MCMASTER UNIVERSITY
Honours Social Psychology

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 4B03

Winter 2020

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey Denis
Office: KTH 624
Office Hours: Friday 2:30 – 3:30 or by appointment

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Class Day and Time: Friday 11:30 – 2:20
Class Location: ABB B118

Course website: http://avenue.mcmaster.ca

SPECIAL TOPICS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY:
From Social Media and Mass Media to Toxic Masculinity, Racism, Reconciliation, and Terrorism

Recent social, political, economic, environmental, and technological changes have impacted individual and group identities, life-chances, and interaction patterns. Yet, much also remains the same. Fundamental questions about human nature, the relationship between individuals and societies, and the policies, practices and modes of social organization that can maximize human freedom, social justice, and well-being are as pressing as ever. This course will explore how social psychology can illuminate a variety of contemporary social issues. Specifically, we will examine social psychological theories and research on how social media are reshaping identities and interactions, the influence of advertising on self-concepts and body images, changing gender roles and norms, mass shootings and violence against women, racism and antiracism, colonialism and trauma, public apologies and reconciliation, and terrorism and responses to terrorism. By engaging with these topics, students will gain a deeper appreciation of the utility and limits of social psychological perspectives for understanding our dynamic world.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you will:

• Expand your familiarity with a range of social psychological perspectives, including symbolic interactionist, dramaturgical, social structuralist, social cognitive, cross-cultural, and critical (Marxist, feminist, antiracist) theories

• Know how these perspectives have been applied to a variety of contemporary social issues and be able to evaluate their strengths and limitations

• Deepen your understanding of social psychological theories and research on a selected topic by conducting a comprehensive literature review

• Enhance your critical thinking, writing, and research skills through the literature review and tests
• Enhance your oral communication skills by presenting your draft paper and by discussing and debating theories and research in class

**Required Readings**

**There is no textbook for this course. Articles and book chapters will be posted on Avenue and/or may be found through the McMaster Library System (http://library.mcmaster.ca/). See details below.**

**Evaluation**

1. Two Take-Home Tests (20% each)

There will be two take-home tests, due on **February 14 and March 27**, respectively. The tests will consist of short-answer / short-essay questions about the assigned readings and class discussions.

2. Literature Review (35%)

Your main assignment will be to write a 10-page literature review on a contemporary social issue of interest to you. (You are not restricted to the topics discussed in class, but please check with me if you wish to do something else). You will be expected to summarize and evaluate existing research on your topic, with an emphasis on the social psychological theories that have been developed or applied to help explain it or on what social psychological perspectives would add to the discussion. Ultimately, you should identify an unanswered social psychological research question concerning your topic and briefly describe how you would design a study to answer it. You may write the paper alone or in pairs. The paper will be due on **April 10**.

*Note: Literature Review is equivalent to a final exam for purposes of McMaster’s Late Withdrawal Policy.*

3. Presentation (10%)

In the last two weeks of class, each student (or pair of students) will present a draft of their final paper (literature review). You will be expected to give a brief overview of your topic, outline the social psychological theories that have been applied to it, the main findings of research to date, and what you think is missing from the discussion / what social psychological research remains to be done.

4. Attendance and Participation (15%)

The quality of this course depends, in part, on your participation. As such, you will receive credit for excellent attendance, thoughtful questions, and insightful comments that demonstrate engagement with and understanding of course material.

**Warning**

**Some of the topics we will discuss in this course (e.g., sexual violence, racism, terrorism) may be upsetting. Social psychologists often study social problems to try to understand and help alleviate them. If at any time you feel distressed or uncomfortable with the subject matter, please feel free to speak with me, a friend or family member, or the Student Wellness Centre.**
PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING POINTS CAREFULLY:

Assignments, Exams, and Late Policies

All assignments and tests must be completed in order to pass the course.

Please submit your assignments and take-home tests via the course website on the day they are due.

Faxed assignments will not be accepted.

Please do not bring assignments to the main Sociology office. The Sociology staff do not date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers. Assignments will be returned to you in class or via e-mail or Avenue to Learn.

Your assignments should be typed in 12-point font and double-spaced.

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work” (http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=2208#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work). Please note that these regulations have changed as of Fall 2015.

The McMaster Student Absence Form is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note that this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, exceed 1 request per term, or miss academic work worth 25% or more of your final grade, you MUST visit the Associate Dean of Social Sciences. You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

Unless I receive this form or notification from the Associate Dean, there will be a **5% per day deduction for all late assignments.**

If you have any questions about the MSAF, please contact your Associate Dean’s office.

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the **RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences** about how to request accommodation.
Review of Grades

All assignments and tests will be graded carefully. On occasion, students may disagree with the mark they receive. If this occurs, I would be happy to review the mark, provided the request is serious and the following procedure is followed.

Write a one-page statement describing in detail why you think a marking error was made. The statement should be submitted, along with the marked assignment or test, to me during my office hours. You may submit the request for a re-mark no sooner than one week and no later than one month after the assignment or test was returned. I will review your mark and get back to you with written feedback.

*Please note that when a mark is reviewed, the new mark may be lower than the original.*

Additional Information

Your final mark will be converted to a letter grade according to the scale used by the Registrar and available in the Undergraduate Calendar.

If you would like to explore strategies for successful learning, please consult the Student Success Centre, which provides useful services and information about time management, note-taking, keeping up with readings, and taking tests, among other skills: [http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students.html](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students.html)

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (e.g., class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, balloting, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY**

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

McMaster University is an institution that takes academic integrity seriously and believes that any form of academic dishonesty is destructive to the values of the University. Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity
TOPIC AND READING SCHEDULE

The following schedule is meant to provide a sense of order and direction. We may modify it slightly as we move through the material. Announcements about any such changes will be made in class.

Week #1: January 10  INTRODUCTION: A BRIEF REFRESHER ON SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES


House: “The Three Faces of Social Psychology”

Week #2: January 17  SOCIAL MEDIA, THE SELF, AND INTERACTION

Required Readings:  Kuznekoff: “Comparing Impression Management Strategies across Social Media Platforms”

Rui & Stefanone: “That Tagging Was Annoying: An Extension of Expectancy Violation Theory to Impression Management on Social Network Sites”

Tobin et al: “Threats to Belonging on Facebook”

Recommended:  Hogan: “The Presentation of Self in the Age of Social Media; Chambers: Social Media and Personal Relationships”

Week #3: January 24  MASS MEDIA, ADVERTISING, AND THE (RACIALIZED AND GENDERED) SELF

Required Readings:  Herman & Chomsky: Manufacturing Consent (read first 9 pages of Introduction to 2002 edition)


Baumann & Ho: “Cultural Schemas for Racial Identity in Canadian Television Advertising”

In-class film:  Killing Us Softly 4

Week #4: January 31  GENDER ROLES AND GENDER INEQUALITY

Required Readings:  Hochschild: Chapter 4 in The Second Shift

Riina & Feinberg: “Involvement in Childrearing and Mothers’ and Fathers’ Adjustment”

**Recommended:**
Doucet: “Gender Equality and Gender Differences”; Milkie et al: “Gendered Division of Childrearing”; Stastna: “Canada's working moms still earning less, doing more than dads”

**Week #5: February 7**
MASS SHOOTINGS, MASCULINITY, AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Required Readings:**
Bridges & Tober: “Mass Shootings in the US are on the Rise. What Makes So Many American Men Dangerous?”
Raskoff: “Thinking Sociologically About Mass Shootings”
Metz & MacLeish: “Mental Illness, Mass Shootings, and the Politics of Firearms”
Gartner & Dawson: “Woman Killing in Ontario”
*Finding Dawn* (watch before class)

**In-class film:**
Katz: “Violence against women – it’s a men’s issue”

**Week #6: February 14**
TAKE-HOME TEST #1 DUE

RACISM, COLONIALISM, AND WHITENESS

**Required Readings:**
Quillian: “New Approaches to Understanding Racial Prejudice and Discrimination”
Denis: “Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context: Laissez-Faire Racism in Indigenous-Settler Relations”
McIntosh: “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
DuBois: “How Does it Feel to be a Problem?”

**Recommended:**

----------------------- February 21 – MID-TERM RECESS – NO CLASS -----------------------

**Week #7: February 28**
RACIAL PROFILING, POLICE SHOOTINGS, AND ANTI-RACISM
**Required Readings:** Cole: “The Skin I’m In”

OHRC: Executive Summary of *Interim Report on Racial Profiling of Black Persons by the Toronto Police Service*

Correll et al: “The Police Officer’s Dilemma”

Fleming, Lamont, & Welburn: “African Americans Respond to Stigmatization”

**Recommended:** Harris: “The Next Civil Rights Movement?”; OIPRD: *Broken Trust: Indigenous People and the Thunder Bay Police Service*

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**Week #8: March 6**

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA, AND INDIGENOUS RESILIENCE

**Required Readings:** Bombay et al: “The Intergenerational Effects of Indian Residential Schools: The Concept of Historical Trauma”

Chandler & Lalonde: “Cultural Continuity as a Hedge against Suicide in Canada’s First Nations”

**In-class film:** *Muffins for Granny*

**Recommended:** TRC: *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*

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**Week #9: March 13**

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF APOLOGY, RECOGNITION, AND INDIGENOUS RESURGENCE

Government of Canada: “Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools”

Denis: “Bridging Understandings: Anishinaabe and Settler Perspectives on the Residential School Apology”


**Recommended:** Corntassel & Holder: “Who’s Sorry Now?”; Regan: *Unsettling the Settler Within*

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**Week #10: March 20**

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF TERRORISM

**Required Readings:** Lemieux: “Social Psychological Approaches to Understanding and Preventing Terrorism”

Moghaddam: “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration”
CBC Radio: “Former Quebec Neo-Nazi Speaks Out”

Simi et al: “Addicted to Hate: Identity Residual among Former White Supremacists”

*Recommended:* Brym and Araj: “Suicide Bombing as Strategy and Interaction”; Silver et al: “Psychological Responses to September 11”

Week #11: March 27

**TAKE-HOME TEST #2 DUE**

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Week #12: April 3

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

* NOTE: FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON FRIDAY, APRIL 10. *

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**REFERENCES**

*Required*


Finding Dawn. 2006. Film directed by Christine Welsh. National Film Board. [https://www.nfb.ca/film/finding_dawn]


**Recommended**


Silver, Roxane Cohen, E. Alison Holman, Daniel N. McIntosh, Michael Poulin, and Virginia Gil-Rivas.
