



COU 655-1/4

Social and Cultural Context and Systems (3 hours)

Autumn Term, 2015

Instructor: Michelle Smith, MA, MA, LIMHP, Psychologist Assistant

Email: michelle.smith@doane.edu

Cell phone: (402)460-8670

Course Description: An examination of the effect of social influence on the development of human behavior. Attitude formation, group behavior, cultural subgroups, and general systems theory are examined. Additional topics include aggression, role patterning, leadership, and the influence of social systems context on patterns of relationship development. Special attention is given to the manner in which social roles and system expectations are relevant to counseling practice.

Additional Description: This course examines the effect of social influence on the development of human behavior. Attitude structure and change, group behavior, and social cognition are addressed. Additional topics include studies in the relationships between individual and social spheres with attention to such issues as emotion, prosocial behavior, aggression, prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, social influence, intimacy, attraction, rejection, and the influence of social and cultural systems and context on patterns of relationship development. This course also considers social processes as they influence neuroscience, judgment, decision making, and personality. Special attention is given to the manner in which social processes are relevant to counseling practice. Concepts, theories, data, research methods, and applications of varied substantive topics are examined. Critical thinking, writing, and the sharing of experiential knowledge by students are stressed. This course draws from the theoretical perspectives of social psychology, applying relevant concepts and theories to graduate counseling majors. We are particularly interested in understanding and explaining how the “thought, feeling, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others” (Allport, 1985: 3) and in what context and systems behavior occurs.

Required Text:

Baumeister, R. F., & Finkel, E. J. (Eds.). (2010). *Advanced social psychology: The state of science*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Course Goals: This course is designed to be a challenging academic experience. The goal is for the course participant to grow as a result of this scholarly pursuit by gaining a better understanding of “self” and the others in one’s life. In this regard, the course can help the participant obtain an understanding of the concepts of social psychology and be able to relate this understanding to real life situations, social interactions, and counseling practice. Also important is for participants to become more proficient communicators, both in verbal and written communicative skills, and to gain confidence as a leader/facilitator working in a multifaceted, diverse group environment.

Social and Cultural Diversity: This course focuses on studies that provide an understanding of the social and cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society, including all of the following:

- a. becoming aware of the importance of antecedent variables or underlying factors in and/or affecting a client’s life circumstances and world view;
- b. understanding the importance of social and cultural influences and context of a client’s life and the systems in which the client exists;
- c. multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally;
- d. attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities designed to foster students’ understanding of self and social and/or culturally diverse clients;
- e. counselors’ roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, and other culturally supported behaviors that promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body;
- f. counselors’ roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression, exclusion, and discrimination.

Course Learning Objectives: Through intellectual dialogue and critical evaluation of course materials and other sources of information, at the course conclusion, each participant should:

1. Understand the core concerns and important theoretical perspectives in social psychology;
2. Understand and be able to apply the critical thinking perspective to the evaluation of social psychological concepts and theory;
3. Understand the concepts of socialization and related components and issues;
4. Understand the concepts of social perception, impression formation, and attribution;
5. Understand the concepts of attitude, including development, maintenance, and change.
6. Comprehend symbolic communication and language from a counselor’s perspective;
7. Understand the concepts of social influence and persuasion and implications for counselors;
8. Understand the concepts of self-presentation and impression management;
9. Comprehend the concepts of helping and altruism, aggression, and interpersonal attraction;
10. Comprehend the concepts of group cohesion and conformity, group structure and interaction, group performance, and intergroup conflict;
11. Understand the concept of adaptation from a social and cultural context approach;
12. Understand the concepts of social structure and personality and implications for the client’s social development;

13. Comprehend the concepts of deviant behavior and prejudice, especially relating to social and cultural context;

14. Understand the neural mechanisms that promote social thought and behaviors, such as attitudes, stereotyping, conformity, and cross-cultural factors.

Course Requirements and Evaluations (Grading):

1. PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE:

A high premium is placed by the instructor on class participation. Ideal class participation, that which earns the highest number of participation points, will exemplify the following:

- Integrating class readings into participation: Often cites from readings; uses readings to support points; often articulates fit of readings with the topic at hand and,
- Interaction in classroom discussions: Always a willing participant; responds frequently to questions; routinely volunteers point of view, and,
- Interaction in classroom learning activities: Always a willing participant; acts appropriately during all role plays, etc.; responds frequently to questions; routinely volunteers point of view.

There is no way a student can “makeup” missing a class. If you need to miss a class, notify the instructor as soon as possible. If you miss one class, your grade will drop one grade level (Example, A to A-). Missing more than one class is not acceptable. You will need to drop or retake the course with approval from the instructor and the Graduate Office.

Participation/attendance is worth 15 points.

2. REFELCTION DISCUSSION: Students will provide a 1 page response to a minimum of 2 of their peers' reflections on Blackboard. A minimum of 1 scholarly article is required for each response.
3. ORAL PRESENTATION: Students will provide an oral presentation over chapter(s) of the text, which will be chosen the first night of class. Class presentations should last 45 minutes and include at least 3 peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles. Presentations should not solely be a summary of the text. Rather, they are to involve critical thinking of the material and adding a knowledge base for other students. The presentation is worth 30 points.
4. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: Each week students will submit a 2-3 page reflection paper describing what they learned from the assigned reading and an application of the material to the counseling profession. Reflection papers will be discussed in class. They are due by 6 pm the day of class the chapters will be discussed. Reflections are worth 20 points.
5. PAPER: A 15-page paper on your topic of choice will be submitted Week 9. Your topic must be approved by the instructor. This paper is to be written in accordance with APA style guidelines. Use the Quick Guide to APA posted on Blackboard. The paper is worth 35 points.

Grading Scale:

100-97=A+	83-80=B-
96-94=A	79-77=C+
93-90=A-	76-74=C
89-87=B+	73-70=C-
86-84=B	60-67=D

Possible Points:

Personal Reflections	20 points
Oral Presentation	30 points
Attendance/Participation	20 points
Paper	35 points
Quizzes	20 points

Total Possible Points 125

Academic Integrity Policy: The Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and written materials will represent your own work. The use of other's ideas and words shall be properly cited. Please ask if you are unsure as to how or what a proper citation of a source is.

ASSIGNED READINGS:

Week 1 Syllabus review

Read chapters 1 & 2: Background

Week 2 Read chapters 3 & 4: Social Cognition; Social Psychology of Emotion

Week 3 Read chapters 5, 6, & 7: The Self; Attitude Structure; Attitude Change

Week 4 Read chapters 8, 9, & 10: Prosocial Behavior; Aggression; Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination

Week 5 Read chapters 11, 12, & 13: Social Influence; Attraction and Rejection; Intimate Relationships

Week 6 Read chapters 14 & 15: Group Processes; Intergroup Relations

Week 7 Read chapters 16 & 17: Social Neuroscience; Evolutionary Social Psychology

Week 8 Read chapters 18 & 19: Cultural Psychology; Health Psychology

Week 9 Read chapters 20 & 21: Judgment and Decision Making; Personality. PAPERS DUE!!!