

Psychology, Inequality, and the American Dream (Psych 25N)

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Website/Forum: On coursework once you have registered

Class meets: Monday and Wednesday 2:15-3:30
Building 420, Room 419

Office Hours: By appointment

Enrollment Limit: 16 students

Welcome!

This course is intended primarily for freshman with an interest in psychology and how it relates to social inequality.

Readings

Readings will be posted on coursework. A reading schedule is below. You are expected to do the readings before class.

Grades and Due Dates

Grades will be determined by five components:

	<i>% of Final Grade</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Weekly essays (5)	15%	Each Sunday by midnight
Class participation	15%	
Midterm	25%	November 11
Research presentation	15%	Last 2 weeks of class
Research proposal	30%	Dec 2 in class

Weekly Essays

From the week of September 28 through the week of November 9 you should submit a 1-page essay for 5 of the 7 weeks. Your essay is due each Sunday at midnight (the first one is due Sunday, September 27). It should reflect on the content of our readings and discussions.

You may:

- Analyze a concept or phenomenon in your own life
- Analysis how a concept or phenomenon plays out in popular culture

- Reflect on a topic using popular or research literature (e.g., biographies, case studies, history, research papers)
- Make a cross-cultural comparison
- Constructively respond to another student's weekly essay from an earlier week

Your essay should not exceed 1 page. I will stop reading at the end of the first page even if your essay keeps going. Please use standard formatting—e.g., Times 12-point font, 1-inch margins, and double-spacing (i.e., about 300 words/page).

To submit your essay, please both email it to me (gwalton@stanford.edu) with the phrase “Weekly Essay” in the subject line and post it to the discussion section of our coursewebsite (on coursework). This way other students can read your essay too and, in a subsequent week, can respond to your essay.

Class Participation

This being a seminar class, it's important that everyone participate. Do the readings, come to class, and share your thoughts and reactions!

Midterm

The midterm is scheduled for November 11. It will cover all readings and discussions in the class up to that date.

Research Presentation (Last 2 weeks of class)

Prepare a 10-12 minute powerpoint presentation describing your research proposal (see below). Be sure to describe why your research question is important (for either theoretical and/or applied reasons), how it extends past research, how you would collect the data, and what implications your results might have.

Research Proposal (Due Dec 2 in class)

This is your opportunity to design a research study examining the role of psychological processes in social inequality! Your proposal should:

- Identify an important psychological process linked to inequality.
- Describe this psychological process and critique the peer-reviewed literature about it. Discuss how your proposed research will contribute to, expand, or challenge this literature.
- Describe an experiment, with random assignment to at least two conditions. What will your experiment involve and how will it affect the psychological process you have identified? What will your control condition be? How will you randomly assign participants to treatment and control conditions? What are your hypotheses?
- Describe how you will evaluate the effects of your experiment. What are your dependent measures? How will they be assessed? How will you analyze the data?

- Discuss what theoretical implications (for our understanding of psychological processes) and applied implications (for inequality) might be drawn from your research if your hypotheses are confirmed.

Your proposal should be 2500 words or less (about 10 pages). This does not include the title page or reference section.

Late Policy

Without an adequate excuse, late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade point each day (a perfect assignment 1 day late receives an A-; 2 days late a B+, etc.).

Class Schedule

Sept 21	Introduction to the class
Sept 23	Introduction to Social Psychology
Sept 28	Social Class
Sept 30	Early Childhood Interventions
Oct 5	Immigration and American National Identity
Oct 7	Aversive Racism
Oct 12	Prejudice and Credentialing
Oct 14	Ambivalent Sexism
Oct 19	Implicit Prejudice
Oct 21	System Justification Theory
Oct 26	Racism and Crime
Oct 28	Intergroup Relations
Nov 2	Stereotype Threat
Nov 4	Stereotype Threat Interventions
Nov 9	Affirmative Action
Nov 11	Midterm
Nov 16	Project Presentations
Nov 18	Project Presentations
Nov 30	Project Presentations
Dec 2	Project Presentations

Three Notes About the Readings

1. Be strategic. Some readings you should read especially carefully and understand thoroughly, for instance seminal theoretical pieces. Others you should read more quickly, for example to glean the main point from a brief empirical paper. Avoid getting lost in unnecessary details. To help guide your reading, I have included asterisks that denote the degree of priority for each reading. Use these and save time!

The point of this course is not to bury you in readings but to expose you to a wide-range of perspectives. With some strategy and forethought I hope the readings will be manageable.

* Moderately important reading – read over once and get the main point

** Important reading – read carefully, be sure you understand what was done, found, and concluded

*** Most important reading – read carefully and reflectively, contains important ideas and insights central to course

2. Each week read the papers in chronological order, with the oldest first and the most recent last. Papers in related areas build on each other; it will be helpful when you read the later papers if you understand their references to the earlier papers.
3. How do I read a research article? In each section, read to answer specific questions:

Introduction: What is this research about?

Why is it important?

What are the hypotheses? What are they based on (past research, logic, commonsense)?

Methods: How were the hypotheses tested?

What was measured?

What was the procedure?

Results: What happened?

Were the hypotheses supported?

(For ease of reading, ignore the statistics. If this section is well-written you should have a nice narrative of what was found; if not, it can be very hard to follow. Try your best.)

Discussion: Summary and interpretation. What do the results mean?

What are the implications for psychological theory?

What are the practical implications?

What are the next steps for research?

Reading Schedule

September 23 – Introduction to Class

No readings

September 23 – Introduction to Social Psychology

- Ross & Nisbett (1991). The person and the situation: Chapter 1.**
McCord (1978). A thirty-year follow-up of treatment effects.**

September 28– Social Class

- Ehrenreich (2001). Nickle and dimed: On (not) getting by in America. Introduction and Chapter 1.**
Rothstein (2008). Whose problem is poverty?*

Rubin (1976). Worlds of pain. Chapters 1, 2, and 9. **

September 30 – Early Childhood Interventions

- Heckman (2006). Skill formation and the economics of investing in disadvantaged children.**
Hamre & Pianta (2005). Can instructional and emotional support in the first-grade make a difference for children at risk of school failure?*

Supplementary reading if you're interested in Head Start (not required):

Woodhead (1988). When psychology informs public policy. The case of early childhood intervention.

October 5 – Immigration and American National Identity

- Devos & Banaji (2005). America = White?*

Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2001). The psychosocial experience of immigration. In *Children of immigration*.**

October 7 – Aversive Racism

- Dovidio & Gaertner (2000). Aversive racism and selection decisions: 1989 and 1999.***
Kawakami, Dunn, Karmali, & Dovidio (2009). Mispredicting affective and behavioral responses to racism.*
Martel, Lane, & Emrich (1996). Male-female differences: A computer simulation.*

October 12 – Prejudice and Credentialing

- Monin & Miller (2001). Moral credentials and the expression of prejudice.**

Uhlmann & Cohen (2005). Constructed criteria: Redefining merit to justify discrimination.**

October 14 – Ambivalent Sexism

Glick & Fiske (2001). An ambivalent alliance: Hostile and benevolent sexism as complementary justifications for gender inequality.***

October 19 – Implicit Prejudice

Read Lane et al. first followed by Arkes & Tetlock and then Banaji et al.

Arkes & Tetlock (2004). Attributions of implicit prejudice, or “Would Jesse Jackson ‘fail’ the Implicit Association Test?”**

Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald (2004). No place for nostalgia in science: A response to Arkes and Tetlock.**

Lane, Kang, & Banaji (2007). Implicit social cognition and the law.*

****No need to read past page 439****

October 21 – System Justification Theory

Kay, Gaucher, Peach, Laurin, Friesen, Zanna, & Spencer (2009). Inequality, discrimination, and the power of the status quo: Direct evidence for a motivation to see the way things are as the way they should be.**

Supplementary reading on system justification theory (not required):

Jost, Banaji, & Nosek (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo.

October 26 – Racism and Crime

Eberhardt, Davies, Purdie-Vaughns, & Johnson (2006). Looking deathworthy: Perceived stereotypicality of Black defendants predicts capital-sentencing outcomes.**

Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson (2008). Not yet human: Implicit knowledge, historical dehumanization, and contemporary consequences.**

October 28 – Intergroup Relations

Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Tropp (2008). With a little help from my cross-group friend: Reducing anxiety in intergroup contexts through cross-group friendships.**

Shelton & Richeson (2005). Intergroup contact and pluralistic ignorance.**

November 2 – Stereotype Threat

A class divided (online video), see:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided/> **

Steele (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance.***

November 4 – Stereotype Threat Interventions

Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master (2006). Reducing the racial achievement gap: A social psychological intervention.***

Walton & Cohen (2007). A question of belonging: Race, social fit, and achievement.***

Wilson (2006). The power of social psychological interventions.*

November 9 – Affirmative Action

Crosby, Iyer, & Sincharoen (2006). Understanding affirmative action.**

Croizet & Guinier (2009). Now you see it, now you don't: Race, wealth, and the magic trick of merit.**

Walton, Spencer, & Erman (2009). Affirmative Meritocracy.**

****No need to read the supplementary material at the end****

November 11 – Midterm

November 16 – December 2

No readings