Course Syllabus for PSYC 380 Fall 2014
Pro-Seminar in Social Psychology
W 9 – 11:30, Dewey 238

Professor: Dr. Carol Miller
Phone: 656-4158
E-mail: cmiller@uvm.edu
Office: 360 Dewey Hall
Office Hours:

Professor: Dr. Elizabeth C. Pinel
Phone: 656-8302
E-mail: epinel@uvm.edu
Office: 348 Dewey Hall
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Objectives

1) To promote understanding and knowledge related to social influences on cognition, affect, and behavior as they are investigated in the discipline of social psychology.

2) To identify the principles and analytical tools that characterize social psychological approaches to knowledge.

3) To improve the quality of your theorizing and research by exposing you to pertinent research and theory in areas outside of your own discipline.

Course Expectations

Class participation and discussion questions (40 points each half; 80 points total). The success of this course, in terms of your learning and the learning of others, hinges on your active and thoughtful participation. To participate actively and thoughtfully, you will need to read assignments prior to class and make notes of questions, reactions, and comments so that you can engage in discussion of the articles. We expect you to attend all classes and to participate in offering comments, in raising questions, and in responding to others. To encourage this process, prior to each class you must submit a brief (300 words or less) reflection/discussion question about the assigned readings. Your contribution should be designed to stimulate class discussion. It is neither necessary nor desirable to summarize the readings in your contribution. We will provide you with feedback on your reflections/discussion questions each week.

Breaking the ice (40 points). We just experienced a pretty severe ice storm, so forgive the analogy! What do we mean by it exactly? Although everyone will come to class having read the articles, not everyone will feel ready to dive into a discussion of the articles. This is why we need ice-breakers, people who start off the discussion of the articles for the week. Each week, two students will sign up as ice-breakers. It will be up to you to decide how you would like to break the ice. We simply ask that you include the following three elements: (1) A 3 – 5 minute reminder of the main points of each article; (2) Something positive to say about each article; and (3) something constructive to say about how each article could be improved.

A New Twist on Take-home Exams (Midterm: 20 points for writing questions and reflecting on whether your questions achieved their goals; 20 points for answering questions. Final: 20 points for writing questions and reflecting on whether your questions achieved their goals; 20 points for answering questions). This exercise will help you to process and integrate the course material. Each student will generate three questions that encourage the respondent to integrate theory and research across the topics covered in this course. Students will exchange questions with randomly assigned classmates and, during the course of the next week, will write a two-page (double spaced, 12 point type, 1 inch margins) answer to one of the two questions assigned to them. We will devote the class on February 26th and on April 30th to student discussions of their responses and to commentary from the class. After each of these classes, students will compose a brief (three paragraphs) 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 paragraph elucidating the goal of the question; (2) a paragraph noting the points from the readings you expected/hoped the respondent would consider in answering your question; (3) A brief overall evaluation of whether the question successfully achieved its goals.
READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: The empirical articles are subject to change as we refine the list. In addition, the specific ordering of the weeks may change as a function of unexpected shifts in Carol and Liz’s schedules. We will notify you by email if we need to make any changes.

Articles marked with ** are for student led discussion.

Week 1, January 15 Introduction to the course (Carol)


Week 2, January 22: Obedience (Carol)


Frontline Part V

Week 3, January 29: Person Perception (Carol)


Week 4, Feb 5: Self regulation (Carol)


These last readings are for your info only – they are not required for our class meeting.


Week 5, February 12: Prejudice (Carol)


Week 6, Feb. 19: Media violence (Carol)


May replace the next ones with something else


Week 7, Feb 26 th : Exam questions and final wrap-up (Carol)

***************MARCH 5 th : SPRING BREAK***************
Weeks 8 through 15, Liz Pinel leads the class. Reading list will be distributed shortly. Please note there will be no class on April 23rd.