**ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE**

**Social Sciences Division**

**PSY 211 – Social Psychology**

**Course Outline**

**Course Number & Name:**  PSY 211 Social Psychology

**Credit Hours:**  3 .0 **Contact Hours:**  3.0 **Lecture:** 3.0 **Lab:**  N/A **Other:**  N/A

**Prerequisites**:  Grade of “C” or better in PSY 101

**Co-requisites:** None **Concurrent Courses:** None

**Course Outline Revision Date:**  Fall 2010

**Course Description**: This course is designed to help students understand and explain social-psychological phenomena. Concepts such as conformity, fear, humor, gratitude, lying, selfishness and attitude, and impression formation are examined. Various methods are applied to enable students to understand the behavior and thoughts of individuals and groups. The course objective is to develop students’ ability to independently analyze social-psychosocial phenomena.

**Course Goals:** Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. demonstrate foundational knowledge in social psychology with respect to various concepts, theories, and research methods;

2. discuss the major research findings and theoretical perspectives in social psychology;

3. describe how social psychologists view the world, think about, and study human behavior;

4. describe the responsiveness of human behavior to changes in their social situations;

5. identify the utility of social psychological approaches and knowledge to one’s own life experiences and apply social psychological phenomena to one’s own thinking, behavior, and relationships;

6. describe the extent to which social behaviors are influenced by situational and interpretive factors and discuss the actual, imagined, or implied presence of how others influence one’s own behavior and how people think about, influence, and relate to one another;

7. discuss the application of social psychological research and how it might be used to solve real-world problems and situations actually encountered in everyday life;

8. apply social psychological research findings to traditional activities such as politics, religious practices, and everyday routine life; and

9. critically evaluate social psychological phenomena (e.g., health-related issues and the law).

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)**: Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate foundational knowledge in social psychology with respect to various concepts, theories, and research methods:

1.1 *identify the founder and history of social psychology;* and

1.2 *describe how the concept of social psychology was introduced to and accepted into the field of traditional psychology*

2. Discuss the major research findings and theoretical perspectives in social psychology:

2.1 *describe social psychology as an empirical science*;

2.2 *describe how to formulate hypothesis and theories;*

2.3 *describe the observational method and social behavior;*

2.4 *describe the correlation method in predicting social behavior;*

2.5 *describe the experimental method;* and

2.6 *describe ethical issues in social psychology*

3. Describe how social psychologists view the world, think about, and study human behavior:

3.1 *identify automatic thinking, low-effort thinking with schemas, mental strategies and shortcuts;*

3.2 *describe controlled social cognition and high-effort thinking;*

3.3 *describe how people express themselves and communicate through non-verbal behavior;* and

3.4 *describe the meaning and utilization of culture and attribution relative to understanding the behaviors of others*

4. Describe the responsiveness of human behavior to changes in their social situations:

4.1 *describe the meaning and use of rational behavior versus rationalizing behaviors*;

4.2 *describe cognitive dissonance*; and

4.3 *describe self-justification*

5. Identify the utility of social psychological approaches and knowledge to one’s own life experiences and apply social psychological phenomena to one’s own thinking, behavior, and relationships:

5.1 *describe the nature of the “self”;*

5.2 *identify one’s own self, using intrinsic and extrinsic motivation*;

5.3 *describe the motivations behind lying, showing gratitude, selfishness, selflessness, and attitude;* and

5.4 *describe how impression formation and impression management are controlled*

6. Describe the extent to which social behaviors are influenced by situational and interpretive factors and discuss the actual, imagined, or implied presence of how others influence one’s own behavior and how people think about, influence, and relate to one another:

6.1 *describe conformity;*

6.2 *describe normative social influence;*

6.3 *provide examples of obedience to authority;*

6.4 *identify various types of groups and how they developed;*

6.5 *identify the differences between conflict and cooperation;* and

6.6 *describe events and actions that often causes fear and humors*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

7. Discuss the application of social psychological research and how it might be used to solve real-world problems and situations actually encountered in everyday life:

7.1 *explain why people help others, known or not known;*

7.2 *describe instincts and genes that lead to helping others;*

7.3 *identify situational determinants that contribute to human behavior;*

7.4 *describe social situations and aggression;*

7.5 *identify* *ways in which aggression can be reduced and volunteerism and assistance can be increased;* and

7.6 *identify causes and instances of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination*

8. Apply social psychological research findings to traditional activities such as politics, religious practices, and everyday routine life:

8.1 *discuss the establishment of political groups and infractions and the causes for such;*

8.2 *discuss the establishment of religious groups and conflicts between adversaries*

9. Critically evaluate social psychological phenomena (e.g., health-related issues and the law):

9.1 *describe how society and cultures can contribute to health problems;*

9.2 *describe how society and cultures can contribute to stress, distress, and eustress;*

9.3 *discuss how eyewitnesses are often wrong or mistaken when testifying in court;* and

9.4 *explain why people obey the law*

**Methods of Instruction**: Instruction will consist of, but not be limited to, a combination of lectures, class discussion, demonstrations and exercises, and media/audiovisual or educational videos. Specific choice of instructional methods is left to the discretion of the instructor.

**Outcomes Assessment:** Quiz and exam questions (if applicable) are blueprinted to course objectives. Checklist rubrics are used to evaluate non-test type assessment instruments (e.g., logs, reaction papers, theme papers, oral/written presentations, and projects) for the presence of course objectives. Data collected will be analyzed to provide direction for the improvement of instruction, viability of class assignments, relevancy of assigned literature, and evaluation of instructional time spent on specific topics.

**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

1. Maintain regular and prompt attendance to all class sessions.

2. Participate in class discussions.

3.    Complete all readings and assignments and take all quizzes and exams that are scheduled.

4. Follow any specific class requirements mandated by the instructor.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Attendance/Class Participation** **5 – 15%**

Attendance points will be computed based on the ratio of the number of days attending the course during a regular semester (i.e., 28 contact days). A similar procedure will be used to determine participation points.

* Logs 10 – 15%

Logs are written exercises designed to heighten student’s awareness of various psychological phenomena that is experienced, observed, read, or viewed on television. Student must relate experiences to chapters either discussed/not discussed throughout the semester.

* **Reaction Papers 15 – 20%**

Reaction papers are 2 – 3 page written exercises in which students read outside sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, or “self-help” books in psychology), discuss their “emotional” reaction to the issue or author’s point of view, yet use critical thinking guidelines to assess claims made augmented by scholarly literature.

* **Theme Papers 20 – 25%**

Theme papers are 3 – 5 page written exercises in which students discuss how taking the course has been personally meaningful, beneficial, and relevant to their future professional aspirations. References can be cited using scholarly journals, psychologically-based magazines, or internet sites.

* **Literature Reviews/Research Papers 10 – 20%**

Literature reviews/research papers are written exercise in which students must investigate a particular topic either in the textbook or assigned by the instructor that is related to the course objectives and conduct a review of the psychological literature. Based on the literature review, students are required to develop a thesis/theme and draw conclusions on the topic researched.

* **Introspective Theme Paper/Case Study Analysis 30 – 40%**

The introspective theme paper/case study analysis is a 7 – 10 page written exercise in which students integrate and synthesize concepts to perform an in-depth analysis and demonstrate relevance of various theories to oneself as an emerging theoretical orientation or professional identity. If a child, teenager, adult person(s), or professional is interviewed, students must analyze, synthesize, integrate, and demonstrate relevance of concepts to course objectives.

**Methods of Evaluation** (continued):

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Written/Oral Presentation of Child, Teenager, Adult, 15 – 25%**

**Agency, or Professional in the Field**

The written/oral presentation of the interview of a child, teenager, adult, agency, or professional requires the student to gather information and to determine its relevance to concepts and theories presented in class and related to course objectives.

* **Oral Presentations 15 – 20%**

Oral presentations are based on a topic either discussed/not discussed during the semester, that is relevant to the study of psychology and related to course objectives. The instructor may require a written outline to augment the oral presentation.

* **Quizzes 10 – 15%**

Quizzes will provide evidence of the extent to which students have met course objectives.

* Exams (number of exams and dates specified by the instructor) **20 – 30%**

Exams will provide evidence of the extent to which students have mastered and synthesize course material and have met course objectives.

Note: The instructor will determine the specific components appropriate for the course and provide specific weights which lie in the above-given ranges at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College.  Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
* cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
* interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
* fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions.  Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

**Course Content Outline:** based on the text Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2010). *Social Psychology (*7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc./Prentice Hall; and the text by Aronson, E. (2008). *The Social Animal* (10th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers

Note**:** It is the instructor’s discretion to recommend other references, as appropriate (e.g., student handbooks, textbooks, resources pertaining to careers in psychology, or style/writing manuals).

**Unit Topic**

1 Introduction – The foundation and history of social psychology, including its founder, Kurt Lewin and its pioneers; differentiating the social aspects of human psychological behavior from the rudimentary psychological aspects of human behavior.

2 Methodology – Major methodological research practices in social psychology (e.g., observational research, correlations, empirical research, and experimentation).

3 Cognition and Perception – How do we think about the social world around us? How do we come to understand others, as well as come to understand ourselves and behave accordingly?

4 Attitudes – The nature and origin of attitudes (e.g., how attitudes change, how persuasive messages are resisted, and how attitudes predict behavior).

5 Self Justification – Maintaining one’s self-image; cognitive dissonance, rationalizing; insufficient justification; culture and dissonance; self-discrepancy theory; and self-affirmation theory.

6 Conformity – When people will conform and the importance of being accurate; the consequence of resisting normative social influence; the power of propaganda; the role of injunctive and descriptive norms; and obedience to authority.

7 Group Processes – Groups and individual behavior: social facilitation, social loafing, gender and cultural differences in social loafing; de-individualization; Group decisions: are two (or more) heads better than one; conflict and cooperation; social dilemmas; using threats to resolve conflicts; negotiating and bargaining; Formation: how organizations and groups form; the purpose and mission of such groups; and the type of individuals they attract and why

8 Pro-social and Antisocial Behavior – Why do people either help or become aggressive? Why do we hurt other people? What are the causes of and cures for prejudice?

9 Interpersonal Attraction – The propinquity effect, physical attractiveness and liking; defining love; culture and love; evolution and love; attachment equity in long-term relationships; attachment styles in intimate relationships; and process and experience of breaking up.

**Unit Topic**

10 Social Psychology and the Law – Eyewitness testimony; recovered memory debate; juries and deliberations; effects of pretrial publicity; procedural justice; people’s sense of fairness.

11 (optional) Social Psychology and Health – Stress and human health; coping with stress; personality and coping styles; and improving healthy habits.

Note: In PSY 211, the instructor must cover the first 10 units listed above minimally in any reasonable order throughout the duration of the semester/term. Also, the instructor may include additional areas based on his/her expertise and/or interest.