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**SAS – SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

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**SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**  
**COURSE TITLE: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**  
**COURSE CODE: LAPYSP300**  
**3 Semester Credits**

**1. DESCRIPTION**

"We see the world as we do, not because that is the way it is, but because we have these ways of seeing" (Wittgenstein). Social psychology is a scientific discipline that explores how the individual is influenced by social contexts. Students will learn to identify how social, environmental, and cognitive factors shape our thoughts, feelings, and actions. The course covers theories regarding attraction, aggression, conformity, and pro-social behavior. As this course is taught in Italy, students will have the advantage of observing and testing theories learned in class in a foreign environment.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the main developments in Social Psychology;
- Develop critical thinking;
- Gain knowledge about research in Social Psychology;
- Develop analytical, writing, and oral skills (through readings, periodicals, internet sources, videos, written paper, exam essays, and oral presentations);
- Work in groups and recognize the roles that people play in social groups in order to acquire an understanding of social dynamics;
- Demonstrate effective communication and presentation skills, both written and verbal.

**3. REQUIREMENTS**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**4. METHOD**

The method aims to adopt an interdisciplinary approach combining theories of psychology and examples of real life. The course will be taught through a combination of traditional lectures and classroom experiences (research lab). A wide use of audio-visual resources (PowerPoint presentations and videos) will be provided by the instructor to illustrate various issues discussed during this course. The first part of each class period consists of short lectures. The second part of class time consists of discussion and short lectures about research methods in Social Psychology. This course requires that you participate in class discussions. This means that you contribute to class discussions by relating your experiences, asking questions, and making comments appropriate to the topics being discussed.

**5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES**

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

- Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron.

The textbook is mandatory for successful completion of the course.

Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will be provided by the instructor.

### **FURTHER READINGS**

- Bell, P. B., Staines, P., & Mitchell, J. (2001). *Evaluating, Doing and Writing Research in Psychology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hewstone M., Stroebe W. (2001). *Introduction to Social Psychology, A European Perspective*.
- Pease B. (2006). *The Definitive Book of Body Language*.
- Myers, D. G. (2010). *Social Psychology (10th ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- DeLamater, J. D., & Myers, D. J. (2011). *Social Psychology (7th ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

### **LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE**

Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times of the university library. Also note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed.

Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

#### **BIBLIOTECA PALAGIO DI PARTE GUELFA**

Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

[http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca\\_palagio\\_di\\_parte\\_guelfa/](http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/)

#### **BIBLIOTECA DELLE OBLATE**

Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

[www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it](http://www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it)

#### **THE HAROLD ACTON LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE**

Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: [www.britishinstitute.it/en](http://www.britishinstitute.it/en)

### **6. FIELD LEARNING**

Please consult your Official Registration for any mandatory field learning dates. Field Learning Activities cited in Official Registrations are an integral part of the course and also include an assignment that counts towards your final grade, details will be provided on the first day of class.

### **7. COURSE MATERIALS**

No additional course materials are necessary.

### **8. COURSE FEES**

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. The exact amount will be communicated by the instructor on the first day of class.

### **9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM**

10% Attendance

10% Class Participation

10% Assignments

20% Research Paper (and its oral presentation)

20% Midterm Exam

30% Final Exam

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+= 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B-=80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C=73-76%, C- =70-72%, D = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

## 10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

**Absences** are based on academic hours: 1 absence equals 3 lecture hours.

Two absences: 6 lecture hours, attendance and participation grade will be impacted.

Three absences: 9 lecture hours, the final grade may be lowered by one letter grade.

Four absences: 12 lecture hours, constitutes automatic failure of the course regardless of when absences are incurred.

Please note:

- The above hours refer to lecture hours. Please note that the contact / credit hour policy in the academic catalog includes additional distribution ratios according to delivery category. Ex: 1 absence equals 6 FL/SL/Lab hours or 9 EL hours.

- Hours may be distributed in different formats according to the academic course schedules.

### LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE

Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

### TRAVEL (OR DELAYS DUE TO TRAVEL) IS NEVER AN EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.

It is the student's responsibility to know how many absences are incurred. If in doubt, speak with your instructor!

**Participation:** Satisfactory participation will be the result of contributing to class discussions by putting forth insightful and constructive questions, comments and observations. Overall effort, cooperation during group work, proper care of work space and tools, responsible behavior, and completion of assignments will be assessed. All of the above criteria also apply to Field Learning and site visits.

## 11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS

During this course students are expected not only to attend classes on a regular basis, but also to actively participate through presentations. Apart from the mid term and final exams, students are expected to give one class presentation, and to write one analytical research paper. Homework and assignments are expected to be done on time.

**Assignments:** chapter readings will be assigned for the next class at the end of each class. Detailed guidelines for assignments will be provided by the instructor.

The **Research Paper and its oral presentation** count for 20% of the course grade.

The topic of the paper will be discussed with the instructor, considering student interests and inclinations toward the topics debated during class hours and throughout the assigned readings.

Students are encouraged to propose their own topics and to describe why the chosen issue is important for the understanding of Social Psychology.

The paper formatting is as follows: It should be between 5-6 pages, 1,5 spaced, including footnotes and

bibliography. Critical evaluation of information is required for this research paper. Plagiarism is not acceptable. Please do not forget to indicate all sources from which you obtained or cited information. Any quotation style is acceptable. You will be asked to give a short presentation of your paper. Grade for the paper will be based on the paper itself and its in-class presentation.

Visual aids can be used for the class presentation, and they will be evaluated along the presentation itself.

The DEADLINE for the term paper submission is Lesson 13. Presentations will take place on Lesson 14.

**N.B.** One week delay in handing in papers will result in their value to be lowered by half. More than one week delay will result in automatic failure of the paper. No-show on the day of the oral presentation will result in automatic failure of the presentation.

Material for research will be available in the University Library in Corso Tintori 21.

The **Midterm Exam** counts for 20% of the final course grade. The **Midterm Exam** is scheduled on **Lesson 7. The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.**

Format: the exam is divided into three sections:

- Part I: 10 Multiple choice questions. Each correct answer is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points.
- Part II: 10 short-answer questions. Each correct and complete answer (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) is worth 5 points, for a total 50 points.
- Part III: two essay questions; each correct and complete answer is worth 15 points (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.

**Final Exam** counts for 30% of the final course grade. The Final Exam is scheduled on **Lesson 15. The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.** Format: the exam is divided into three sections:

- Part I: 10 Multiple choice questions. Each correct answer is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points.
- Part II: 10 short-answer questions. Each correct and complete answer (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) is worth 5 points, for a total 50 points.
- Part III: two essay questions; each correct and complete answer is worth 15 points (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.

The Final Exam is comprehensive.

## 12. LESSONS

Lesson 1	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Introduction of the teacher and of the course; Introduction to the class syllabus. Information on research paper, oral presentation and exams. Social Psychology: The science of the social side of life
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will be informed on the level, requirements, and main contents of the course.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 1)

Lesson 2	
<b>Meet</b>	In class

<b>Lecture</b>	Social Cognition: How We Think About Our Social World
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will learn about the effects of schemas on various aspect of social behavior and they will be able to identify the potential sources of error in social cognition.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 2) Assignments: Reflect on the following question: Research strongly suggests that our moods can influence memory and how we retain/recall information. Describe an instance in which your thoughts were influenced by your feelings and another in which your feelings were influenced by your thoughts.

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Social Perception: Perceiving and Understanding Others
<b>Objectives</b>	In this lesson students will learn about theories of attribution, and the basic channels of nonverbal communication.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 3) Assignments: Answer the following question: What techniques do you use to make a good first impression on others? Do they work? What else might you do that would be more effective?

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	The Self: Answering the Question “Who Am I?”
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will be made aware of the role of social learning in attitude formation, persuasion and resistance to persuasion, and the role of cognitive dissonance in various attitudes and forms of social behavior.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 4) Assignments: Marketing and persuasion exercise

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Attitude: evaluating and responding to social world
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will be made aware of the role of social learning in attitude formation, persuasion and resistance to persuasion, and the role of cognitive dissonance in various attitudes and forms of social behavior.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 5) Assignments: Visit a place that you've never been before (a store, an event, a library, a café, etc.) and take note of your initial impressions. Then, consider how your own experiences (values, attitudes, beliefs, memories, culture, mood, etc.) along with past learnings have influenced your initial impressions and reactions.

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Stereotyping, Prejudice and Discrimination: The Causes, Effects and Cures
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will be made aware of how stereotypes and prejudice can be changed and the role of competition in prejudice.
<b>Readings/</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron.

<b>Assignments</b>	(Chapter 6) Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 6)
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<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	MIDTERM EXAM

<b>Lesson 8</b>	
<b>NA</b>	ACADEMIC BREAK

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Prosocial Behavior: Helping Others
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will learn about the effects of social comparison processes among the witnesses of an emergency and the relationship between genetics and helping.
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 9)

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<i>Aggression: its nature, causes, and control</i>
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will be made aware of the role of cognitive and affective variables in aggression as well as the role of personal characteristic that influence aggression
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 10) Assignments: Non-aggression day

<b>Lesson 11</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Social Influence: Changing Others' Behaviors
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will be able to identify the basic principles underlying many different techniques for gaining compliance and the role of mood in compliance.
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 8) Assignments: Answer the following question: Now that you know about many different techniques people use to gain compliance with their wishes, do you think this will help you to resist such tactics when used against you? And turning things around, will this knowledge help you to gain compliance from others?

<b>Lesson 12</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will learn about characteristics of romantic relationship and interpersonal attraction.
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 7) Assignments: Love day

<b>Lesson 13</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class

<b>Lecture</b>	Groups and Individuals: The consequences of belonging
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will be able to identify the role of norms in the functioning of groups, they will also learn about the nature of cooperative and conflict and factors that affect their occurrence.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Social Psychology, 14th edition by Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron. (Chapter 11)

<b>Lesson 14</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Research Paper Presentations
<b>Objectives</b>	Present your work in front of peer and be able to discuss peers' projects
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Submit Research Paper

<b>Lesson 15</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	FINAL EXAM