COURSE TITLE: Social Psychology

COURSE CODE: PSY 234

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces the student to the study of how people influence each other. Topics to be covered include: liking and loving, aggression and violence, obedience and compliance, helping in emergencies, attitudes, prejudice and sexism. In addition, social perception and group behavior will be examined. Prerequisite(s): PSY 101. Credits: 3 (3,0)

PREREQUISITES: PSY 101, PSY 130, or PSY 131 or permission from Department Chairperson.

REQUIRED FOR: None

ELECTIVE FOR: All curricula with a social science elective

GENERAL EDUCATION: This course satisfies 3 credits of the Social and Behavioral Science competency area of the General Education requirements at Farmingdale State College.

Course Goals: It is hoped that the student will be able to appreciate and understand the interpersonal interaction between individuals, and individuals in groups, and how this information is scientifically obtained. The main emphasis in the course involves those intrapersonal factors (attitudes, social identity, attraction social perception and cognition) affecting variations in interpersonal interaction (attitude change, persuasion, conformity, compliance, obedience, aggression, altruism, group behavior). Since social psychology is scientific, experiments and theories are presented. Students should be able to critically think about and analyze experimental methodology, findings, and various social psychological theory. Applications of social psychology to politics and political campaigns, history and historical decisions, business, persuasion, advertising, law, etc., and social problems such as destructive obedience, aggression and altruism will be made. Students should then be able to apply this information to the real world. Cultural differences (gender, prejudice, cross cultural research findings) are also explored through readings and discussion.

After successful completion of this course:

1. The student is expected to be familiar with the scientific method and those methodological concepts necessary to run a well organized social psychological experiment. They are also expected to be able to indicate methodological problems related to specific experiments.
2. The student will be expected identify and describe those intrapersonal and interpersonal factors affecting the development of the self concept, attitudes, values and beliefs and how these affect their interaction with others.
3. The student is expected to have an understanding of how culture affects social behavior and appreciate similarity and diversity.
4. The student should be able to identify the major theoretical frameworks and research related to attitudes, prejudice, discrimination, persuasion, conformity, compliance and obedience.
5. The student is expected to be able to identify the major theories of social relationships and interaction, as well as appreciate the effects of technology such as e-mail, chat rooms and instant messaging on social interaction.
6. The student should be able to understand the factors affecting how people think about others, perceive and remember characteristic of others and attribute the causes of behavior.
7. The student should understand the variables affecting prosocial and well as antisocial behavior.
8. Students should be able to indicate how groups function.
9. The student should be able to apply social psychological principles to everyday situations, such as advertising, politics, business, social institutions, international relations, etc.
JUSTIFICATION

Social Psychology clearly satisfies the social and behavioral science competency goals. The approach to the course is scientific and the student is expected to be able to use scientifically collected data to analyze experiments and hypothesized behavior. Additionally, since the subject matter is psychologically, as well as social psychologically based, intrapersonal and interpersonal themes run throughout the course. These then help the student to appreciate the effect of one’s culture and environment on identity formation, attitudes, values, society, and technological advances.

The material is applied to real world situations such as business, government, media, international relations, etc. Students are able to examine and communicate the behavioral implications of their personal, social and political involvement with the goal of resolving contemporary societal problems and becoming productive citizens.
COURSE OUTLINE

I. Definition of Social Psychology
The field of social psychology will be defined. In addition the relationship between social psychology, psychology and sociology will be discussed.
A. Definition of Social Psychology
   1. approach is scientific
   2. object and focus of study
   3. social stimuli vs. physical stimuli

B. Interrelation of social psychology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology.
   1. definitions of psychology and sociology
   2. some concepts borrowed by social psychology
      a. norms and roles
      b. perception
      c. emotions
      d. learning

C. Explanation of Social Behavior
   a. social learning
   b. cognition
   c. symbolic interaction orientation
   d. biological orientation
   e. culture and social behavior

D. Brief history of modern social psychology

II. Research Methods
This unit will expose the student to the scientific method. The student is expected to be familiar with methodological concepts necessary to run a well-designed experiment. Particular attention will be given to the social psychology of social psychological research.
A. The student should be familiar with the following concepts related to the scientific method:
   1. induction a. hypothesis b. theory
   2. deduction
   3. testing
   4. literature review

B. Recognize and describe the following methods of gathering information:
   1. unobtrusive measures - nonreactive research
   2. case history
   3. survey method
   4. cross cultural
   5. experimental method
   6. correlational method
C. Define the following components of the experimental method:
   1. independent variable
   2. dependent variable
   3. intervening variable
   4. organismic variable
   5. operational definition
   6. experimental group
   7. control group

D. Recognize the differences between laboratory and field experiments as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each.

E. Recognize the problems of using humans as subjects in scientific research:
   A. biases due to demand characteristics of experiment
   B. biases due to unintentional influences of the experimenter
   C. subject biases
   D. mundane and experimental realism
   E. internal and external validity

F. Recognize the purposes of the post-experimental debriefing.

G. Recognize the ethical problems inherent in the use of human subjects.

III. Attitudes
    The student will be introduced to the definition of an attitude as well as its components, measurement and development. In addition, racial prejudice, as well as sexism, will be considered.

A. The student should be familiar with the definitions attitudes.

B. The student should be able to recognize and discuss the three components of attitudes and their implications.
   1. cognitive component
   2. affective component
   3. behavior component
   4. attitudes and behavior consistency
   5. social interaction, attitudes, e-mail & instant messaging

C. Recognize and discuss some of the theoretical frameworks of studying attitudes:
   1. conditioning and reinforcement
   2. incentives and conflict
   3. functionalism
   4. cognitive consistency

D. Recognize the formation of attitudes:
   1. Social Learning
   2. Direct Experience
   3. possible genetic factors

E. The student should be able to identify the method and problems of measuring attitudes.
1. paper and pencil measures
2. behavioral measures
3. physiological measures

F. Attitudes and culture
1. differences across cultures
2. differences across time
3. differences across groups
4. similarities across cultures

IV. Persuasion
The student will be exposed to various factors that make our attitudes susceptible or resistant to change. In addition, various theories of persuasion be discussed.

A. Recognize the modified Holland and Janis model of attitude change.
   1. Source of the communication
      a. credibility & sleeper effect
      b. trustworthiness
      c. liking & attraction
      d. reference group

   2. Communication
      a. discrepancy and credibility
      b. fear appeals
      c. one sided vs. two-sided communication
      d. drawing a conclusion-gain vs loss
      e. primary-recency effect

   3. Characteristics of target
      a. commitment
      b. inoculation
      c. personality factors, i.e. self esteem

B. Cognitive Approach & Attitude Change
   A. Two Routes to persuasion - Elaboration-likelihood model, related to political campaigns and advertising
      a. central route
      b. peripheral route
   B. Heuristic Model of Persuasion

C. Recognize the difficulty of changing attitudes in the real world.
   B. Communication interference
      a. low levels of exposure
      b. two step flow of communication
      c. selective exposure
   C. Resistance to persuasion
   D. Cognitive consistency
D. Recognize, define, differentiate and describe the following theories of attitude change:
   2. Cognitive Dissonance - Festinger
   3. Self Perception - Bem
   4. Impression Management - Tedeschi
   5. Reactance - Brehm

E. Persuasion and Culture
   2. strategy differences
   3. business, culture and persuasion

V. Prejudice and Discrimination
   The student will be exposed to the various forms of prejudice and should be able to understand its nature, causes and effects.
   A. Stereotypes
      2. Formation & Persistence
      2. Perceptual Distortion
      3. Cognitive View- Social Categorization
   B. Sexism
      1. Gender Stereotypes
      1. Gender Bias and Discrimination
      3. Sexual Harassment
   C. Ethnic and Racial Prejudice
   C. Reducing Prejudice
      C. Intergroup Contact
      2. Recategorization

VI. The Self
    Discussion of this topic will expose the student to the various parts of the self. Hopefully, the student will recognize that identity formation is significantly determined by the social environment
   A. Self Concept
      1. Development
      2. Social Influences & Reference Groups
      3. Self Schemas
      4. Self Concept & Psychologically Compelling Situations, i.e. Zimbardo Prison study
      5. Variations and Complexity across cultures
   B. Components and processes
      1. Self Esteem & Self Evaluation
      2. Self Efficacy
      3. Self Focusing
      4. Self Disclosure
      5. Ideal Self vs Psychological Self
C. Self Presentation & Behavior
   1. Goffman's - Presentation of Self
   2. Cooley's Looking Glass Self
   3. Self Monitoring & Self Presentation

VII. Affiliation and Attraction
   The student will be exposed to the research attempting to explain why people want to be together. Also discussion will concern the determinants of liking or disliking another.

A. The student is expected to be familiar with the factors affecting the need to affiliate
   1. instinct
   2. social rewards
   3. social comparison (Festinger)
   4. fear and affiliation (Schachter)

B. The student should be able to identify and describe the factors influencing the attraction of one individual for another.
   1. Proximity
   2. Personality characteristics
   3. Rewards others provide
      a. reciprocity
      b. esteem needs
      c. gain-loss phenomenon
   4. Similarity
      a. attitudes
      b. need compatibility vs complementarity
   5. Physical attraction
   6. Cultural Variation
   7. Emotions and Attraction

C. The student should be able to identify the factors involved in an ultimate relationship.
   1. Relationship stages
   2. Self Disclosure--Gender Differences
   3. Romantic love
      A. passionate love
      B. companionate love
      C. love, desired qualities & cultural diversity
   4. Types of Relationships and love-Relationships among gay and lesbian couples
   5. Equitable relationships
   6. Conflict in Relationships
   7. Coping after the end of a relationship
   8. Loneliness
VIII. Social Perception and Cognition

Students will have the opportunity to learn how people assign characteristics to others, think about others, as well as perceiving the causes of behavior.

A. The student should be able to discuss how impressions are formed:
   1. central traits
   2. consistency
   3. accuracy of judgments
   4. cognition and social schemata

B. The student should be able to describe the factors affecting judgments of others.
   1. perceptual bias, motivational bias, information processing bias, i.e., halo effect, logical error, positivity bias.
   2. knowledge of the other

C. The student should be able to identify and discuss aspects of nonverbal communication and its implications on social perception.
   1. body language
   2. gestures
   3. eye contact and facial expression

D. The student should be able to identify and discuss the processes of attribution.
   1. goals of the attribution process
   2. Heider's Naive Psychology
   3. Kelley's covariation model
   4. Kelley's causal schemata model
   5. Jones's correspondent inferences model
   6. Divergent perceptions of the actor and observer
   7. self perception, attributions
   8. Just World Hypothesis
   9. Attributional Errors, i.e. self serving bias, fundamental attribution error, etc.
   10. Sources of attribution
       A. personality
       B. attitudes
       C. experiences
       D. culture
       E. motivation & emotion

E. Social Cognition - Thinking About Others
   A. Heuristics - mental shortcuts
      A. representativeness
      B. availability
      C. false consensus
      D. base rate fallacy
      E. priming
      F. framing
   B. Affect and Cognition
   C. Social Context
      A. reference points and contrast
      B. ordering of information
C. construct accessibility

D. Some Basic Aspects of Social Thought
   A. inconsistent information
   B. automatic Vigilance-Negative information
   C. cognitive filters & motivated skepticism
   D. social schemas
   E. culture and cultural schemas

IX. Altruism and Helping Behavior
Research will be presented in order to give the student a basic understanding of the personal and situational determinants of prosocial behavior.

A. Students should be able to discuss the definitional problems related to the concept of altruism.
   1. intentionality
   2. rewards
   3. labeling
   4. reciprocity

B. The student should have a thorough understanding of the various theoretical and research approaches to helping behavior.
   1. Bystander intervention
      a. decision the analysis of helping
      b. research by Latane & Darly
      c. responsibility diffusion - deindividuation
   2. Piliavin et al cost analysis of helping
   3. modeling approach to helping behavior
   4. normative approach to helping behavior
   5. cultural view
   6. reciprocity and equity theory
   7. mood states and helping
   8. Arousal theory and Helping
      a. physiological arousal
      b. labeling the arousal
      c. evaluating consequences of helping
      d. empathy-altruism model
   9. Characteristics of the victim
      a. similarity of victim to potential helper
      b. gender
      c. status
      d. ethnic and racial background
   10. Characteristics of the potential helper
      a. gender
      b. ethnic and racial background
      c. personality traits
   11. Communication of the need for help
X: Conformity, Compliance and Obedience
The student should be involved in discussions which will lead to his/her understanding of why people yield to group pressure or to an authority figure. In addition, information will be presented which will indicate why behavior is changed to fit the request or demand of someone else.

A. The student should be able to define and describe conformity. In addition the reasons for conformity should be well understood.
   1. other people as a source of information and trust
   2. fear of deviance
   3. group unanimity
   4. group size
   5. expertise of the group
   6. individual characteristics
   7. commitment
   8. group cohesiveness
   9. sex differences
   10. social support
   11. cultural differences

B. The student should describe and differentiate the classic conformity paradigms.
   1. Sherif
   2. Asch
   3. Crutchfield

C. The student should be able to define compliance and discuss the various factors affecting it.
   1. rewards and punishments
   2. individual characteristics
   3. Hawthorne effect
   4. foot-in-the-door technique
   5. other compliance techniques, i.e. low balling, "That's not all", etc.

D. The student should be thoroughly familiar with the series of studies performed by Milgram & others investigating destructive obedience.

XI. Aggression
This area will expose the student to the various theories that have attempted to explain aggressive behavior. In addition research will be presented to show how social psychologists study the factors that increase or decrease harm doing.

A. The student should be able to differentiate the various interpretations of aggression.
   1. Psychoanalytic approach
   2. Instincts and the ethological approach
   3. Physiological bases of aggression
   4. Social and psychological bases of aggression

B. The student should describe and differentiate the various social and psychological factors influencing aggressive behavior.
   1. Frustration aggression hypothesis
      a. displaced aggression - scapegoating
      b. catharsis
      c. critical appraisal of the frustration aggression hypothesis
2. Social learning theory
   a. learned aggressive responses
   b. reinforcement
   c. modeling
   d. aggression-eliciting areas

3. Specific Acts of Aggression
   1. angry vs. instrumental aggression
   2. instigators of angry aggression
   3. situational and environmental influences on angry aggression
   4. alcohol and drug effects on angry aggression

C. The student should be aware of the ways aggressive behavior is minimized.
   1. Catharsis
   2. Fear of punishment and retaliation
   3. Learned inhibitions

D. The student will be able to describe the controversy concerning the effects of television violence on aggressive behavior.

XII. Group Behavior
    This section will show the student that individuals rarely exist by themselves. People are members of groups that have a great deal of influence on our behavior.

A. Groups: Their Nature and Function
   1. How groups form and why people join.
   2. How groups function
      a. Roles and function in groups
      b. Group norms and their necessity
      c. Cohesiveness and belonging

B. The students should be able to discuss the different aspects of leadership and external factors.
   1. Leadership and external factors
      a. Appointed and legitimate leaders
      d. Communication networks

   2. Personal characteristics of leaders
      a. Verbal activity
      b. Status
      c. Relation to rest of group

   3. Effects of structure on performance
      a. Communication, communication networks and performance
      b. Leadership and performance
         1. Trait approach
         2. Leader-behavior approach
         3. Contingency approach
         4. Social interaction approach
C. The student should be able to discuss and distinguish the process of group dynamics:

1. Social facilitation
   a. drive arousal
   c. competition
   d. distraction

2. Competition vs. cooperation
   a. Deutch & Krauss
   b. prisoner's dilemma
   c. bargaining

3. Factors affecting competition
   1. incentive
   2. motivation
   3. threats
   4. communication

4. Problem solving by groups
   a. brainstorming
   b. group consensus
   c. cohesiveness
   d. group think

5. Risky Shift research

6. Individual vs. group: Individualism vs. Collectivism, and culture

XIII. Applications of Social Psychology
The student should be able to apply social psychology to several areas listed below:
 a) Social Psychology and the Law
 b) Social Psychology and Business
 c) Social Psychology and Health