

SOCIOLOGY 105: SELF & SOCIETY

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Zoom link: <https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/3921513628>

INTRODUCTION

Why do people behave the way they do? In this course, we will explore social psychological concepts that will help you better understand yourself, others, and your social world. Understanding conformity, decision-making, persuasion, and emotions will benefit you no matter what career you choose after UMass. How should you market an advertisement to a given demographic? How do you promote equity in your classroom? How do you challenge your unconscious biases during a hiring process? We will answer these questions and more throughout the course.

Sociological and social psychological concepts can also improve your personal life. Why do you always butt heads with your mom? How can you improve your romantic relationships and friendships? How can you make decisions in your daily life to increase your happiness? In this course, you will learn to analyze human behavior and apply social psychological research to your everyday life.

Course Objectives

- Identify social psychological concepts in everyday life.
- Apply sociological and social psychological analysis to social contexts and explain why social situations unfold as they do.
- Discuss the relevance of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation as they relate to social psychological processes.
- Reflect on your own social identities and how they relate to your beliefs, behaviors, and decisions.
- Apply social psychological research to historical trends and current events to better understand society.

REQUIREMENTS

- Participation - Discussion Posts: 20%
- Reading Reflection Papers (x3): 30%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Participation - Discussion Forum Posts

Since this course meets entirely online, your way to communicate with your classmates is through the discussion forums. Discussion posts are a place to critique readings, connect course content to your life, and/or connect class material to current events. All content in discussion posts should, in some way, connect to course materials for the given unit. Please be respectful of others on the forum even in moments of disagreement.

For each unit, you are expected to post at least three times on that unit's discussion forum. At least one of those three posts must be an original post (i.e. a new thread topic) where

you discuss something about the reading then pose a discussion question(s) for your classmates. Your other two posts may be comments on your classmates' threads. Please note: If you want to work ahead of your classmates, you can post all three of your posts for a given unit as original threads. If others have already posed discussion questions as threads on the discussion forum for the given unit, then I would recommend using two of your posts as comments/replies to your classmates' threads.

Each post—whether an original thread or comment/response—will be worth two points. One point will be earned for completing the post on time at the minimum length requirement and the other point will be earned for offering valuable content. You will NOT earn credit for posts completed after the deadline. I recommend each post be about a paragraph in length—4 to 8 sentences long. Of course you are welcome to go over this recommendation. If your posts do not meet the minimum length, then you will not get credit for the post. If someone poses a discussion question and you write 4 to 8 sentences without adding any content (e.g. “I agree. Great point. I thought the same thing during the reading. Thanks for bringing this up.”), then you will not earn the content point. The content point is for thoughtful responses that move the discussion forward.

Over the nine units in this course, there will be 54 total available discussion forum points (six points per unit). Given that life happens, I will scale your grades up and calculate your final discussion forum grade based on a total of 44 points. This means that any total points at or above 44 will earn you a 100% for your discussion forum grade. You could miss one entire unit of discussion posts (three posts worth six total points) and one additional post and still earn a 100% on the discussion forum grade. Please see the table below for information on what percentages correspond to which letter grades. For example, if you earned 36 points over the entire course, then $36 \text{ points} / 44 \text{ points} = 81.8\%$. Your discussion forum grade would be a B-.

Discussion Posts Grade Scale

Total Points	Percentage	Letter Grade
44-54	93-100	A
40-44	90-92.9	A-
38-39	87-89.9	B+
37	83-86.9	B
35-36	80-82.9	B-
34	77-79.9	C+
32-33	73-76.9	C
31	70-72.9	C-
29-30	67-69.9	D+
28	63-66.9	D
26-27	60-62.9	D-
0-25	0-59.9	F

2. *Reading Reflection Papers (x3)*

Reading reflection papers ask you to reflect on the materials assigned for a given unit. These are NOT just summaries of the reading(s). If you turn in a summary, you will not score well on the assignment. I want to see you engaging with the class material. Here are a few examples of prompts you could use for a reading reflection paper:

- Relate the reading to something from your life, the news, another course, a movie, a book, etc.
- Talk about the implications of a reading for social, legal, political, or governmental change.
- Talk about how you will use what you have learned from a reading to change your own behaviors, perspectives, or actions.
- Make up an experiment to test something that the reading talks about.
- Explain why a reading is wrong and use evidence.
- Anything else!

These papers should be about 500 words (two pages double spaced), but it is okay if it is a little shorter or longer. That said, it will be difficult to write a strong reading reflection in 300 words. Please turn these in via Blackboard in either a PDF or Word Document. You may write about one of the readings from a given unit, all of the readings, or a combination of a few.

Deadlines: You can choose when you write these two papers and what content you write them on. To help you stay on track, the official deadline for the **first reading reflection paper is 06/09 by 11:59PM**. The deadline for the **second reading reflection paper is 06/23 by 11:59PM**. The deadline for the **third reading reflection paper is 07/10 by 11:59PM**. You can choose what content to write about so I recommend you write your reflection papers on whatever readings interest you most. If you are most interested in the “Liking, Loving, and Relationships” unit, for example, you could write both of your reading reflection papers on readings from that unit. I highly recommend you do not wait until the deadline to submit these papers.

3. *Midterm Exam*

The midterm and final exams will be the same format: multiple short essays in an exam format. Given that this course is online, the midterm and final exams are open note. The midterm exam will cover content from Unit 1 through Unit 4 (meaning, the midterm exam will include content from Unit 4). At least one week before the midterm exam, I will release a study guide including 15 potential short essay questions that may be on the exam. Of those 15 questions, 8 questions will appear on the midterm exam. **The midterm exam will be available to you from 06/16 through 06/19**. The exam will open at 12:00AM on 06/19 and will be available until 11:59PM on 06/19. Once you open the exam, you will have 2 hours to complete the exam. You will not be able to start the exam then go back into it, so be prepared to sit down and complete the exam in one sitting as you would if this were an in-person class.

If I were you, I would prepare short essays for all 15 essay prompts then simply copy and paste them into the exam when you open the exam. Since the exam is open note, you may prepare whatever materials and notes you would like to for the exam.

4. *Final Exam*

The final exam will be the same format as the midterm exam: multiple short essays in an exam format. Given that this course is online, the midterm and final exams are open note. The final exam will cover content from Unit 5 through Unit 9. At least one week before the final

exam, I will release a study guide including 15 potential short essay questions that may be on the exam. Of those 15 questions, 8 questions will appear on the final exam. **The final exam will be available to you from 07/10 through 07/12.** The exam will open at 12:00AM on 07/10 and will be available until 11:59PM on 07/12. Once you open the exam, you will have 2 hours to complete the exam. You will not be able to start the exam then go back into it, so be prepared to sit down and complete the exam in one sitting as you would if this were an in-person class.

If I were you, I would prepare short essays for all 15 essay prompts then simply copy and paste them into the exam when you open the exam. Since the exam is open note, you may prepare whatever materials and notes you would like to for the exam.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings and assigned material for this course will be available on Blackboard. Given the financial constraints of many college students, I try to make my course materials free for all students.

LATE POLICY

I will accept the reading reflection papers late with a one-letter grade deduction per day late. If you have an unusual circumstance that you believe warrants an exception to this policy, come see me in office hours and I may recommend you go see the Dean of Students office. In very rare circumstances you may go to the Dean of Students' office and request they override my course policies. Examples of situations that would warrant such a request include a family death during the semester, a health emergency, an unforeseen surgery, etc. If the Dean of Students instructs me to override a course policy for a student, then I will do so. Otherwise, I will uphold the course policies detailed in the syllabus (See Dean of Students section below).

I recommend that you write the reading reflection papers well in advance of the deadline to avoid conflicts that may arise. I strongly encourage that you turn your reading reflection papers in early to avoid getting docked for late submission. If you miss the midterm or final exam window, you will earn a 0. You may not take the midterm or final exam following the exam window. I recommend taking the exam early in the exam window to account for technological difficulties or other issues.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this semester. Should you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please connect with me before the end of the second week of class to discuss appropriate accommodations. If you fail to set up these accommodations in the first two weeks, then I will not create them retroactively.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

You are expected to familiarize yourself with and uphold all aspects of the Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures. See <https://www.umass.edu/honesty/>. You may not receive or provide assistance on any exam or assignment in this class—this does not include proofreading a paper for grammar and/or writing feedback. Anything turned in with your name on it must be solely your own work, and submitted only for this class. Plagiarism is the submission or presentation of work, in any form, that is not your own, without acknowledgment of the source. This includes AI-generated work. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or

tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the UMass community. As such, dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and students found in violation of the Academic Honesty Policy will be notified and reported to the appropriate authorities. Cheating and other forms of dishonesty (such as plagiarizing) often result when students feel that they do not have the time or tools to achieve their goals. If you are falling behind or feeling overwhelmed, please come see me *before* you violate the Honesty Policy.

CONTACTING ME

You can **always** contact me with questions via email or schedule a time to hop on Zoom to talk. Please come to office hours whether or not you have questions—you can (and should!) come just to chat! What are office hours? Office hours are a time I set aside every week to answer your questions and to get to know you, so please think of this time as time for you. This material is challenging and I am here to help you. Asking questions is never a bother. I expect each of you to set up at LEAST one meeting with me this semester during office hours. If you have classes/work that conflict with office hours, then we can set up a separate time for our meeting. Setting up this meeting is your responsibility.

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

The Dean of Students Office provides students with resources, support, and referrals. If you or your family are in crisis, please contact the Dean of Students. Some examples of what the Dean of Students office can assist with include: financial struggles, mental or physical health needs, student conduct issues, food insecurity, death of a loved one, and similar personal challenges. Deans serve as a single point of contact at the university for you and your family, and they will contact your instructors to advocate for your needs. In addition, they can point you to other appropriate campus resources if you have a concern, need, or question. Phone: (413)545-2684. Hours: Monday–Friday from 8:30AM–5:00PM.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

UMass Amherst is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services, you may be eligible for academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. *If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me as soon as possible* (ideally the first week of the semester). If you receive a diagnosis throughout the course of the semester, then please come talk to me as soon as possible about accommodations. We will work together to make appropriate arrangements for you. If you think you might have a disability, but it is not documented, visit the Office of Disability Services (umass.edu/disability or office #160 in Whitmore) to learn about disability testing and documentation. I am also happy to talk to you about this process if you believe accommodations would best serve your ability to learn and thrive in this class.

Importantly, **accommodations are not applied retroactively**. Thus, if you email me at the end of the semester after receiving documented accommodations, those accommodations will only apply to the class from the date they are granted. If you are interested in accommodations, please come see me as soon as possible so we can make the class work for you.

Assistive Technology Center (ATC): The ATC is located on the lower level of W.E.B. DuBois library and is open to **any** UMass student, whether you have a documented disability or

not. The ATC provides instruction, training, and support for assistive technology tools. They also offer workspace for you to access specialized equipment and software for anyone who could benefit from assistive technology. Visit the ATC website (<https://www.umass.edu/it/assistive>) or email atc@umass.edu to learn more or to schedule a consultation.

COUNSELING/MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) helps students who experience a wide variety of personal challenges, and provides individual and group counseling. Visit umass.edu/counseling to learn about the services they provide (including those related to stress, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts, relationship problems, and much more). CCPH has a 24/7 on call clinician available for mental health emergencies: (413)-577-5000. Additionally, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7 free, confidential, suicide prevention and intervention services: 1-800-273-TALK(8255) or 988. For more mental health resources, check out the mental health resource page listed on Moodle.

DIFFICULT TOPICS

Our subject matter can be difficult intellectually *and* emotionally. We will review tough topics, including racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexual assault, rape, violence, social class and gender issues, and more. If you anticipate distress as a result of encountering a particular topic, talk to me ahead of time and we can arrange a different assignment for you. You do not need to disclose to me why a particular topic is distressing to you; I trust that if you are requesting an alternate assignment that you have a legitimate reason to do so and that you have a right to privacy about such sensitive matters. I will not “warn” students about particular topics (i.e. provide trigger warnings), because sensitivity to a topic varies between people. That being said, the syllabus should be clear about different potentially distressing topics in the subjects of each week and titles of the readings.

Please note: There is a difference between being *triggered* (in the sense of post-traumatic stress and/or an anxiety disorder) and feeling *uncomfortable*. I hope you have emotional reactions to these materials—many of them make me angry, sad, anxious, and generally upset. Emotional reactions and emotional discomfort are part of intellectual, personal, emotional, and spiritual growth—being psychologically traumatized is not.

LANGUAGE

Part of this course will be talking about and examining the language that we use and how that language relates to power, history, and marginality. I ask everyone in our class, including myself, to try to use person-first language when referring to different groups of people. Person-first language is meant to respect the dignity and unique qualities of individuals. You can think about person-first language as emphasizing the person first rather than the illness, quality, or identity. For example, instead of saying “schizophrenics,” I would invite you to say, “people with schizophrenia” or “people living with schizophrenia.” The first example reduces people to their diagnoses while the second acknowledges the individuals’ personhood first and foremost. I do not expect that people will always know what language to use. In speaking frequently and openly about language in this class, we will be able to consider the pros and cons of certain language in order to make more informed decisions about the language we choose to use. If/when you do not know what language to use, please bring it up so we can talk about it on one of the discussion forums!

INCLUSION & EQUITY

It is important to me that every student feel welcome and respected in this class. I encourage all students to share their views while being respectful of other students in the course. I would like for all of us to assume that we are trying our best and that we will make mistakes, including myself. In turn, I ask all of us to be willing to admit when we mess up and learn from those mistakes. I ask that we all assume best intentions, while also equally giving attention to the impact of our actions. I will say more about intentions and impact in one of the first lecture videos. All of this is to say, respect of all individuals' humanity is of utmost importance to me.

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

I am happy to write recommendation letters for students. If you would like me to write a recommendation letter on your behalf please send the following information to me in an email: 1) the deadline(s) for the letter(s), 2) a list of the programs or recipients of the letter(s), 3) your CV or resume, 4) a draft of your personal statement or other relevant writing material; 5) a paragraph detailing what I should emphasize in your letter. Given the number of recommendation letters I write every semester, I ask students to give me **at least 2 weeks advance notice for a recommendation letter request**. If you are applying to something last-minute you may still ask me, but I cannot guarantee I will have the time or capacity to write a letter with short notice.

COURSE WEBSITE

We will use Blackboard for this course. All readings, films, and assignments will be visible on Blackboard. All papers, discussion posts, and exams must be submitted on Blackboard by the indicated deadlines.

SYLLABUS

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION, CONFORMITY, AND DEVIANCE

05/30–06/02 (Tuesday–Friday):

Kassin, Saul, Steven Fein, and Hazel Rose Markus. 2021. "What is Social Psychology?" In *Social Psychology*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA. Pgs. 4–10.

Aronson, Elliot and Joshua Aronson. 2012. "4. Conformity" In *The Social Animal*. Worth Publishers: New York, NY. Pgs. 109–32.

McLeod, Saul A. 2018. "Solomon Asch – Conformity experiment." Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/asch-conformity.html>.

Cherry, Kendra. 2022. "What was the Milgram Experiment?" Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-milgram-obedience-experiment-2795243>.

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 06/02 by 11:59PM

UNIT 2: INFLUENCE AND PERSUASION

06/03–06/07 (Saturday–Wednesday):

Cialdini, Robert B. 2007. “**Reciprocation: The Old Give and Take and Take.**” In *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. Collins: New York, NY. Pgs. 13–42.

Kassin, Saul, Steven Fein, and Hazel Rose Markus. 2021. “**Persuasion by Communication**” In *Social Psychology*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA. 224–47.

Sivanathan, Niro. 2021, January. “**The Counterintuitive Way to Be More Persuasive.**” TED Talk. Retrieved from:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hK8kk_3WA7w.

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 06/07 by 11:59PM

UNIT 3: SOCIAL COGNITION

06/08–06/11 (Thursday–Sunday)

Aronson, Elliot and Joshua Aronson. 2012. “**4. Social Cognition.**” In *The Social Animal*. Worth Publishers: New York, NY. Pgs. 113–75.

Vedantam, Shankar. 2022. “**You Don’t Actually Know What Your Future Self Wants.**” TED Talk. Retrieved from:
https://www.ted.com/talks/shankar_vedantam_you_don_t_actually_know_what_our_future_self_wants/c

Vedantam, Shankar. 2022, January. “**Mind Reading 2.0: Why Did You Do That?**” *Hidden Brain Podcast*. Retrieved from:
<https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/mind-reading-why-did-you-do-that/>.

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 06/11 by 11:59PM

UNIT 4: LIKING, LOVING, AND RELATIONSHIPS

06/12–06/15 (Monday–Thursday)

Cialdini, Robert B. 2008. “**Liking: The Friendly Thief.**” In *Influence: Science and Practice*. Pgs. 126–56.

Lundquist, Jennifer Hickeys, and Celeste Vaughan Curington. 2019. “**Love Me Tinder, Love Me Sweet.**” *Contexts* 18(4): 22–7.

England, Paula. 2016. “**Is a ‘Warm Hookup’ an Oxymoron?**” *Contexts* 15(4): 58–9.

Wade, Lisa. 2017. **“Hookup Culture: The Unspoken Rules of Sex on College Campuses.”** NPR. Hidden Brain. Retrieved from:
<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/552582404>

Kitroeff, Natalie. 2013. **“In Hookups, Inequality Still Reigns.”** *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/11/women-find-orgasms-elusive-in-hookups/>.

***All UMass students get a free subscription to The New York Times. Follow the instructions at this link to set up your UMass NYT account and access NYT articles: <https://guides.library.umass.edu/nytimes>*

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 06/15 by 11:59PM

**MIDTERM EXAM ONLINE
06/16-06/19
Unit 1 through Unit 4
Two hours to complete exam**

**UNIT 5: SOCIAL CLASS AND STATUS
06/19–06/22 (Monday–Thursday)**

Lareau, Annette. 2002. **“Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families.”** *American Sociological Review* 67(5): 747–76.

Adelman, Larry, director. *Unnatural Causes: In Sickness and in Wealth*. Kanopy, Public Broadcasting Service, <https://www.kanopy.com/en/umass/video/62769>.

Pizzigati, Sam. 2016. **“The Death Gap.”** *Portside*, Pgs. 1–2. Retrieved from: <https://portside.org/2016-04-24/death-gap>.

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 06/22 by 11:59PM

UNIT 6: RACE, RACISM, AND PREJUDICE
06/23–06/27 (Friday–Tuesday)

Kassin, Saul, Steven Fein, and Hazel Rose Markus. 2021. **Excerpt 1 from “Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination”** In *Social Psychology*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA. Pgs. 154–74.

Kassin, Saul, Steven Fein, and Hazel Rose Markus. 2021. **Excerpt 2 from “Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination”** In *Social Psychology*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA. Pgs. 189–205.

Eberhardt, Jennifer. 2020. **“How to Check Your Unconscious Bias.”** Video. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egw-iheD1Mc>.

Take the race **Implicit Association Test** and reflect on your results: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>.

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 06/27 by 11:59PM

UNIT 7: GENDER
06/28–07/02 (Wednesday–Sunday)

West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. **“Doing Gender.”** *Gender & Society* 1(2): 125–51.

Lorber, Judith. 1994. **“Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender.”** In *Paradoxes of Gender*. Chapter 1. Pgs. 1–11.

Pascoe, C.J. 2005. **“‘Dude You’re A Fag’: Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse.”** *Sexualities* 8(3): 329–46.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 2016, January. **“The Urgency of Intersectionality.”** TED Talk. Retrieved from: https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality.

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 07/02 by 11:59PM

UNIT 8: EMOTION AND HAPPINESS

07/03–07/06 (Monday–Thursday)

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2019. “**4. Feeling Rules**” In *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA. Pgs. 56–75.

Diener, Ed, Pelin Kesebir, and William Tov. 2009. “**Happiness.**” *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior*, M. Leary & R. Hoyle, eds., Guilford Press. Pgs. 147–60.

Vedantam, Shankar. 2023, February. “**Happiness 2.0: Surprising Sources of Joy.**” *Hidden Brain Podcast*. Retrieved from:
<https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/happiness-2-0-surprising-sources-of-joy/>.

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 07/06 by 11:59PM

UNIT 9: AGGRESSION

07/07–07/11 (Friday–Tuesday)

Kassin, Saul, Steven Fein, and Hazel Rose Markus. 2021. “**Aggression**” In *Social Psychology*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA. Pgs. 460–89.

Brown, Ryan P., Kiersten Baughman, and Mauricio Carvallo. 2018. “**Culture, Masculine Honor, and Violence Toward Women.**” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. 44(4): 538–49.

Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts: 07/11 by 11:59PM

FINAL EXAM ONLINE
07/10-07/12
Unit 5 through Unit 9
Two hours to complete exam