

Sociology 147—Issues in Social Psychology

Winter Quarter 2012, Phelps Hall 3515, TR 11-12:15

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Text: David G. Myers. *Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lectures on the implications of social networks in social psychology:

Myers' text provides an up-to-date review of social psychology that is heavily oriented to lines of research pursued in psychology, where most social psychological research is conducted. Remarkably, the text (which is outstanding in many respects) does not deal with social networks. The interpersonal interactions and influences that define a group occur between particular persons.

Myers defines social psychology as follows: Social psychology is a science that studies the influences of our situations, with special attention to how we view and affect one another. More precisely said, it is *the scientific study of how people think about, influence, and relate to one another*. Myers defines a social group as follows: Two or more people who, for longer than a few moments, interact with and influence one another, and perceive one another as "us". You will find that social groups are treated in this text as social units in which networks of interpersonal interactions and influences are not attended to directly.

This course develops a network perspective on social groups. My aim is to encourage you to think about the social psychological implications of the interaction and influence networks that are involved in social groups.

I hope that you enjoy this course as much as I enjoy teaching it! Many of the issues that are dealt with are central matters in my research.

Papers, Grades & Attendance

The course grade is based on three, equally weighted, papers and your record of attendance.

Papers:

Paper #1 (Due Tuesday, 31 Jan) on Normative Influence. Drawing on your own thoughts, my lectures, and the assigned chapters from Meyer's text do the following: (a) Discuss the implications of Milgram's finding that a disagreement among authorities reduces a subordinate's obedience; (b) Discuss the implications of Milgram's finding that the noncompliance of two peers of a subordinate reduces the subordinate's obedience; (c) Discuss the implications of Asch's finding that the presence of one dissenter reduces the power of a majority faction; and (d) Discuss the limitations of Milgram's obedience studies and Asch's conformity experiments as bases of a broadly applicable understanding of interpersonal influences in social groups. Do this in 7-10 double-spacing type written pages. Only hard copies will be accepted.

Paper #2 (Due Tuesday, 28 Feb) on Influence Networks. Drawing on your own thoughts, my lectures, and the assigned chapters from Meyer's text do the following: (a) Discuss influenceability (the extent to which an individual is open or closed to the influence of other persons on his or her thoughts or actions by means of argument, example, or force of personality) as one dimension of the social self, and its relationship to the classic dimensions of the self (self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy). (b) Discuss the implications of issue positions/arguments being embodied in individuals versus being disembodied positions/arguments, and the tensions between striving for a logical-rational analysis of issues and striving for a consensus position on an issue. (c) Imagine that you are a supervisor and that you are concerned about the quality of the advice that you have been getting from your group immediate subordinates/advisors, with whom you meet on a regular basis. With the same personnel, how might you alter the deliberative process to improve the quality of the advice that you are getting? Explain your social engineering ideas and link them to your discussions of (a) and (b) above. Do this in 7-10 double-spacing type written pages. Only hard copies will be accepted.

Paper #3 (Due Tuesday, 20 Mar) on Balance Theory. Drawing on your own thoughts, my lectures, and the assigned chapters from Meyer's text do the following: (a) Consider the four "rules" of classic balance theory (the friend of my friend is my friend, the enemy of my friend is my enemy, the enemy of my enemy is my friend, the friend of my enemy is my enemy) and rank order the importance these rules and present your argument for your rank order, i.e., why do you think that one "rule" more important than the next in your rank order? (b) Set up an interpersonal situation involving four or more persons, with an unbalanced pattern of positive and negative relations, and analyze it in terms of balance theory (as I illustrated in my analysis of the Romeo-Juliet situation). Use figures to make your situation and analysis concrete. What are the structural tensions involved in this situation? (c) What strategy would you employ to convert the unbalanced interpersonal situation into a balanced one in which all pairs of persons have mutual positive relations? Lay out your rationale. Use figures to make your situation and analysis concrete. Do this in 7-10 double-spacing type written pages. Only hard copies will be accepted.

Attendance: Attendance is rewarded (+0.50 point per lecture attended) and nonattendance is penalized (-0.50 lecture not attended). I view your attendance record as an important matter not only because my lectures are an intrinsic part of this course, but also because there are many students who wanted to enroll in this course, but could not do so.

Grades: Each paper is graded on the following scale. A+ (97-100), A (93-96), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), F (0-59). Your course grade (based on the papers) may be raised or lowered by as much as 10 points, depending on attendance. Your course grade will be the average of your three paper grades plus or minus your attendance points. With a perfect attendance record your grade will be raised one level, e.g., from C+ to B+, from B- to A-, from B to A, etc. With poor attendance, it may be substantially lowered. For example, if your average paper grade is 90 and your attendance points are +5, then your course grade is 95 (i.e., A); but if your average paper grade is 90 and your attendance points are -5, then your course grade is 85 (i.e., B).

Class Schedule

Introduction

Week 1.	Tuesday, 10 Jan Thursday, 12 Jan	Introduction	
Week 2.	Tuesday, 17 Jan Thursday, 19 Jan	Behavior and Attitudes	Chapter 4
Week 3.	Tuesday, 24 Jan Thursday, 26 Jan	Conformity and Obedience	Chapter 6

Paper 1 Due on Normative Influence, Tuesday 31 January

Influence Networks

Week 4.	Tuesday, 31 Jan Thursday, 2 Feb	Persuasion	Chapter 7
Week 5.	Tuesday, 7 Feb Thursday, 9 Feb	Group Influence	Chapter 8
Week 6.	Tuesday, 14 Feb Thursday, 16 Feb	Social Self	Chapter 2
Week 7.	Tuesday, 21 Feb Thursday, 23 Feb	Beliefs and Judgments	Chapter 3

Paper 2 Due on Influence Networks, Tuesday 28 February

Balance Theory

Week 8.	Tuesday, 28 Feb Thursday, 1 Mar	Positive Relations	Chapter 11
Week 9.	Tuesday, 6 Mar Thursday, 8 Mar	Negative Relations	Chapter 9
Week 10.	Tuesday, 13 Mar Thursday, 15 Mar	Juries and Overviews	Chapter 15

Paper 3 Due on Balance Theory, Tuesday 20 March