sunday 9/7 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 3	Sep 8 – Sep 12	Cutting Out Complexity	READ Chapter 2 of HTWTWOT , Cutting Out Complexity (by Friday 9/12) READING LOG POST 3 Over Chapter 2 by Sunday 9/14 <i>midnight</i>
Unit	Week	Dates (Mon-Fri)	Topic	Activities/ Assignments All Due Dates @ 12 PM CST

	Week 4	Sep 15 – Sep 19	Bias and the Brain & Emotional Manipulation	READ Chapters 3 & 4 of HTWTWOT , Bias and the Brain and Emotional Manipulation (by Friday 9/19) READING LOG POST 4 Over Chapters 3 & 4 by Sunday 9/21 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 2 by Sunday 9/21 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 5	Sep 22 – Sep 26	Dividing and Conquering (An Audience)	READ Chapter 5 of HTWTWOT , Dividing and Conquering (An Audience) (by Friday 9/26) READING LOG POST 5 Over Chapter 5 by Sunday 9/28 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 6	Sep 29 – Oct 3	Power, Profit, and Propaganda	READ Chapter 6 of HTWTWOT , Power, Profit, and Propaganda (by Friday 10/3) READING LOG POST 6 Over Chapter 6 by Sunday 10/5 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 3 by Sunday 10/5 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 7	Oct 6 – Oct 10	Propaganda Techniques	READ Chapter 7 of HTWTWOT , Dividing and Conquering (An Audience) (by Friday 10/10) READING LOG POST 7 Over Chapter 7 by Sunday 10/12 <i>midnight</i>
Unit	Week	Dates (Mon-Fri)	Topic	Activities/ Assignments All Due Dates @ 12 PM CST

	Week 8	Oct 13 – Oct 17	The Southern Strategy: A Case Study in Propaganda/ Conclusion	READ Chapter 8 of HTWTWOT , The Southern Strategy: A Case Study in Propaganda and Conclusion (by Friday 10/17) READING LOG POST 8 Over Chapter 8 by Sunday 10/19 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 4 by Sunday 10/19 <i>midnight</i>
Unit 2	Week 9	Oct 20 – Oct 24	The Psychology of Everyday Persuasion	READ Chapter 1 of AOP , The Psychology of Everyday Persuasion (by Friday 10/24) READING LOG POST 9 Over Chapter 1 by Sunday 10/26 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 10	Oct 27 – Oct 31	Pre-Persuasion: Setting the Stage for Effective Influence	READ Chapter 2 of AOP , Pre-Persuasion: Setting the Stage for Effective Influence (by Friday 10/31) READING LOG POST 10 Over Chapter 2 by Sunday 11/2 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 5 by Sunday 11/2 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 11	Nov 3 – Nov 7	Communicator Credibility: Real and Manufactured	READ Chapter 3 of AOP , Communicator Credibility: Real and Manufactured (by Friday 11/7) READING LOG POST 11 Over Chapter 3 by Sunday 11/9 <i>midnight</i>
Unit	Week	Dates (Mon-Fri)	Topic	Activities/ Assignments All Due Dates @ 12 PM CST
	Week	Nov 10 – Nov 14	The Message and How it is	READ Chapter 4 of AOP , The Message and How it is Delivered (by Friday 11/14)

	12		Delivered	READING LOG POST 12 Over Chapter 4 by Sunday 11/16 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 6 by Sunday 11/16 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 13	Nov 17 - Nov 21 Have a great Thanksgiving Holiday!	Emotional Appeals: Touch the Heart, Persuade the Mind	READ Chapter 5 of AOP , Emotional Appeals: Touch the Heart, Persuade the Mind (by Friday 11/21) READING LOG POST 13 Over Chapter 5 by Sunday 11/23 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 14	Nov 24 - Nov 28 Have a great Thanksgiving Holiday!	When Information Fails: the Challenge of Propaganda to Society/Counteracting the Tactics of Propaganda	READ Chapter 6 & 7 of AOP , When Information Fails: the Challenge of Propaganda to Society/Counteracting the Tactics of Propaganda (by Friday 11/28) No Reading Log this Week!
Unit 3	Week 15	Dec 1 – Dec 5	Course Wrap Up	COGNITIVE MAP PRESENTATION by Friday, 12/5 <i>midnight</i> PERSONAL CHANGE PAPER by Sunday 12/7 <i>midnight</i> SELF EVALUATION by Sunday 12/7 <i>midnight</i> PERSONAL REACTION TO THE COURSE PAPER by Sunday 12/7 <i>midnight</i>

Below you will find the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) dealt with in this course. The student learning outcomes follow and relate, to a greater or lesser extent, to each SLO dealt with in the course.

Student Learning Objective (SLO #1)

1. The students will be able to demonstrate competency in the biopsychosocial approach.

Student Learning Objective (SLO #2)

2. The students will be able to demonstrate their critical thinking skills via tasks related to student thought, complexity, and originality.

Student Learning Outcomes

Required Task-Reaction Reports:

Goal One: The student will demonstrate the ability to engage in the self-expression of emotions by writing bi-weekly reaction reports. (Affective Domain: Respond)

Goal Two: The student will demonstrate value development by reporting an emotion they experienced in the reaction reports. (Affective Domain: Value Development)

Required Task-Reading Log:

Goal Three: The student will write an evaluation of the readings they complete for the course that will be examined weekly during the semester. (Cognitive Domain: Evaluation)

Goal Four: The student will demonstrate an awareness of their responsibility for their development as a life-long learner by taking personal responsibility for the volume of readings they complete. (Affective Domain: Value Development)

Required Task-Personal Change Paper:

Goal Five: The student will write a critical evaluation of the issues they have learned about in the course. This evaluation will compare and contrast the state of their knowledge about psychology at the beginning of the course and towards its close. (Cognitive Domain: Evaluation)

Goal Six: The student will create an original paper that compares and contrasts the state of their knowledge about psychology at the beginning of the course and towards its close. (Psychomotor Domain: Creation)

Goal Seven: The student will freely express their opinion that demonstrates the student has been independently studying and thinking about issues in psychology. (Affective Domain: Value Development)

Marketable Skills Assessed by the Tasks Completed in this Course

1. Describing Feelings: Students will demonstrate empathic or active listening and conversational skills, and/or write clearly about their affective stance, respectfully attuned to the needs of their audiences.
2. Identifying Resources: Students will demonstrate the aptitude to locate, organize and evaluate the credibility of information from multiple sources.
3. Analyzing: Students will demonstrate the ability to examine the underlying issues of scientific problems, attending to the pertinent details and creating action plans, recognizing ambiguity and complexity as essential components. Students will communicate effectively in writing.

SPECIAL NOTATION FOR EDUCATION STUDENTS:

I know that some education students may take this course. This course addresses some of the objectives of the TExES Exam for the subject area of social science, which includes a psychology portion. Specifically, this course may address the following objectives, among others.

Domain III

Geography, Culture, and the Behavioral and Social Sciences

Competency 13 (Social, Anthropological, and Psychological Concepts and Processes)

The teacher applies sociological, anthropological, and psychological concepts and processes to understand cultural formation and change, intergroup relations, and individual development.

- Demonstrates knowledge of the history and theoretical foundations of psychology.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the behavioral, social, cognitive, and personality perspectives of human learning.
- Understands basic psychological principles and including those related to motivation, sensation and perception, personality, relationships between biology and behavior, and relationships between the self and others.

The interested student is informed that for full information concerning the TExES exam in education concerning psychology as a part of the social sciences, they should contact the SRSU Education Department for materials concerning test preparation and administration. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of this course if he or she is a candidate for the exam. If so, the instructor can guide them to resources that will assist with their exam preparation.

Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. 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.

Disabilities Act Statement

SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartze, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can during working hours). Our office is located on the first floor of

Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, SUI Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Academic Integrity:

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

The **second requirement** is that you write a paper, which I refer to as a "Personal Change Paper". This paper may be as brief or as lengthy as you wish about your own ideas about the most significant areas of social attitudes to you and the ways those ideas have changed or not changed as a result of this course. In this paper, use the space to show me what you have learned about the field and yourself because of your efforts in the course. In the past, this paper has generally been five to seven pages in length, not including the title page and references. Your research paper should have at least four (4) references other than the text. Use at least two (2) peer-reviewed journals (which can be electronic). Use the APA reference manual for format guidelines. Go to library or SRSU Writing Center for help, or use the internet resources provided on Black Board for this course. Please ask for help early on so that you do not get overwhelmed. See the attached PERSONAL CHANGE PAPER CHECKLIST below for specifics on components of the paper.

Downing

NAME: _____

PERSONAL CHANGE PAPER CHECKLIST

The following must be included in your paper: (from syllabus)

- 1) Explore the most significant areas of study of social attitudes to you. _____
- 2) Explain how those ideas have changed and Developed (or not) as a result of the course. _____
- 3) Describe how your views can impact your community, our U.S. society, and the global community. _____
- 4) Describe how your views can affect how you might choose to be in your family, work, and social life from here on out. _____
- 5) Organization of Content/Spelling/ Grammar/Writing style (6 to 8 pages long) _____
- 6) APA Style Format
 - a) Title page with Running head _____
 - b) Abstract _____
 - c) Correct citation of references and quotes within paper _____
 - d) Reference page (5 to 6 references) _____

Things to Do to Help Improve Your Performance in Class

I, like most faculty, expect you to spend 2-3 hours outside of class studying for every hour spent in class each week. That means for this 3 semester credit hour course you should be studying between 6-9 hours outside of class each week.

Study your text regularly. As you will see, spending 30 minutes a day studying for six days is much more useful than studying for a single three-hour period.

Link the concepts that you learn with your own experience. Try to make the material come to life by thinking of people, events, etc., in your own life where you have seen the ideas you read about play themselves out.

