

**PSY 237**  
**SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Prerequisites: PSY 150 or SOC 210

Corequisites: None

This course introduces the study of individual behavior within social contexts. Topics include affiliation, attitude formation and change, conformity, altruism, aggression, attribution, interpersonal attraction, and group behavior. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of social influences on behavior. Emphasis is on the application of principles as they relate to contemporary social issues. *This course has been approved to satisfy the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement for the general education core requirement in social/behavioral sciences.* Course Hours Per Week: Class, 3. Semester Hours Credit, 3.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- a. Explain research methods used in social psychology.
- b. Define and discuss the concept of social cognition.
- c. Discuss the concepts of cognitive heuristics and schema as they apply to social psychology.
- d. Explain attribution theory and use it as a means of analysis of human behavior.
- e. Define the concepts of person perception and impression formation and discuss the relationship between the two.
- f. Discuss the concept of self as it is used in social psychology.
- g. Define attitude; discuss how attitudes are formed and explain how and why attitudes change.
- h. Define and discuss prejudice, its origins, its relationship to stereotype and methods to reduce it.
- i. Define and explain group behavior phenomenon, including conformity, obedience, and compliance.
- j. Explain the factors that influence interpersonal attraction and the development of personal relationships.
- k. Define and discuss the concepts of altruism, prosocial behaviors, aggression and violence.
- l. Discuss social psychology as it relates to broad societal concerns.

**OUTLINE OF INSTRUCTION:**

- I. Social Psychology as a science
  - A. Historical background
  - B. Theories of social psychology
  - C. Goals of research
  - D. Research methods

- II. Social cognition
  - A. Schemas and schematic processing
  - B. Cognitive heuristics
  
- III. Attribution
  - A. The origins of attribution
  - B. Attributions about others
  - C. Attributions about self
  - D. Attributional bias
  
- IV. Person perception
  - A. Impression formation
  - B. Accuracy of judgments
  
- V. The self
  - A. Definition of self
  - B. Creation of self
  - C. Social comparison theory
  - D. Cultural influences on self
  
- VI. Attitudes
  - A. Theories of attitudesDefinition of attitudes  
Attitudes and behavior
  - B. Attitude change
  - C. Persuasion and attitude change
  
- VII. Prejudice
  - A. Origins of prejudice
  - B. Prejudice and stereotypes
  - C. Reduction of prejudice
  
- VIII. Social influence
  - A. Conformity and compliance
  - B. Obedience to authority
  - C. Group behavior
  - D. Helping behavior
    - 1) altruism and prosocial behavior
    - 2) the helper and the one in need
  
- IX. Aggression
  - A. Origins of aggression and aggressive behavior
  - B. Reduction of aggression
  - C. Media influences on violence

- X. Social psychology and society
  - A. Stress and illness
  - B. Environmental stress
  - C. Political behavior

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS:**

To be selected by instructor.

**STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students who require academic accommodations due to any physical, psychological, or learning disability are encouraged to request assistance from a disability services counselor within the first two weeks of class. Likewise, students who potentially require emergency medical attention due to any chronic health condition are encouraged to disclose this information to a disability services counselor within the first two weeks of class. Counselors can be contacted by calling 686-3652 or by visiting the Student Development Office in the Phail Wynn Jr. Student Services Center, room 1309.