Course Syllabus for PSYC 382B
Professional Seminar in Social Psychology
W 11:30 – 1:00, Dewey 342

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Course Description and Objectives

Welcome to your professional seminar in social psychology (i.e. cluster). In this class, we will strive to model the ideal social psychologist by keeping updated on current work and maintaining an active program of research. To this end, each registered student will undertake a research project during the course of this year. In addition, we will read and discuss current topics in the field, paying special attention to work in social psychology’s primary journals.

As a result of taking this course you will hone your skills as a professional social psychologist. We will emphasize the conduct of research, critical analysis of articles, oral presentations, and manuscript writing.

Required Reading

Based upon class interests and research projects, we will develop a reading list. All students attending cluster will be expected to read these articles and to participate actively in the class discussion.

Class Structure

The class will meet biweekly. The structure will vary depending upon the week and the season. Some days we will follow a seminar format, where all participating members will read and discuss the assigned articles. Other days will get devoted to research presentations.

At the start of each seminar-style meeting, volunteers will provide a 5-minute summary of the readings, just to get everyone on the same wavelength. The remainder of the class will get devoted to a discussion of the readings. Although we will not require you to turn in discussion questions or thought papers (because professional social psychologists do not tend to do this), we highly recommend that you jot some thoughts down as you read (because professional social psychologists do tend to do this). We will expect to hear from everyone during the course of a class meeting, and we will not hesitate to put you on the spot if we have not heard from you.

Assignments

Class Participation: All students will be expected to participate in class each time we meet.

Research Project: Each student will take the lead on a research project to be completed during this year. This will be the main assignment for the course. During the fall semester, you will propose your project and turn in completed abstracts (due October 17th) and introductions (due November 31st). You will also secure IRB approval and progress with data collection.

During the spring semester, you will complete data collection and analysis. You will present the completed study to the group and turn in an APA-style manuscript of the research. If the research is not complete by the end of the semester, you will receive an SP in the class until you complete the research and turn in the manuscript.
NOTE: Your research project can be a project that you have already begun, one that you are about to begin, or one that you have not yet begun. This cannot be a project for which you have already collected more than 25% of the data, and it cannot be a project that you are already pursuing for your master’s, preliminary project, or dissertation.

Yes, you may collaborate with another student on a package of studies. However, each one of you will be expected to take the lead on a separate study pertaining to the package.

The goal behind this assignment? To get you in the habit of maintaining an active research program because social psychologists pursue research and not because you need to do it to get your PhD. (Except I guess now you do, as part of your prosemimar?)

The Grand Plan

The next two class meetings will get devoted to ironing out students’ research projects. Each student will propose his/her research idea and get input from the group.

Once everyone has proposed a project, we will dedicate one week to honing writing skills and then several weeks to reading current topics in social psychology. Carol and Liz are happy to entertain your suggestions for these topics. If you would like to shape the nature of the topics we discuss, let Carol or Liz know within the next week or two.

During the last three meetings of the spring semester, we will hear presentations from each registered student.

Grading

Your class participation will constitute 20% of your grade, your oral presentation will constitute 30% of your grade, and your APA-style manuscript will constitute 50% of your grade.

At the end of the semester, your grades for each assignment will be weighted and your final grade will be assigned according to the following scale: A = 93-100; A- = 90-92.9; B+ = 86.9-89.9; B = 82.9-86.9; B- = 79.9-82.8; C+ = 75.5-79.8; C = 70-75.4; D = 60-69.9; F = 59.9 or below.

Special Accommodations

Please contact Carol or Liz in person, by email, or by phone if there is anything that I need to know that might improve your learning environment in this class.

Religious Holidays

According to UVM guidelines, students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Each semester students should submit in writing to their instructors by the end of the second full week of classes their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester. Faculty must permit students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance to make up this work.