

**University of Pennsylvania**  
**Psychology 1440.920**  
**Summer Session II, 2023**  
**Social Psychology**  
**M-W-F 12:00- 2:30**

Professor: Paul Okami

Office Hours: By appointment before class or through Zoom at agreed-upon time

Email: [pokami@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:pokami@sas.upenn.edu) (ALWAYS use email to message me. NEVER use Canvas)

**CLASS CANVAS PAGE:**

If you have problems accessing the Canvas page, please contact the help desk at 215-204-8000. Please don't email me because I can pretty much guarantee I will be of no help whatsoever (I'll likely be on the phone with tech support with some sort of problem with Canvas at the time you send me the email). You can also contact Canvas directly at 833-330-8387.

**REQUIRED READINGS AND OTHER MEDIA**

All required readings and video or audio material will be posted on line FOR FREE(!). With one exception, the readings will be drawn from those authored by your instructor. (See course schedule attached to the end of the syllabus.)

**OVERVIEW AND COURSE STRUCTURE:**

This class takes an evidence-based psychological science perspective on social psychology, with an emphasis on evolutionary perspectives. We will cover topics including evolution and culture; research methods in social psychology (and problems with the research database); group behavior; the self; prosocial behavior and morality; moral panics; love, attraction, and mating; aggression and violence

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To promote in-depth knowledge of a limited number of important areas in the field of social psychology.
2. To learn to think critically about information you receive in psychology classes through evaluation of evidence and understanding of research methods.
3. To promote an evidence-based approach to understanding human behavior, particularly those aspects you consider personally important.
4. To introduce and deepen understanding of how human evolutionary history has helped to shape human psychology.

**ABOUT THIS SECTION OF PSYC 1440**

*"Some things are believed because they are demonstrably true, but many other things are believed simply because they have been asserted repeatedly."*

– Thomas Sowell

This section of Psyc 1440 does not follow a standard undergraduate textbook in content.

**Indeed, some of what you will be exposed to in this class may contradict what you have been told elsewhere**, or what is normally presented in various mass media and commercial textbooks. In a sense, then, in order to get the most out of this class, you might need to forget much of what you think you know, study the lectures and readings, keep your mind open, and be willing to go where the evidence takes you. Or, as philosopher/neuroscientist Sam Harris puts it:

**“I find it thrilling when someone raises a point that I find I’m uncomfortable with, and I’m being led, helplessly, in the direction of something that I find destabilizing to my cherished opinions. And I can’t see any errors being made, yet I don’t like where I’m being taken. I find that absolutely thrilling. I find those moments some of the best moments in intellectual life.”**

#### **IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT SPECIFIC CLASS CONTENT**

Human beings are a highly social species, *but we are still a species* – mammals in the primate line. Consequently, we reproduce sexually, and as it happens, there are *average* sex differences in behavior in *all* sexually reproducing species, including humans. I will be discussing these differences in some detail when appropriate, including discussion of their possible origins in human evolutionary history. Some of these discussions involve details of sexual behavior. *If you are concerned that discussions of average human sex differences or sexual behavior in general might be unduly upsetting or harmful, please reconsider enrolling.*

#### **ABOUT EMAILS:**

As stated earlier, please **ONLY** use email addresses to send messages to me. Please do **NOT** use Canvas, as it creates complications in responding. I answer emails promptly – usually within 8 hours but never in more than 24 hours.

#### **ABOUT POWERPOINT SLIDES**

All PowerPoint slides, reading material, videos, and some audio files will be uploaded to Canvas. The PowerPoint slides are generally more detailed than most and studying them as adjuncts to the lectures is critical if you want to do well in this class. This is because a substantial amount of lecture/PPT material is **NOT COVERED IN READINGS**, particularly in the first part of the course. Similarly, significant portions of the assigned readings will **NOT BE COVERED IN LECTURE**. **So, you HAVE to do the readings AND study the lecture material to do well in this class.**

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

Because of the accelerated pace of summer courses at Penn, each class covers material normally covered in two classes and one week’s class time, reading, and other work is equivalent to three week’s during ordinary semesters. Therefore, missing a single class is in practical terms equivalent to missing *more* than two ordinary classes, and it is extremely easy to fall behind if you are absent. Therefore, *you are expected to attend all classes*. Absences must be accompanied by some sort of documentation as to the reason. Everyone will get one free pass for an unexcused absence, but *each additional unexcused absence will result in a 2- point drop in your final grade computation.*

#### **EXAMS AND FINAL GRADING POLICIES:**

Your final grade will be based **entirely** on your performance on **3 take-home, open-book/open-note tests based on lecture and readings, and you will have 12 hours to complete each one**. You will be able to consult the assigned readings, the highly detailed PowerPoint slides, and your lecture notes. These tests are identical in difficulty to a typical in-class (1 ¼ hour) multiple-choice/true-false test for which you would ordinarily NOT be permitted to consult books or notes, and which you would only have the length of the class time to complete! Also, **the tests will not be cumulative, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> (final) test**. So please – don’t complain about tests. Be grateful. 😊 Each test has a different number of questions, but **each question has the**

**same worth.** In other words, you can think of the testing as consisting of one long exam, given in three parts throughout the semester, containing 230 total questions, each worth one point.

**Test #1 has 60 questions, Test #2 has 90 questions, and Test #3 has 80 questions.**

Theoretically, then, given the total of 230 questions (= 230 total points):

Test #1 = 26% of your total grade

Test #2 = 39% of your total grade

Test #3 = 35% of your total grade

The tests are completed online at home, but you do not have to complete them in one sitting. You can return as often as you like as long as the test is completed within 12 hours. **But make sure you do not click “submit” until you are certain you are finished!** (Your work is saved automatically, so you can leave Canvas and then return as long as you don’t click “submit.”

UNLESS OTHERWISE ANNOUNCED, TESTS WILL BE POSTED BY 10:00 a.m. ON THE SATURDAY FOLLOWING THE WEEK THE TEST-RELATED TOPIC LECTURES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND WILL BE DUE BY 10:00 p.m.<sup>1</sup> However, because test due dates may change as the course schedule changes, you must stay current with emailed announcements! So please make sure that Canvas is configured to receive announcements as soon as they are posted.

*All test questions are to be answered solely from the lectures, PowerPoint slides, and reading material. Please do not use other sources such as the internet, or worse, personal beliefs and opinions.*

#### **MORE ABOUT EXAMS:**

Take-home, open-book/open note, multiple-choice/true false tests that you have 12 hours to complete may sound ridiculously or even insanely easy, but I assure you that these tests are not so easy. Test questions for this course absolutely **demand** that you have read the material, studied the lecture material and PowerPoint slides, **and understand** what you have read and studied. You cannot do well on these tests simply because you are “good at taking multiple-choice tests” and can easily ferret out stupid answers that can’t possibly be correct. I don’t write those sorts of tests.

**Please note that the tests must be completed by the time listed.** There will be **NO EXCEPTIONS\*** to this policy.

**\*EXCEPTION TO THE “NO EXCEPTION” POLICY.** Under genuinely unusual circumstances – serious illness or hospitalization, funeral (yours or someone else’s), automobile accident, court date, marriage, divorce, childbirth, existential crisis (**documented verification will be required, especially for existential crises**), some sort of fair arrangement will be made.

#### **CURVING AND “BAD QUESTIONS”**

I don’t curve tests. Instead, I do item analyses of the questions. If 67% or more of students answer a question incorrectly, it is assumed to be “bad” unless most of the higher-scoring

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<sup>1</sup> If you have a solid reason why you can never work on exams on Saturdays, we can figure something out for you.

students answered the question correctly, in which case it is simply recognized to be “difficult” rather than “bad.” A bad question is one answered incorrectly by 67% or more of students, **and also answered incorrectly by a substantial number of the high-scoring students.** Students receive credit for all bad questions. Although I will discuss any confusion or problems with specific questions, **I do not argue about questions**, and please do not attempt to “fight for points.” If I think your criticism of a question is legitimate, I may make a change, but that is my decision to make.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Your grade is computed strictly on the basis of your test scores. Please do not ask me to change your grade because you are “just one point” away from where you want to be. There has to be a cut-off somewhere. In fact, **I don’t give grades at all. You give yourself your own grade through your test performance.**

**FINAL GRADE CUT-OFF SCORES (Total Points: 230)**

223 - 230 = A+  
214 - 222 = A  
207 - 213 = A-  
200 - 206 = B+  
191 - 199 = B  
184 - 190 = B-  
177 - 183 = C+  
168 - 176 = C  
161 - 167 = C-  
154 - 160 = D+  
145 - 153 = D  
138 - 144 = D-  
Below 138 = F

**EXTREMELY IMPORTANT:**

**ABOUT ACADEMIC FREEDOM FOR INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS**

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. *I take this policy extremely seriously.* It implies that *all* opinions and ideas, no matter how unusual or controversial they may be perceived by some, *must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse* as long as they are related to the content and topics covered in the class and are presented respectfully, honestly, and with the assumption of charity towards those with whom one might disagree.

I encourage comments, questions, and *critiques* of ideas, not attacks on individuals or unwarranted assumptions about a person’s supposed hidden motives for making statements that someone might find disagreeable. We may or may not create a discussion board, but if so, please follow these guidelines, and as obvious as this might seem, let your behavior mirror how you would like to be treated by others.

*In any case, participation in this class after the first week--when the assignment to have read the syllabus is due--affirms that a) you have, in fact, read the syllabus; and b) you accept, and agree to abide by, its policies.*

COURSE SCHEDULE

**IMPORTANT NOTE!** The schedule below could be termed a hopeful approximation. I reserve the right to make any necessary scheduling or content changes as the semester progresses. In fact, the schedule is *virtually guaranteed* to change – this may include test dates. So please stay current with schedule changes as posted in Canvas and email.

Week	Dates	Reading	Topics
1	(Fri) 6/30	<p><b>IMPORTANT!</b> 1) Read the ENTIRE syllabus BEFORE the first class!</p> <p><b>THERE WILL BE TEST QUESTIONS ON THE SYLLABUS!!!</b> <b>(NO KIDDING!)</b></p> <p><b>READ by Wednesday:</b> CH 1</p> <p><b>READ over the weekend:</b> CH 2</p>	<p><b>TOPIC 1: Introduction: The Domains of Social Psychology</b></p> <p><b>TOPIC 2: Social Psychological Science, Part I, Theory</b></p>
2	7/3 - 7/7	<p><b>READ by Wednesday 7/5</b> CH 3</p> <p><b>STUDY FOR SATURDAY'S TEST</b></p> <p><b>READ by Wednesday 7/12</b> CH 4</p>	<p>Topic 2 Part 1, cont...</p> <p><b>TOPIC 2: Social Psychological Science, Part II Research</b></p> <p><b>TEST #1 posted on Saturday 7/8 at 10:00 a.m., due by 10:00 p.m</b></p>
3	7/10- 7/14	<p><b>READ by Monday 7/17</b> CH 5</p> <p><b>READ by Wednesday 7/19,</b> CH 6</p>	<p><b>TOPIC 3: The Self</b></p> <p><b>TOPIC 4: Altruism, Prosocial Behavior, and Morality</b></p>
4	7/17 - 7/21	<p><b>STUDY FOR TEST #2!</b></p> <p><b>READ by Wednesday 7/26</b> CH 7</p>	<p>Topic 4 cont....</p> <p><b>TOPIC 5: Group Behavior</b></p> <p><b>TEST #2 on Topics 3, 4, and 5 posted on Saturday 7/22 at 10:00 a.m., due by 10:00 p.m.</b></p>

5	7/24 - 7/28	<b>READ by Wednesday, 8/2 CH 8</b>	<b>TOPIC 6: Love, Attraction, and Mating</b>
6	7/31- 8/4	<b>STUDY FOR TEST #3!</b>	<b>TOPIC 7: Aggression and Violence TEST #3 on Topics 6 and 7 Posted on Friday 8/4 at 12:00 Noon, due by 10:00 p.m.</b>

### COVID-FLU-AND RSV-ERA MASK POLICY

I understand that wearing masks is uncomfortable, particularly when sitting in a classroom for 2 ½ hours!. *However, because I have multiple vulnerabilities, I would greatly appreciate it if you would at the very least wear a mask if you come anywhere near my physical person.* And please don't be insulted if I slap one on hurriedly as I see you approach – it's nothing personal.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Given my testing policy, it would be difficult to cheat on tests because you already have access to all material worth using to cheat! Nonetheless, all students are expected to abide by Penn's Code of Academic Integrity policy as outlined here:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/> and submit only their own work. The take home exams are not to be discussed with others, nor should you complete them in pairs or groups. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated and will be reported to the University. Violations are also pretty cheesy, given that you have 8 hours and all materials to complete an otherwise 1¼ closed-book multiple choice test. So have some self-respect.

### RESOURCES

University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the [Office of Student Disabilities Services \(SDS\)](#). If you have not yet contacted SDS and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling SDS at 215-573-9235. The office is located in the [Weingarten Learning Resources Center](#): <https://wlrc.vpul.upenn.edu/for-faculty-and-staff/resources-for-your-courses> temporarily located in Hamilton Village at 220 S. 40<sup>th</sup> Street Ste. 260. All services are confidential.

Student Disabilities Services has recently introduced the enhanced [MyWLRC Portal](#) for students and faculty, a suite of new online tools to interact with disability services. The new tools will allow students to register with SDS, upload disability documentation, renew accommodations each semester, schedule accommodated tests, and upload texts for conversion to alternate formats. For more detailed information, please [contact SDS](#) for assistance.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Undertaking a college education can be a stressful and taxing experience, and these stresses are exacerbated as a function the current pandemic. Penn has many resources available to help you deal with both physical and mental health challenges, and I encourage you to make use of the various resources available. Seeking help is an

important proactive step to take if you are experiencing distress. As a starting point, you might consider first going to the following Wellness at Penn, here:  
<https://www.wellnessatpenn.com/>

Additionally, you consider making use of the University HELP Line. The HELP line is a service that connects calls with health and wellness resources at Penn, including CAPS, Student Health Services, Student Intervention Services, Public Safety, and others. You can call for yourself or on behalf of a friend or acquaintance. Calls will be answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by Division of Public Safety professionals trained in mental health referrals by the staff at CAPS. If you or someone you know needs help, please call the HELP line at 215-898-HELP. For more information, see here:  
<https://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/safety-initiatives/help-line-215-898-help/>