

SOC 30: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	One of the following: ENGL 1A or 1AH or ESLL 26 or equivalent; not open to students with credit in PSYC 30.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 4: Social & Behavioral Sciences
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade Only
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable
Cross-Listed:	PSYC 30

Student Learning Outcomes

- Student will demonstrate knowledge of the major theories and content areas of social psychology.
- Students will apply social psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life.

Description

A survey of human behavior in relation to the social environment. The course focuses on human interaction and the shaping of diverse and commonly-shared attitudes, beliefs and worldviews by society, culture, and social groups. The course includes an emphasis on how individuals are influenced behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively. Topics include but are not limited to the self, social cognition, aggression, interpersonal attraction, attitudes, social influence, prejudice and discrimination, gender, race, person perception, cultural norms, and conflict and peace-making.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Critically assess background and range of theoretical contributions made by psychologists and sociologists.
2. Describe and evaluate the various theoretical perspectives in social psychology.
3. Compare and contrast the research methods and techniques used by psychologists and sociologists.
4. Examine social psychological roots of cultural diversity and uniformity in explaining the phenomenon of such topics as person perception, attitudes and attitude change, conformity vs. deviance, attraction, aggression, prejudice and stereotyping, conflict and peace-making.
5. Describe diverse groups, such as primary vs. secondary, and how structural, interactional and functional differences influence group dynamics.
6. Identify different types of leaders and how they influence others.

7. Explain and analyze collective behavior and the social and cultural circumstances leading to acceptable crowd conduct vs. uncontrollable behavior as witnessed in riots.
8. Demonstrate effective reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.
9. Assess benefits gleaned by social institutions, such as the law, due to social psychological research findings.
10. Describe how principles gleaned from social psychological research apply to real problems and issues.

Course Content

1. Basic concepts
 - a. Social psychology
 - b. Society
 - c. Culture
 - d. Social groups
 - e. Individuals
 - f. Social interaction
2. Social research: methods, techniques and ethics
 - a. Psychological social psychologists
 - i. Laboratory (experimental)—independent and dependent variables
 - ii. Correlational studies
 - iii. Field (objective)
 - iv. Surveys
 - v. Experimental: animal (primate and non-primate) research
 - vi. Archival
 - b. Sociological social psychologists
 - i. Laboratory (experimental)
 - ii. Field (objective and subjective)
 - iii. Surveys
 - iv. Archival
 - c. Sampling procedures
 - d. Ethical issues
3. Theoretical contributions
 - a. Schools—psychological social psychological theoretical influences
 - i. Psychoanalytic theory (Freud et. al.)
 - ii. Gestalt/field theory (Lewin et. al.)
 - iii. Behavior theory (Pavlov, Skinner)
 - iv. Cognitive theory (Lewin)
 - v. Social learning theory (Bandura)
 - vi. Humanistic theory (Maslow, Rogers)
 - vii. Evolutionary theory (Buss)
 - viii. Eclectic theory
 - b. Schools—sociological social psychological theoretical influences
 - i. Symbolic interactionism theory (Mead and Blumer): Chicago School
 - ii. Expectancy-value theory (Edwards)
 - iii. Social exchange theory (Blau, Homan, Gouldner)
 - iv. Role theory (Parsons, Turner)
 - v. Social learning theory (Bandura)
 - vi. Socialization/sociocultural theory (Mead, Cooley, Sutherland)
4. Person perception

- a. Basic issues, theories and research
 - i. How are impressions integrated?
 - ii. How are impressions managed?
 - iii. Causal attributions
 - iv. Heuristics, counterfactual thinking, illusory thinking
 - v. Pygmalion effects (teacher expectancy effects)
 - vi. Accuracy of judgments
 - vii. Nonverbal communication and diverse cultural meaning (e.g., facial expression, prosody, gestures)
5. Social cognition
 - a. Schemas and schematic processing
 - b. Culture and small group influence
 - c. Which schematas are used and when?
 - d. Understanding the social world: preferences
6. Learning about the self
 - a. Basic concepts: What is "self," "self-esteem," "self-concept"?
 - b. Presentation of self in everyday life
 - c. The self and the socialization process
 - d. Theories: self-perception, labeling, self-awareness, self-efficacy, social comparison, socialization
 - e. Social identity: self-esteem and ethnicity
 - f. Individualistic and collectivist cultures
7. Attitudes, attitude change and prejudice
 - a. Social and cultural influences
 - b. Theories: cognitive dissonance, expectancy-value, learning, balance, self-perception, contact, attribution-value model, realistic group conflict approach, social dominance, social identity
 - c. Attitudes, prejudice and stereotyping
 - d. Theories of prejudice
 - e. Can racism be eliminated?
 - f. The "Robber's Cave" study: the group, situation and attitude change
8. Conformity, compliance and obedience to authority: social influence
 - a. Symbolic interactionism: Muzafer Sherif's "Emergent Social Norm"
 - b. Perception theory: Solomon Asch "Line" studies
 - c. Why do people conform and why do they tend to obey an authority figure?
 - d. Compliance techniques: "foot in the door," "door in the face," "low balling"
 - e. Overconformity: the Stanley Millgram studies, "electroshock"
9. Interpersonal attraction, personal relationships and gender
 - a. Theories of attraction: "social exchange"
 - b. Types of love: triangular theory
 - c. "Expectance-value" theory revisited (Stanford University studies)
 - d. Relationship between "mere exposure effect" and forming relationships
 - e. Self-disclosure, liking and reciprocity: the balance of power
 - f. Principle of "least interest" and equity theory
 - g. Gender and role play
 - h. Cultural stereotyping and gender identity
 - i. Homosexuality, lesbians and transsexuals: nature vs. nurture?
10. Group behavior
 - a. Basic concepts: social group, aggregate and category, social norms, social role, social loafing, social facilitation/inhibition, leadership, groupthink, group locomotion
 - b. Theories: "expectation-states" (J. Berger)
 - c. Examples of "de-individuation": "social contagion" (G. LeBon), "disculturation" (E. Goffman), "prison study" (Zimbardo)
 - d. Group polarization and "risky shift" (J. Stoner)
 - e. Social loafing, social facilitation
 - f. Competition vs. cooperation: "Prisoner's Dilemma" and the "Trucking" games
 - g. Leadership types and styles: is leadership innate?
 - h. Criterion for judging a "good" leader: cultural/ethnic/racial/gender differences
11. Aggression and deviance
 - a. Definitions of basic concepts: aggression, violence, domestic violence, desensitization, dehumanization, rape, date rape
 - b. Sexual harassment as a form of aggression
 - c. Theories of aggression and aggression tolerance
 - d. The rape myth
 - e. Defining deviance
 - f. Theories of deviance: "strain," "differential association," "labeling," "self" theory
 - g. E. Goffman's studies: Asylum and Stigma
 - h. The effects of social psychology's research on institutions: the law
12. Helping behavior
 - a. Social exchange and social norms
 - b. Different theories of helping
 - c. Bystander effects
 - d. Situational and personal factors that affect helping behavior
 - e. Factors to increase helping behavior
13. Conflict and peacemaking
 - a. Tragedy of the commons
 - b. Mirror image perceptions
 - c. Bargaining
 - d. Negotiation
 - e. Arbitration
 - f. Mediation

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

When taught as an online distance learning section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Quizzes

Examinations (multiple choice and/or short answer, essay questions)

Problem-solving exercises

Paper(s) integrating personal observations/experiences to social psychological concepts and/or theories

Research project (individual or group)

Field visit to Psychology or Sociology Laboratory (optional)

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture
Class discussions
Active learning exercises
Group work
Films

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Myers, David, and Jean Twenge. Social Psychology, 14th ed.. 2022.

Gilovich, Thomas, Dachner Keltner, Serena Chen, and Richard Nisbett. Social Psychology, 5th ed.. 2018.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Research project (individual or group)
2. Writing assignment integrating sociological or psychological theories and/or concepts to real world observations
3. Homework assignments (e.g., observing advertisements and evaluating the methods utilized to persuade consumers)
4. Field visit to Psychology or Sociology Laboratory (optional)

Discipline(s)

Psychology or Sociology