University of Vermont  
Department of Psychology  
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PREJUDICE: A SERVICE LEARNING COURSE  
PSYC 295, Section B  
Fall 2005  
Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:45PM  
John Dewey Hall, Room 100

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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 collaborate with local community partners on a project related to the course content. The service learning component of the course 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, community organizations, 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.

- Learn and use each other’s names; BUT, respect confidentiality by keeping private people’s identities in discussing the class outside the classroom.
- Personalize your comments (aka, “I” statements): do not say “group y always does y,” but, instead, describe specific personal experiences and identify them as such.
- Speak for yourself: do NOT speak for an entire group, and do not expect classmates to speak for an entire group either.
- Use the research literature to ground and frame your comments. Remember, we are examining the way research psychologists have attacked this problem. Psychologists rely on data-driven evidence!

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. This means that when relevant, you:

(a) ask for clarification and elaboration by others (e.g., “Can you say more about that?”), “Would you give some examples of what you mean?”, “How are you using term ‘x’ when you say that?”, “I don’t think I fully understand; do you mean to say …?”, “How does your perspective relate to Student X’s comment or the article we read?”
(b) ask good questions of one another that will foster constructive and collaborative thinking, critical reflection, and problem solving (e.g., “Why do you think that there’s so much [or so little] consensus among us on this?”; How does your personal experience fit with what the reading were saying?”; “Could we build on one another’s perspectives to try to make sense of this question?”)

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 class meeting, develop one or two 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.** You might, for example, pose the question in a manner that helps to integrate the readings with your service learning experience in a meaningful way. Or you might try to identify relationships between some aspect of the reading and current or historical events, life experiences, diverse groups of people, previous class discussion, or other readings. For each question, begin by trying out different ways of looking at this issue, perhaps even arguing with yourself or offering different ways of approaching and/or thinking about the matter at hand. Be clear why this question or issue is interesting.

**Reading response papers.** On Thursdays you will submit a brief (2 - 3 pages, typed-written) reflection paper on the readings for that week (you are free to respond to any readings assigned for that particular 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. Your goal is not to summarize the readings. Rather, you should **analyze and critically reflect upon a couple of significant issues raised in the readings.** For example, the paper can be focused on a specific issue from the week and then relate that issue to either a historical or current event, an event experienced while working with your service-learning partner, or other material we have covered in our course (readings, discussions).

You are required to submit 10 reflection papers over the course of the semester. In other words, you don’t have to write a paper every week. It is up to you to decide what weeks you would rather not hand in a paper.

Points will be awarded as follows:

**5 points:** Your response moves beyond comprehension (summary) of the material to analysis. The analysis shows evidence of integration with textbook material and may include evaluation (e.g. criticism of methods, conclusion of a study), integration with other readings (appropriately cited), and/or application to your own experience with evidence of thoughtful analysis.
3 points: Your response indicates that you understand the material, but does not include the depth of thought apparent in a 5-point response (e.g. you generally refer to other readings without specific references, your criticism is not substantiated, your application lacks analysis).

1 point: Your response indicates that you read the material, but is vague and superficial in content. Your response is, for example, primarily a summary of the reading with little analysis.

0 points: You do not submit a response OR you complete your response during class time OR your response indicates little understanding of the material OR your response is replete with mechanical errors OR your response involves plagiarism.

Service Learning Placement. Early in the semester I will introduce the service learning project. You are expected to spend approximately 20 hours on this project outside of class 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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<td>93 - 100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>80 - 82.99</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>67 - 69.99</td>
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<td>87 - 89.99</td>
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TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (AUGUST 30 AND SEPTEMBER 1): INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

August 30: Overview over class procedures

September 1: Introduction to service learning

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

WEEK 2 (SEPTEMBER 6 AND SEPTEMBER 8): DEFINING PREJUDICE

September 6: A primer in social psychology


September 8: What is prejudice?

2) Textbook: Chapter 1

WEEK 3 (SEPTEMBER 13 AND SEPTEMBER 15): MEASURING PREJUDICE

September 13: Measuring stereotypes


September 15: Measuring prejudice, confronting prejudice

2) Take an IAT at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/
WEEK 4 (SEPTEMBER 20 AND SEPTEMBER 22): THE PREJUDICED PERSON

September 20: Authoritarianism and Intolerance of Ambiguity

1) Textbook: Chapter 2

September 22: Intolerance of Ambiguity and Social Dominance Orientation


WEEK 5 (SEPTEMBER 27 AND SEPTEMBER 29): OVERT AGGRESSION (ARISING FROM FRUSTRATION) AND COVERT HOSTILITY

September 27: Frustration and Aggression

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

September 29: Prejudice: Old and New


WEEK 6 (OCTOBER 4 AND OCTOBER 6): MODERN RACISM AND CONFLICT OVER RESOURCES

October 4: Modern Racism (continued)


Discussion of Videos: 1. True Colors (Primetime Live, Nov. 26, 1992)
2. America in Black & White: Health Care, the Great Divide
October 6: Realistic Group Conflict

1) Textbook, chapter 6

WEEK 7 (OCTOBER 11 AND OCTOBER 13): MAXIMIZING SELF ESTEEM AND POWER

October 11: Social Identity Theory


Video: A Class Divided.

October 13: Biased Judgments and Hypothesis Testing

1) Textbook, chapter 3

WEEK 8 (OCTOBER 18 AND OCTOBER 20): COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF STEREOTYPING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PREJUDICE IN CHILDREN

October 18: Developmental Issues in Stereotyping and Prejudice

1) Textbook, chapter 5

October 20: The Social Transmission of Prejudice


WEEK 9 (OCTOBER 25 AND OCTOBER 27): FALL INSTITUTE ON RACISM

October 25: Attend the Fall Institute on Racism (details will be announced in class)

October 27: Attend the Fall Institute on Racism (details will be announced in class)
WEEK 10 (NOVEMBER 1 AND NOVEMBER 3): EXAM WEEK

November 1: Fall Institute Wrap-up & Review for Midterm

November 3: MIDTERM (no reflection paper due!)

WEEK 11 (NOVEMBER 8 AND NOVEMBER 10): PREJUDICE IN THE SCHOOLS AND BEYOND

November 8: Exclusion, Bullying, and Prejudice in School


November 10: Gender Stereotyping (Reflection Paper is Due)


WEEK 12 (NOVEMBER 15 AND NOVEMBER 17): PREJUDICE AGAINST THE OVERWEIGHT

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

November 15: Prejudice Against the Obese and Mere Association Effects

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

November 17: Compensating for Stigma (Reflection Paper is Due)

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 13 (NOVEMBER 22 AND NOVEMBER 24): THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF PREJUDICE ON THOSE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

November 22: Understanding Antigay Prejudice


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

November 24: No class – Thanksgiving Break

WEEK 14 (NOVEMBER 29 AND DECEMBER 1): THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF PREJUDICE ON THOSE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

November 29: Self-Fulfilling Prophecies, Impact on Intellectual Performance


December 1: Impact on Attributions and Behavior


WEEK 15 (DECEMBER 6): INTEGRATING WHAT WE LEARNED

December 6: Group Presentations of Service Learning Projects and Class Wrap-up