Instructor: Carol T. Miller
The goals of this course are to
- promote understanding and knowledge related to social influences on cognition, affect and behavior as they are investigated by the discipline of social psychology
- identify social psychological principles and analytical tools used in research on social psychology
- improve the quality of students’ research by making them aware of relevant research and theory in areas outside their own discipline.

Course Expectations

Class participation and discussion questions. Your active and thoughtful participation is critical to the success of the course, in terms of your own learning and that of others. This requires thoughtfully reading assignments prior to class and making notes of questions, reactions, and comments so that you are prepared to engage in discussion of the articles. I expect you to attend all classes and to participate in offering comments, raising questions, and responding to others. To encourage this process, come to class with at least one written question, based on the readings, designed to stimulate class discussion. 33% of the course grade is based on your participation and preparation, as reflected in your questions.

Leading class discussion. Students will be responsible for presenting and leading a discussion about one of the assigned readings. As everyone will have read the study, the emphasis is on the discussion. In general, the student-led discussion will occur during the last hour of our class meeting. However, should our discussion lead us to a point where the empirical article assigned for the student-led discussion is extremely relevant, we may take it up at that time rather than disrupt the flow of our thoughts. We would do this only if the student presenters agree to this change in order. The student–led presentation/discussions constitute 33% of the course grade.

Take-home Final. The purpose of this exercise is to help you process and integrate course material. One essential skill in this process is the ability to ask good questions. The final will allow you to demonstrate this ability by requiring you to write two take-home exam questions (due February 24). On that date, students will exchange questions at random during class time. During the next week, each of you will write a maximum two-page (double spaced, 12 point type, 1 inch margins) answer to one of the questions written by another student which you will bring to the next class (March 3). On, March 3, in addition to discussing the assigned reading, there will be time for students to read the student answer to the question they wrote with the student who wrote it. After our final class,
students will then send me no later than March 5 an electronic copy of a brief (one paragraph) reflection on whether the question they wrote appeared to achieve the goals they had in mind when composing the question. This reflection should include
(1) a statement of the goal of the question
(2) a brief summary of what points from the readings you expected/hoped the question answerer would consider in answering your question
(3) A brief overall evaluation of whether the question was successful in achieving its goals.

Your performance on the take home final activities (question composition, question answering, and reflection on the quality of the questions you wrote) will count 33% toward your grade.

Note: The empirical articles are subject to change as I refine the list. I will notify you by email if I make a change. Articles marked with ** are for student led discussion.

Reading for February 20

Week 1 January 27 Situations: Obedience


Frontline Part V

Week 2 February 3 Situations: Classic Studies and Media violence


February 10 Construal: Person Perception


**February 17 Week 5 How biased are our construals?**


**February 24 Week 6 Tension Systems - Prejudice**


**March 3 Week 6 Social psychology general issues**

College students; generalizability,