

223.21 • Self and Society: Social Psychology (3 hrs.)
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Providence University College
Fall Session, 2011
Mondays & Thursdays 8:30am

SYLLABUS

A. Calendar Description of the Course

A sociological study of social psychology, primarily from the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. Interrelations between the individual, group, and society will be examined, with emphasis on interaction as a process that gives form, direction, and meaning to the everyday lives of people. (Cross-credited with Psychology)

B. Purpose of the Course

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. summarize and characterize the discipline of social psychology in terms of the nature and interrelations of the social sciences;
2. compare the various theoretical perspectives within the field of social psychology, and demonstrate particular familiarity with symbolic interactionism;
3. outline various factors in the formation and functioning of the social self;
4. identify and describe how various aspects of collectivities impinge upon the experience and behaviour of the individual;
5. demonstrate awareness of the points of intersection between social psychological and Christian perspectives of individual human being and functioning;
6. interpret your own roles and interactions in everyday life, and thereby enhance self-understanding;
7. express encouragement toward your own potential for more enlightened and satisfactory human relationships;
8. display an appreciation for the necessity and value of human relationships for the personal and social well-being of human life.

Note re. Syllabus:

It is the student's responsibility to retain their course syllabi for use as support for possible future applications to other educational institutions for transfer of credit.

C. Textbooks

Required Texts:

Sandstrom, Kent L., Daniel D. Martin, and Gary Allan Fine. 2010. *Symbols, Selves, and Social Reality: A Symbolic Interactionist Approach to Social Psychology and Sociology* 3rd ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

All required texts are available in the Providence Bookstore. All assigned collateral readings are available as PDF documents under Course Readings at www.provsoc.org.

Recommended Texts:

Aronson, Elliot, Timothy D. Wilson, Robin M. Akert, and Beverly Fehr. 2010. *Social Psychology: Fourth Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Pearson Canada.

Baron, Robert A., Donn Byrne, Nyla R. Branscombe, and V. Heather Fritzley. 2011. *Mastering Social Psychology: Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Pearson Canada.

Cahill, Spencer E., and Kent Sandstrom, eds. 2010. *Inside Social Life: Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology* 6th ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Charon, J. M. 2010. *Symbolic Interactionism: An Introduction, an Interpretation, an Integration* 10th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Hewitt, J. P., and David Shulman. 2010. *Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology* 11th ed. Toronto: Pearson Canada.

Lesko, Wayne A., ed. 2009. *Readings in Social Psychology: General, Classic, and Contemporary Selections* 7th ed. Toronto: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.

O'Brien, Jodie., ed. 2010. *The Production of Reality: Essays and Readings on Social Interaction* 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Smith, Christian. 2010. *What is a Person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up*. University of Chicago Press.

Taylor, Charles. 1992. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Harvard University Press.

D. Course Requirements

1. Reading Checks (15%)

There will be a reading check at the beginning of most classes according to the class schedule below. The checks will consist of 2-3 multiple-choice questions from textbook chapters and one multiple-choice question from any collateral reading assigned. They will enable you to demonstrate whether you have completed the assigned reading on time with rudimentary comprehension. The questions can only be answered at the time they are given to the whole class; late-comers or absentees will forego the opportunity for credit for that reading. Your grade for this component of the course will accumulate throughout the semester.

2. Personal Reflections (3 x 5%)

After each unit of the course, write a 2-page informal reflection on selected course material that demonstrates your personal interaction with it, and functions as a form of journaling. No further study beyond doing the assigned readings and participating in class discussion is required. Comment on ideas or analyses presented in the preceding unit of the course that have interested or impressed you the most, explaining why you think they are significant. In order to develop your reflections meaningfully, you should probably limit your focus to the topics of one or two classes/readings.

Unit I: Symbolic Interactionism
Unit II: Social Interaction
Unit III: Group Dynamics

Due Date:
October 13
November 21
December 12

3. Research Paper **OR** Book Review (20%)

Due Date: November 10

- a) Write a short research paper (6-7 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font) on any relevant topic of your choice, using a formal style of writing (i.e. third person, etc.) and a social scientific style of documentation (see the “ASA Quick Style Guide” in your Blackbaud student portal under “Shared Documents” for this course). As a general guideline, you should have approximately the same number of references as there are pages to your paper, and no more than half of the references may be from internet sources other than on-line academic journals, government agencies, or credible public organizations. See also the *Providence College Academic Formation Guide* for general writing guidelines. Topics that are significantly different than those covered in the classes of this course should have **prior** approval from me. Your paper should demonstrate that

you have done independent research and reading beyond the assigned readings, that you have thought carefully and/or reorganized your topic in an original manner, and that you can express yourself in writing clearly and effectively. It will be graded on the quality of its content (15%) and composition (5%).

OR

- b) Write a formal review (i.e. third person, etc. – 5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font) of **one** of the following books, or any other relevant book that you have not read prior to this semester, and for which you have obtained **prior** approval from me. Your review should **not** focus on outlining the contents of the book you have chosen, but rather should demonstrate that you have interacted critically with the material, identifying its strengths and weaknesses while bringing fresh observations to it. Your paper will be graded on the quality of its content (15%) and composition (5%). Help in all aspects of essay writing can be found in the *Providence College Academic Formation Guide* available in the Providence Bookstore. See also the study help posted under Shared Documents in your Blackbaud student portal entitled “How to Write a Book Review.”

Agger, Ben. 2003. *The Virtual Self: A Contemporary Sociology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Becker, Ernest. 1971. *The Birth and Death of Meaning* 2nd ed. New York: Free Press.

Baum, Gregory. 2006. *Religion and Alienation: A Theological Reading of Sociology* 2nd ed.. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Baumeister, Roy. F., and Aaron Beck. 1999. *Evil: Inside Human Cruelty and Violence*. New York: Holt Paperbacks.

Baumeister, Roy. F. 1993. *Escaping the Self: Alcoholism, Spirituality, Masochism, and Other Flights from the Burden of Self*. New York: Basic Books.

Baumeister, Roy. F. and Dianne M. Tice. 2000. *The Social Dimension of Sex*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Brueggemann, Walter. 1999. *The Covenanted Self: Explorations in Law and Covenant*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Gergen, Kenneth J. 2009. *An Invitation to Social Construction*. 2nd ed. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- Hewitt, John P. 1998. *The Myth of Self-esteem: Finding Happiness and Solving Problems in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie. 2003. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. 20th anniversary ed. University of California Press.
- Holstein, J. and J. Gubrium. 2003. *The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Post-modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kelly, K.D. and M. Totten. 2002. *When Children Kill: A Social-psychological Study of Youth Homicide*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview.
- Kohn, Alfie. 1992. *No Contest: The Case Against Competition* rev. ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Lemert, Charles and Anthony Elliot. 2006. *Deadly Worlds: The Emotional Costs of Globalization*. Toronto: Roman & Littlefield.
- Mullaney, J.L. 2006. *Everyone is NOT Doing It: Abstinence and Personal Identity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Myers, David. G. 2000. *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Pratkanis, A. and E. Aronson. 2001. *The Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: W. H. Freeman & Company.
- Prus, R. and M. Scott. 1999. *Beyond the Power Mystique: Power as Intersubjective Accomplishment*. State University of New York.
- Scheibe, Karl E. 2000. *The Drama of Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Tilly, Charles. 2006. *Why? What Happens When People Give Reasons....and Why*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Vanier, Jean. 1998. *Becoming Human*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
- Vitz, Paul C. 1994. *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-worship* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

4. Research Project (20%)

Due Date: December 8

Plan, conduct, and report a small-scale qualitative or quantitative research project on any topic relevant to this course. You may choose to work alone or together with one other member of the class, in which case both of you will receive the same grade for the project. The intent of this assignment is to give you a feel, perhaps for the first time, for what it is like to explore a particular question by collecting data from real life, analyzing it, and reporting on it, instead of speculating about it, or accepting what others say about it. Your project may remain rather informal, and need not be very sophisticated or rigorous in its methodology, but your 5-page report should contain the bare minimum of the following:

- a) identify the research question you explored and what you anticipated you might discover (hypothesis)
- b) describe the methods you used to collect data. You may use either systematic observation, a correlational method (naturally occurring changes of variables), or an experimental approach (manipulation of a variable), and/or one or any combination of
 - i) experiment
 - ii) interview (no mail surveys allowed!)
 - iii) participant observation
 - iv) content analysis
 - v) unobtrusive observation

It may be helpful to review the chapter on research methods in your Introduction to Psychology or Sociology textbook. You may also consult the reading on “Research Methods in Social Psychology” posted under Shared Documents for this course in your Blackbaud student portal.
- c) analyse your data by searching for any pattern there may be in it, and show how you deciphered the pattern(s), whether by use of elementary statistics or not
- d) discuss your findings by
 - i) suggesting an explanation for why the particular patterns were found, and
 - ii) relating your findings, if possible, to what others have thought or found about the issue, as indicated by the course texts and/or lectures

Your project will be graded on the insight, effort, and relevance your project demonstrates, not on the technicalities of research methodology.

5. Exams (15% x 2)

You will write two exams, each worth 15% of the final letter grade, and each consisting of approximately 30 multiple choice questions plus 8 written definitions and examples of concepts. Each exam will hold you responsible for only but all the material in the lectures since the previous exam; the final exam is not comprehensive. See the study help posted under Shared Documents in your Blackbaud student portal entitled “How to Study for and Write (My!) Exams.” The dates of the exams are as follows:

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Exam #1 | October 20 |
| Exam #2 | December 12 |

Any request to reschedule a final exam must be approved by the Academic Committee in accordance with the policy in the College Academic Calendar. (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/programs/registrars_office/calendar/).

E. Grading Summary

1. Grade Components

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Reading Checks | 15% |
| Personal Reflections | 15% (5% x 3) |
| Research Paper / Book Review | 20% |
| Research Project | 20% |
| Exams | 30% (15% x 2) |

Note: The last date for **Voluntary Withdrawal** from this course is Monday, Nov. 14.

2. Grading Scale

Final course letter grades and their Grade Point equivalents will be calculated using the following scale:

| <i>Percent</i> | <i>G.P.</i> | <i>Quality</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>G.P.</i> | <i>Quality</i> |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 91 – 99 = A+ | 4.0 | Exceptional | 67 – 69 = C+ | 2.5 | Satisfactory |
| 85 – 90 = A | | Excellent | 63 – 66 = C | 2.0 | Adequate |
| 80 – 84 = A- | | | 60 – 62 = C- | | |
| 77 – 79 = B+ | 3.5 | Superior | 57 – 59 = D+ | 1.0 | Marginal |
| 73 – 76 = B | 3.0 | Good | 53 – 56 = D | | Poor |
| 70 – 72 = B- | | | 50 – 52 = D- | | |
| | | | < 50 = F | 0.0 | Failure |

F. Course Policies

The full text of the academic policies, procedures and regulations of Providence College can be found online in the Student Handbook (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/) and the College Academic Calendar (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/programs/registrar_office/calendar/).

1. Class Attendance

Full attendance at all classes is expected, because active listening, thinking and discussing are primary learning experiences in this course. Questions on exams will be designed to reward class attendance and attention. While I am committed to making the classes as interesting and informative as possible, it is neither my role nor my gift to be an entertainer. I am happy to give additional assistance outside the classes to students who find themselves struggling with course material, but only to those who have demonstrated the self-discipline to attend all the classes they possibly can.

2. An ICT-free Classroom

Student use of electronic information and communication technologies, including laptop computers, is not allowed in class. Anyone found using one will be asked to either put it away or leave the classroom. (If you have a special learning need, please consult with me.) While I deeply regret the inconvenience for note-taking this becomes, too many students in the past have abused ICTs in the classroom, distracting themselves and their classmates, and disrespecting the educational enterprise. Our advanced technologies have by now created a need to regain the ability to give sustained total attention to a single focus, a life skill now more in need of nurture than the ability to multi-task, though I well realize that banning ICTs does not guarantee it. As partial compensation, I will post the PowerPoint presentations from my lectures in the Shared Documents for this course in your Blackbaud student portal for one week after each topic is completed, for you to download if you wish.

3. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as

one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing" posted under Shared Documents in your Blackbaud student portal.

4. Late Assignments

Assignments will not be accepted after their due date; a grade of zero will be given for that component of the course. Furthermore, I will **not** receive requests for due date extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and I will make a decision if and when your paper is graded. Assigning a late penalty (usually 10% or one letter grade per week) or waiving the zero grade will be considered only in the cases of medical or personal emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, changes in employment schedules, or competition for library resources do not constitute such personal emergencies. Failure to plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

5. Missed Exams

Students who miss an exam are responsible to contact me within one week of the exam date if they still wish to write the exam. Permission to do so will be given to only those students who present evidence, acceptable to me, of medical reasons for having missed the exam. The format of the exam will be at my discretion, with essay questions likely. Students who do not write an exam by at most two weeks after the exam date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. Student athletes who are travelling during a scheduled exam period are required to write their exams 'on the road', invigilated by a coach or supervisor, and are responsible to notify me one week prior to the exam date.

G. Class Schedule

All assigned readings from other than the Sandstrom, Martin, and Fine text (S, M & F) are posted under Course Readings at www.provsoc.org. I reserve the right to assign additional readings during the course of the term, or to alter the schedule of topics as I see fit.

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>Reading Check</u> | <u>Assignment Due</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Sept. 8 | Orientation to the Course | | |
| Sept. 12 | Introduction to Social Psychology | Epstein, Robert. 2009. "Folk Wisdom: Was your Grandmother Right?" In <i>Readings in Social Psychology: General, Classic, and Contemporary Selections</i> 7 th ed. Philip Zimbardo, 2010, "The Secret Powers of Time," RSA Animate http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3oIiH7BLmg | |

UNIT I: Symbolic Interactionism

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|----------|----------------------------|--|--|
| Sept. 15 | Introduction to SI | Baron, R. A., D. Byrne, N. R. Branscombe, and V. H. Fritzley. 2011. "The Field of Social Psychology." Chapter 1 in <i>Mastering Social Psychology: Canadian Edition</i> . | |
| Sept. 19 | Symbols and Social Reality | S, M & F ch.1 "The Meaning of Symbolic Interactionism" | |
| Sept. 22 | Self and Identity | S, M & F ch.2 "The Interactionist Toolkit" Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2011. "Islands of Meaning." In <i>Inside Social Life: Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology</i> 6 th ed. | |
| Sept. 26 | Self and Identity | S, M & F ch.3 "People as Symbol Makers and Users" | |

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|---------|-----------------------------|--|
| Oct. 31 | Interpersonal Communication | <p>Wilkins, Amy C. 2011. "Collective Emotions and Boundary Work among Evangelical Christians." In <i>Inside Social Life: Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology</i> 6th ed.</p> |
| Nov. 3 | Social Influence | <p>Holtgraves, Thomas. 2004. "Conversational Structure." In <i>Inside Social Life: Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology</i> 4th ed.</p> <p>Steven Pinker, 2010 "Language as a Window into Human Nature," RSA Animate http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-son3EJTrU</p> |
| Nov. 7 | Altruism | <p>Zimbardo, Philip G. 2007. "Revisiting the Stanford Prison Experiment: A Lesson in the Power of the Situation." <i>The Chronicle Review</i>, 53, 30, B6.</p> <p>"Face the Rear" YouTube, 2010 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRFx7YU6eXE</p> |
| Nov. 10 | Aggression | <p style="text-align: right;">Paper Due</p> <p>Aronson, Elliot, Timothy D. Wilson, Robin M. Akert, and Beverly Fehr. 2006. "Prosocial Behaviour and Aggression: Helping and Harming Others." Chapter 9 in <i>Fundamentals of Social Psychology: Canadian Edition</i>.</p> |
| Nov. 14 | Anomie | <p>Scully, D. and J. Marolla. 1991. "Riding the Bull at Gilley's: Convicted Rapists Describe the Rewards of Rape." In <i>Down to Earth Sociology: Introductory Readings</i> 6th ed.</p> |
| Nov. 17 | Alienation | <p>S, M & F ch.7 "The Politics of Social Reality" "Gustavus and Alienation" YouTube, 2009 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3ymGcDskys</p> |
| Nov. 21 | Class Discussion | <p style="text-align: right;">Reflection #2 due</p> <p>- Questions distributed one week in advance.</p> <p>Hiebert, Dennis W. 2004. "Toward a Post-postmodern Christian Concept of Self." <i>Didaskalia</i>, 16, 1:1-24.</p> |

