

Sociology 150

Social Psychology

John Kaiser, PhD
UC Berkeley
Summer 2018

This course introduces the major approaches, issues, and debates within social psychology. It begins by exploring the foundational concepts in the field, emphasizing the nature of self, identity, meaning making, and social interaction. We then move through the major debates in a number of substantive areas, including emotions, driving in L.A., romantic relationships, social media and cell phones, obedience, conformity, status and stereotypes, medical school culture, high school reunions, automaticity and the psychological immune system, empathy, connection, and dancing. On this journey, we apply social psychological concepts to issues of inequality, such as race, class, gender, and ability. Likewise, we consider how power impacts interactions, behavior, and meaning making.

A central goal is understanding individual mental processes and the connection between individuals and society, especially how interactions shape macro-structures and vice-versa. How do people construct “reality” in social interactions? How do structures, institutions, and other factors shape the contexts of those interactions? In what sense does “reality” exist beyond our individual perceptions and collective meanings in the structures and institutions that order the social formation?

Students should come away from this course with four core competencies: 1) the ability to read social psychology research articles; 2) the ability to think critically about social psychological theories and methods; 3) a general understanding of key findings and concepts in the major substantive areas; and 4) ability to apply social psychology in the field of everyday life. The first three competencies mainly require *explicit* knowledge gained through lectures and readings while the fourth requires the *tacit* knowledge gained through hands-on field studies.

Note: Students who miss any of the first three classes may be dropped.

Coursework and Grading

Attendance and Participation.....	10%
Meditation Journal.....	5%
Observation Field Studies.....	40%
Midterm Exam.....	10%
Final Exam.....	15%
Final Paper.....	20%

Attention: all assignments and instructions will be exchanged digitally through bCourses. When the deadline for submitting an assignment passes, you will no longer be able to access the instructions or submit your assignment.

Please do not ask for an extension on any of the assignments! Let the instructor know of any special circumstances that might affect your performance; however, do not ask for an extension or exemption from course policy. Although you may have a legitimate reason for making such a request, not all of your classmates— even those with more serious situations— necessarily feel entitled or comfortable enough to ask. Therefore, out of fairness and to avoid creating an awkward situation, please do not ask. The same goes for exams, so do not miss any.¹ NOTE: if you are having trouble keeping up with the course or miss an exam due to verifiable circumstances beyond your control, please talk to me.

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance promotes enjoyment of the course and benefits everybody's experience. Yet, I want you to come because you enjoy the class and want to contribute, not because you have to. On the other hand, structure helps students attend regularly, so I designed the attendance policy for the perfect balance of structure and freedom: missing two classes will not lower your attendance grade; however, missing more than two will lower your A&P grade by one letter grade per absence. Please arrive on time. Coming late once or twice is fine; however, habitual tardiness can be disruptive and will lower your grade.

Note that I do not post my lectures on bCourses or distribute them to students to encourage students to come to class to learn that material and contribute. This is part of my attendance policy so please do not ask me to post or distribute any of the slides. If you have a question about any part of the lecture, please ask me about it during class, after class, in email, or in office hours.

Students are expected to participate in discussion and activities. Please be mindful of group dynamics so that everybody feels comfortable to speak up (avoid dominating). Positive attitude and attentive listening matter, too. Participation also includes any in-class writing, activities, and quizzes. Cell phones tend to negatively affect learning, attention, and empathy. Furthermore, they can also distract and frustrate others in the room. The same goes for surfing the web on a laptop. However, I do not want to police your use of them in my class or ban them outright. So, here is our compromise: 1) control your cell phone use; 2) sit in the back of the room if you want to surf the web on your computer (so it doesn't distract people sitting behind you). Potentially-distracting behavior, such as chatting, surfing the web, and cell phone use, will lower your grade if it happens too much (i.e. distracts or disrupts instruction).

Participation credit, including any in-class assignments, quizzes, and lectures cannot be made up under any circumstances due to absence, even with evidence of legitimate reason for missing class and/or accommodations.² However, an absence itself may be excused if the student's request includes evidence of the legitimate reason for missing class (this will prevent the grade penalty for attendance only).

¹ If you miss an exam due to an emergency, you must provide adequate documentation in order to make it up. Note that any make-ups require different, and potentially more difficult, questions.

² I do not post or distribute my lectures.

Meditation: The mind is your primary and most effective instrument of observation, and meditation develops it. We will practice a form of mindfulness concentration that reduces mental reactivity, thereby facilitating mental-emotional states beneficial to good observation and analysis. This practice also creates mental space for insight and creativity by increasing access to the power of the subconscious while maintaining executive function. You should also notice an increased ability to identify patterns and make connections.

We will practice meditating during some of our classes. You do not have to sit cross-legged in the lotus position, but it is best to meditate somewhere comfortable and with few distractions. Do not try to meditate and do anything else, like watch videos, talk, or think about your day. Instead, simply focus on your breath, and think “in” when you breathe in and “out” when you breathe out. When your mind wanders away from your breathing, just bring it back.

Students will keep a journal of their personal meditation sessions that they do at home, noting the time, location, duration, and then describing what occurs (processes, habits of mind, experiences, feelings, etc.). Each session should last at least 30 minutes. Five sessions, each with a detailed ½ to 1 page account of each session (double spaced), are required for full credit. One meditation session description will be due every week on Friday at 4:20pm. Plan to complete them before the due dates; once the deadline has passed, you will not be able to submit that assignment, and they cannot be made up.

Observation Field Studies: Observational studies that students do out in the “field” of everyday life are a central part of this course. These include four categories of activity: 1) directly observing particular types of social situations, interactions, behaviors, emotions, and identities; 2) participating in particular kinds of interactions; 3) altering one’s own “self” in order to elicit reactions of others; and 4) intentionally defying informal rules of interaction to see how people react. There will be 10 different field study assignments and each will require a 2 page (double-spaced) minimum report for full credit (you may write more if you wish).

Quality and detail of description is important, but these do not require a formal essay style of writing. Feel free to use bullet points, lists, diagrams, and so on in addition to more organized, coherent writing. Things like grammar and organization matter less than the quality of the description in these reports. Content also matters: thoughtfully engaging with and executing the topic of each field study is required for full credit. These are graded pass/not pass, but partial credit will be given if a report meets only some of the criteria.

The instructions for each assignment will become available on bCourses at noon on the date indicated on the syllabus. We will go over the instructions for each assignment in class on the day that they come up. Each field study is due by noon on the date indicated on the syllabus. Be sure to begin working on each assignment on the day it is given, as we move quickly and *you will not be able to submit it once the deadline has passed* (and they cannot be made up for any reason short of catastrophe). Plan to submit it well before noon!

NOTE: falsely representing what you did (making it up) in any assignment counts as academic dishonesty and may result in an automatic “F” in the course.

Final Paper: The final paper draws on lectures, reading, in-class activities, self-observation, and the field studies, giving students a chance to process what they have learned and to communicate their understanding of social psychology in relation to their own experiences. It is a 8-10 pages-long (double spaced) analytical paper that should be well-organized and clearly-written; however, it is a bit different from a traditional essay as it involves more reflection and personal voice. Detailed instructions will be available on bCourses later in the semester.

Midterm and Final Exams: The exams will be multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank, with about 25 questions each, based on lectures and readings. We will have a review session for each. The final will emphasize the second-half material but will include a few questions from the first half.

Reading: You are responsible for all assigned reading and assignments. You are expected to have completed each day's reading as preparation for class attendance and participation. Always read with a pencil in hand and take notes as you go (or annotate digitally if you don't have a hard copy).

Come to class with ideas about what you found interesting, puzzling, etc. If you do not read carefully and keep up, you might feel frustrated or disappointed with the course.

Guidelines and Resources

Formatting: All work must be formatted correctly, particularly for the final paper. Familiarize yourself with MLA style formatting. Refer to The Purdue Owl Writing Lab³ and note the following specifications for our course's modified MLA format style:

- single space* the header at the top-left of your first page (name, course, assignment, due date);
- center your creative title above the start of your text with enough space between;
- no title page;
- single space* block quotations;
- 1" margins;
- indent paragraphs (no extra spaces between paragraphs);
- doubled-spacing (except the header, title, bibliography, and block quotations);
- page numbers (bottom center);
- 12-point Times New Roman font;
- no contractions.

Disability Accommodations: If you need disability-related accommodations in this class please inform the instructor. Students who need academic accommodations should contact the Disability Students Program, 260 Cesar Chavez Center.

³ <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Student Learning Center (SLC): The SLC provides peer writing tutors. You are expected to make use of their services. You do not need an appointment. Find them in the Chavez Center (<http://slc.berkeley.edu>).

Disclaimer: this course includes material that may be emotionally-difficult and disturbing. Reactions, including, but not limited to, discomfort, anxiety, anger, sadness, disgust, guilt, and stress to course material is not grounds for exemption from, or customization of, policies pertaining to coursework, participation, assignments, and exams.

NOTE: Plagiarism, broadly put, is the presentation of another's words and/or ideas as one's own. It is grounds not only for automatic failure, but also for administrative disciplinary action. This also applies for other forms of academic dishonesty (a.k.a. cheating). Please see the Berkeley Campus Code of Student Conduct, Section III B, Academic Violations, and Section IV, Disciplinary Procedures.

Wellness Resources: Berkeley offers several types of counseling services. You can call to talk to someone for help or to make an appointment: 642-9494. There is also on-campus drop-in counseling that does not require an appointment: <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling/lets-talk>. You can also drop in at the Tang center if you need immediate and urgent support (first 5 sessions are free). Those hours are Monday-Friday 10am-5pm. Please make use of these great resources available to us!

Mindfulness and meditation can also really help with stress. Berkeley offers free mindfulness classes! <https://www.facebook.com/Mindfulnessatberkeley/> There is also a meditation and prayer room in Eshleman Hall, open Monday-Friday 8am-9pm. Another option is a tranquil stroll through the quieter parts of campus or up in Strawberry Trail.

Course Materials

All course readings will be available on bCourses. Always bring the course reading (printed out or on your putater). Always bring paper and pen/cil to class for in-class writing activities and taking notes (taking notes by hand facilitates learning).

Course Schedule

Note: this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

WEEK ONE

July 2 Introduction to the course

Field Study #1 available

July 3 Social Psychological Paradigms

- Sandstrom, et al. *Symbols, Selves, and Social Reality*. Ch. 1.
- Mead. "The Self, the I, and the Me."

July 4 Holiday: No class

July 5 Impression Management

- O'Brien. "Meaning Is Negotiated through Interaction."
- Goffman. "Presentation of Self in Everyday Life."

→ Field Study #1 Due

Field Study #2 available

WEEK TWO

July 9 IM and Situational Identity

- Albas and Albas. "Aces and Bombers."
- Ekman. "Smiles when Lying."

→ Field Study #2 Due

Field Study #3 available

July 10 Identity Work

- Vinitzky-Seroussi and Zussman. "High School Reunions."
- Goffman. *Stigma*, ch. 1.

July 11 Stigma

- Granberg. "Stigma Exits after Weight Loss."
- Phillips et al. "Courtesy Stigma in Medical Care of Sex Workers."

→ Field Study #3 Due

Field Study #4 available

July 12 Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology

- Schutz. "The Stranger."
- Garfinkle. "A Conception of and Experiments with Trust as a Condition of Concerted Stable Actions."

Meditation journal entry #1 due on Friday at 4:20pm

WEEK THREE

July 16 Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology

- Pollner. "Mundane Reason."
- Becker. "Becoming a Marijuana User."

→ Field Study #4 Due

Field Study #5 available

July 17 No class

July 18 The Power of the Situation & Review

Darley and Batson. "From Jerusalem to Jericho."

Zimbardo. "The Pathology of Imprisonment."

→ *Field Study #5 Due*

July 19 Midterm Exam

Meditation journal entry #2 due on Friday at 4:20pm

WEEK FOUR

July 23 Signal Theory and Emotion Management

- Scheff. "Shame in Self and Society."
- Hochschild. "Emotion Work."

Field Study #6 available

July 24 Emotion Management and Embodied Transcendence

Cahill and Eggleston. "Managing Emotions in Public."

Smith and Kleinman. "Managing Emotions in Medical School."

July 25 Embodied Transcendence and Anger

- Katz. "Pissed off in L.A."

→ *Field Study #6 Due*

Field Study #7 available

Meditation journal entry #3 due on Friday at 4:20pm

July 26 Laughter and Humor

- Francis. "Laughter, the Best Mediation..."
- Billig. "Humour and Embarrassment."

WEEK FIVE

July 30 Romantic Love and Flirting

- Simon et al. "The Development of Feeling Norms Underlying Romantic Love."
- Tavory. "The Structure of Flirtation."

→ *Field Study #7 Due*

Field Study #8 available

July 31 Social Media

- Ellison et al. "Managing Impressions Online."
- Hancock. "Putting Your Best Face Forward."
- Misra et al. "The iPhone Effect."

August 1 Status

- Ridgeway and Walker. "Status Structures."
- Anderson et al. "Who Attains Social Status?"

→Field Study #8 Due

Field Study #9 available

August 2 Obedience and Conformity

Asch. "Effect of Group Pressure upon the Modification and Distortion of Judgments."

Milgram. *Obedience to Authority*. Ch. 1.

Meditation journal entry #4 due on Friday at 4:20pm

WEEK SIX

August 6 Automaticity

- Bargh, Chen, and Burrows. "Automaticity of Social Behavior."
- Chartrand and Bargh. "The Chameleon Effect."

→Field Study #9 Due

Field Study #10 available

August 7 The Psychological Immune System

- Wilson. *Strangers to Ourselves* (selections).

August 8 Empathy and Connection & Review

- Ehrenreich. *Dancing in the Streets* (selections).
- Keltner. "Love."

→Field Study # 10 Due

August 9 Final Exam

Meditation journal entry #5 due on Friday at 4:20pm

Final Paper is due by **4:20pm**, Friday August 10 on bCourses. Late papers will not be accepted.