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Readings: See class schedule

Course overview

In this course we will examine stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and minority experience from a social psychological perspective. In other words, we will examine (1) the phenomena and processes associated with one’s beliefs about members of social groups (stereotypes), (2) attitudes and evaluative responses toward group members (prejudice), and (3) behaviors toward members of a social group based on their group status (discrimination). We will study (4) how these issues impact the experiences of social group members, especially when they are members of low status or minority groups. Because this is a course in social psychology, we will approach these issues wearing the hat of an experimental social psychologist. Thus, rather than relying on anecdotal evidence, cultural truisms, sociological explanations, or philosophical orientations to address these issues, we will focus on experiments and theory that focus on understanding individual-level processes and behavior and their causes.

This course is a service learning course: Students will spend time in local schools or community agencies to gain firsthand knowledge of the kinds of stereotypes and prejudices most prevalent among today’s children and adolescents and will collaborate with these community partners in an effort to address these problems. Working at local schools and community agencies will give students an opportunity to (a) see firsthand how, by whom, and toward what groups or individuals prejudice is expressed; (b) apply what they learn from readings and classroom discussions; and (c) collaborate with the community partner on a relevant project. Once students begin their community placements, we will devote time each week to discussion and integration of service learning experiences with course material.

This course has several important goals:
COURSE GOALS:

1. Students will develop an in-depth and integrative understanding of how approaching the issues of stereotyping, prejudice, and minority experience from a social psychological perspective improves our understanding of human behavior.
   **Objective:** Students will read empirical journal articles on stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination and will demonstrate their understanding of this work by developing discussion questions, discussing the articles in class, and reflecting on what they have read.

2. Students will study classic and contemporary social psychological theories of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.
   **Objective:** Students will study the major theoretical frameworks for understanding stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. They will demonstrate their understanding of the major social psychological theories through their ability to apply the theories to a number of current events and real life problems.

3. Students will learn about the complexities of studying stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, especially considering the reluctance of many people to publicly acknowledge their negative attitudes toward particular groups.
   **Objective:** Students will study how social psychologists measure stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination and will demonstrate their knowledge of measurement by developing and using such tools themselves.

4. Students will come to an appreciation of how research in social psychology can be used to address intergroup conflict.
   **Objective:** Students will examine how current social psychological theory and research has informed intervention programs aimed at reducing prejudice and will study the conditions under which these approaches work.

5. Students will learn to take the perspective of others who have become the target of prejudice.
   **Objective:** Students will study what it is like to be the target of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination and will examine how peoples' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors change when they are aware of prejudices against their group. They will demonstrate their ability to understand what it is like to experience prejudice during class exercises, discussions, and in reflection papers.

6. Students will learn how social psychological processes affect human behavior in the real world (in the local community).
   **Objective:** Students will demonstrate their ability to think critically about research by examining and evaluating the assigned readings in light of their community experience.

7. In collaborating with community residents (teachers and students), community organizations (schools), and community specialists students will develop skills in identifying, designing, implementing, and interpreting social-psychological action research.
   **Objective:** Students will develop a project in collaboration with our community partner that relates to the social psychology of prejudice, implement it, and analyze the results.

**Important Note:**
The purpose of this class is to engage thinking about issues involving stereotyping and prejudice, not to proselytize others to a particular worldview or to be a vehicle for further anyone’s political or personal agendas.
Teaching Philosophy
Learning involves more than memorizing facts and figures. The most useful learning is about how to think, both creatively and critically; how to find and use information; and how to express ideas effectively in writing and speech. These skills are not learned by just listening to lectures and parroting back information on tests. In this course we engage in a problem-posing dialogue where both students and professor both teach and are taught in dialogue with each other. To this end, students actively discuss ideas and experiences, share these with one another, and participate in exercises that seek to inspire their critical thinking.

Discussing topics such as stereotypes, prejudice, and the experiences of minority group members can be tricky because these issues are, for many, intertwined with important self-relevant experiences, political ideologies, and personal identities. Sometimes, these topics lead to emotionally charged discussions and debates, or at the other extreme, these topics are often skirted in order to avoid violating norms of political correctness. In this class, we will engage these topics directly, but respectfully, in order to explore important mechanisms and theory that underlie stereotyping, prejudice, and minority experience. We will need to (1) create a comfortable climate for discussion and dissent, (2) maintain strict confidentiality with any personal material shared in the seminar, and (3) treat each other with respect, regardless of whatever differences we may have in opinion or lifestyle choices.

Class Procedures
This seminar is conducted as an upper level seminar and will be run as a group effort. There will be some lecturing, but student discussion will play a central role. Your active and thoughtful participation is critical to shaping the quality of your own learning experiences as well as those of others in the seminar. Therefore you are expected to attend every class and to be an active participant in both guiding and engaging in the discussion. Before coming to class, be certain to identify those issues that you feel are most important and relevant for discussion, debate, questioning, and integration. In addition, please take responsibility for creating a constructive dialogue in class by responding to, building on, and helping to develop the ideas of others as well as your own ideas.

I have chosen a set of readings and your task will be to come prepared to discuss your interpretation and understanding of those readings, to ask questions when things are unclear, and to try to apply the concepts discussed to either current or past events (fictional or not). To facilitate this, you will be required to develop discussion questions for each topic and reflect on the material you have read for each week in a short paper. The questions and papers will help you to prepare for class discussion and will help me to know how deeply you are thinking about the material.

Discussion questions. For each Tuesday class meeting, develop three thoughtful questions related to the material read for that day. These questions should go beyond requiring "yes/no" answers and should challenge us beyond recalling "factual" information. They may ask us to integrate material from previous readings, to apply material from current readings, to compare one theory with another in some specific way, etc. Construct your questions in a way that will help all of us in the class to clarify and develop our thinking. That is, your questions should engage critical and analytic reflection.

Reading response papers. For each Thursday class meeting you will submit a brief (2 - 3 pages,
typed-written) reflection paper on the readings for that week. In some instances, I will ask you to focus your paper upon a specific assignment or activity. Otherwise, these papers are to focus specifically upon the week’s reading assignment and its relation to your service learning work, other readings, and personal experiences and observations of yours.

**Service Learning Placement.** Early in the semester you will develop a service learning placement that fits with your schedule. I will provide you with several options for a placement. You are expected to spend approximately 20 hours in your placement over the course of the semester.

**Learning derived specifically from service will be assessed.** Students will make on-going oral reports of their service as one basis for class discussion and analysis, reflect on their service learning experiences when writing their response papers, and write a term paper in which the service experiences are integrated with the social science concepts of the course. The analysis and integration will focus on students’ growing understanding of the social psychology of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

**Grading.** Course grades will be based on students’ performance on the following: A midterm and a term paper due the first day of the final exam period. The midterm will contribute 30% to the final grade, the term paper will also be worth 30% of your course grade. Attendance and class participation will contribute 20%, and the final 20% will be determined by the weekly reflection papers.

**Letter grades are assigned based on the following cutoffs:**

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TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (JANUARY 18 AND JANUARY 20): INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

January 18: Overview over class procedures

January 20: Class cancelled

1) Read Syllabus

WEEK 2 (JANUARY 25 AND JANUARY 27): DEFINING PREJUDICE

January 25: Background and Introduction to Service Learning

3) Illich, I. To hell with good intentions. 314-320.

January 27: What is Prejudice?


WEEK 3 (FEBRUARY 1 AND FEBRUARY 3): MEASURING PREJUDICE

February 1: What is prejudice? Measuring stereotypes

1) Textbook: Chapter 1

February 3: Measuring prejudice, confronting prejudice

2) Take an IAT at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/
WEEK 4 (FEBRUARY 8 AND FEBRUARY 10): THE PREJUDICED PERSON

February 8: Authoritarianism and Intolerance of Ambiguity
1) Textbook: Chapter 2

February 10: Intolerance of Ambiguity and Social Dominance Orientation

WEEK 5 (FEBRUARY 15 AND FEBRUARY 17): OVERT AGGRESSION ( ARISING FROM FRUSTRATION) AND COVERT HOSTILITY

February 15: Frustration and Aggression
2) Dollard et al. (1939). Frustration and Aggression. Chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 27-46). New Haven: Yale University Press.

February 17: Covert Prejudice
1) Textbook, chapter 7

WEEK 6 (FEBRUARY 22 AND FEBRUARY 24): CONFLICT OVER RESOURCES, MAXIMIZING SELF ESTEEM, AND POWER

February 22: Realistic Group Conflict
1) Textbook, chapter 6
February 24: Social Identity Theory


WEEK 7 (MARCH 1 AND MARCH 3): COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF STEREOTYPING

March 1: No Class

March 3: Biased Judgments and Hypothesis Testing


WEEK 8 (MARCH 8 AND MARCH 10): DEVELOPMENT OF PREJUDICE

March 8: Developmental Issues in Stereotyping and Prejudice

1) Textbook, chapter 5

March 10: The Social Transmission of Prejudice


WEEK 9 (MARCH 15 AND MARCH 17): SEXISM

March 15: Gender Stereotyping

March 17: MIDTERM

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10 (MARCH 29 AND MARCH 31): PREJUDICE IN THE SCHOOLS

March 29: Exclusion, Bullying, and Prejudice in School


March 31: Discussion of Service Learning Placements and Projects

WEEK 11 (APRIL 5 AND APRIL 7): PREJUDICE AGAINST OBESE PEOPLE

Take the Obesity IAT at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/research/obesity/www/home.htm

April 5: Prejudice Against the Obese and Mere Association Effects


3) Two Rice studies show obesity stigma perceived to be contagious. Rice University News, 2003

April 7: Compensating for Stigma


2) A day in the Life: Girl gets a painful glimpse of life as an overweight teen. ABC news, October 27, 2003.

Video: “Lookism”
WEEK 12 (APRIL 12 AND 14): Antigay Prejudice

April 12: Antigay Prejudice


April 14: Antigay Prejudice, continued


Video: Assault on Gay America (Frontline episode, 60 minutes)

WEEK 13 (APRIL 19 AND 21): THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF PREJUDICE ON THOSE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

April 19: Self-Fulfilling Prophecies, Impact on Intellectual Performance


April 21: Discussion of class projects…

WEEK 14 (APRIL 26 AND 28): THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF PREJUDICE ON THOSE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

April 26: Impact on Attributions and Behavior


April 28: Contact as a Means to Decrease Prejudice

1) Textbook, chapter 8

WEEK 15 (MAY 3): PREJUDICE – WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

May 3: Future Directions for Research, Intervention, and Policy


Video: A Class Divided.