



Course Title: Social Psychology in a Global Context

Instructor: Dr. Deborah Hill

Course Description:

The world in the 21st century is an increasingly smaller place, where social psychology is a global phenomenon by necessity. Communication between people and the societies they belong to is increasingly virtual and instantaneous. Boundaries between nations and continents have become increasingly permeable. This course will familiarize students with concepts in social psychology in the context of the 21st century global community, focusing in particular on the way in which different societies around the world manage international concerns and issues.

This dynamic course will investigate how people think, feel and behave in the presence of others, both within small groups (family, local community) and large ones (nations and continents). In addition to exploring theoretical aspects of social psychology, students will take an active role in applying learned theories to their study abroad experience by means of a social psychology journal, with the purpose of collecting observations of people and groups in London, England, and by means of exploring human behaviour interactively, via the World Wide Web.

The range of topics to be covered is wide and varied but will include an exploration of diversity, conformity, power, leadership and influence, prejudice and discrimination, multi-culturalism vs. cultural imperialism, sexism and racism, many aspects of interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup behavior, language and communication and psycho-social trends. In order to study psycho-social behavior in an international context, one shared human issue (e.g. climate change) will be used as a means of better understanding human similarities and differences around the world.

This course can be taken by those with a general interest in people and human behavior or by those who are majoring in psychology or sociology.

Course Objectives:

- a) To provide students from all majors with an introduction to social psychology with an emphasis on its practical relevance in today's world.
- b) To provide Sociology and Psychology majors with additional grounding in their discipline, which also integrates well with other sociology and psychology courses.
- c) To familiarize students with key issues in social groups around the world at a good academic level.
- d) To encourage self-and-other reflexion around important, world-wide concerns.
- e) To promote personal and multicultural insights as part of the necessary skills of psychological training in the social sciences.

Course Learning Outcomes:

- a) **APPROACHES:** Students will be able to compare and contrast various approaches to worldwide issues in topical reading materials, class debates and discussions and in their active observations.
- b) **APPLICATIONS:** Students will be able to develop an in-depth appreciation of global issues and how social groups think, feel and behave in similar and different ways. Readings, multi-media materials and presentations will establish a more detailed knowledge base.
- c) **OBSERVATION JOURNAL:** Students will keep a weekly journal in which they observe psycho-social phenomenon around the various topics covered by this course.
- d) **ACTIVITIES:** In addition to lectures, students will break into dyads or triads in order to debate relevant international topics. Experiential exercises will also be used to illustrate some group dynamics.
- e) **SELF-AND-OTHER AWARENESS:** In addition to encouraging students to be self-reflexive, this course will actively promote 'other-awareness' in lecture materials, outside readings, class exercises and small and large group class discussions.

Course Requirements:

- **Group Project:** Students will be divided into groups that will make a presentation on the social psychology of a designated continent, focusing on how cultural psychology influences their approach to the issue of climate change within the global community.

- **Website Report:** Each student will choose two international websites and report on psycho-social aspects of these websites' international approach to global challenges and concerns.

Required Text:

Hogg, Michael A. And Graham M. Vaughan. *Social Psychology*, 5th ed. London: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2008.

Zeldin, Theodore. *An Intimate History of Humanity*. London: Vintage, 1998.

Von Ruhland, Catherine. *Living with the Planet. Making a Difference in a Time of Climate Change*. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008.

Harrow, Lisa. *What Can I do? The A-Z Guide to Eco-Friendly Internet Sites, Ideas and Information in the UK*. London: Random House, 2007.

Further Readings Will Include:

The Science of Human Behaviour.

Weekly current event readings or TV/DVD viewings, to be assigned as relevant.

Topics Covered Will Include:

Introduction to International Social Psychology + An Introduction to the Demographics of the Earth and the Global Community that Inhabits It

An introduction to social psychology and its relationship to the global community. The demographics of the world's human population will be viewed within the context of planet earth as humankind's shared habitat.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 1 – Introducing Social Psychology
- Von Ruhland, Chapter 2 – The Earth
- Zeldin, Chapter 17 – How travellers are becoming the largest nation in the world, and how they have learned not to see only what they are looking for

The Psychology of Global Citizenship and International Identity

An exploration of social identity theory as a means by which social psychologists explain social categories. Concepts such as belonging (not belonging), solitude, alienation, independence/dependence will also be discussed.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 4 – Self and Identity
- Zeldin, Chapter 3 – How people searching for their roots are only beginning to look far and deep enough

International Group Psychology, Part 1

An overview of the nature of group structure and dynamics. A look at generally accepted categories of groups. And, an introduction to the psycho-social world of North America.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 8 – People in groups
- Von Ruhland, Chapter 6 – North America (Group project)
- Zeldin, Chapter 16 – Why even the privileged are often somewhat gloomy about life, even when they can have anything the consumer society offers, and even after sexual liberation

International Group Psychology, Part 2

An overview of inter-group structure and behaviour (e.g. nations, political parties, corporate cultures, competitive sports teams). Introduction to the psycho-social world of South America.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 11 – Intergroup Behaviour
- Von Ruhland, Chapter 7 – South America (Group project)

The Psychology of International Influence, Part 1

An overview of the power of influence including types of social influence, conformity and rebellion. An introduction to the psycho-social world of Europe and the UK.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 7 – Social Influence
- Von Ruhland, Chapter 9 – UK & Europe (Group project)

The Psychology of International Influence, Part 2

An introduction to the psychology of persuasion. Advertising techniques, propaganda, and the use of language. Introduction to the psycho-social world of Asia.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 6 – Persuasion and Attitude Change
- Von Ruhland, Chapter 4 – Asia (Group project)

The Psychology of International Relationships

An exploration of prejudice and discrimination. Themes include racism, sexism, ageism, stereotyping and collective belief systems. Introduction to the psycho-social world of Africa.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 10 – Prejudice and Discrimination
- Von Ruhland, Chapter 5 – Africa (Group project)
- Zeldin, Chapter 24 – How humans become hospitable to each other

The Psychology of International Attraction and Disgust

Overview of human psychology of relationships including love and hate, friendship and enmity, attraction and repulsion. Introduction to the psycho-social world of Oceania/Australasia.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 13 – Attraction and Close Relationships
 - History of Beauty
- Zeldin, Chapter 5 – How New Forms of Love Have Been Invented
- Von Ruhland, Chapter 10 – Oceania/Australasia (Group project)

The Future: Sharing Concerns in the International Community; The Psychology of International Altruism

Course overview including prosocial behaviours such as altruism. A look at vicarious living and re-traumatization as well as the influential role of the media. Comparison of the various psycho-social groups previously explored, including the important role Antarctica plays in international social psychology.

Weekly Readings

- Hogg and Vaughan, Chapter 14 – Prosocial Behaviour
- Von Ruhland, Chapter 8 – Antarctica
- Zeldin, Chapter 1 – How humans have repeatedly lost hope, and how new encounters, and a new pair of spectacles, revive them

Co-Curricular Activities May Include:

Relevant guest speakers, or site visits, will be announced as available or relevant.

Instructional Methods:

Lectures and activities are structured to encourage students to reflect on readings and develop skills of critical analysis and self-and-other reflection. To this end, classes are structured through lectures, (small and large) group discussions and experiential exercises. Students are required to prepare for class and to play an active role by raising questions, challenging ideas and by engaging in group exercises and activities. The observation journal is meant to encourage students to self-and-other reflect in an active way in order to take advantage of their international experience as part of the course's learning experience.

Each week, the academic component will include a lecture, enhanced by supportive materials (e.g. multi-media presentations) as well as class discussions around relevant international issues and current events. The final two thirds of the course will include student presentations which are meant to be dynamic, encouraging debate around the issues.

Presentation: (15%)

Students will be given a choice of presentation topics as described in the syllabus. Presentation of this material will allow students to share their learning with classmates. In addition, fellow classmates will be able to learn about different perspectives on similar issues. Presentations should last 20 minutes and must include a handout that reviews the material. A 10 minute class discussion should follow. NB: 10% of the presentation grade will assess the student's ability to engage other students in a discussion of the topic.

Observation Journal: (10%)

Students are asked to keep a journal in which they make on-going observations (from the perspective of an international social psychologist), observing how people think,

feel and behave in relation to other people in London, England, or in other places where the student may travel. Interpretations of what is observed in the social environment is likely to be subjective, but should nevertheless demonstrate considered thought, self-and-other reflection, and be related to psycho-social issues and themes raised throughout the course. (Approx. 1500 words)

Interactive Project: Website Report (15%)

Students will select two active, dynamic globally-focused websites from Lisa Harrow's book, *What Can I Do? The A-Z Guide to Eco-Friendly Internet Sites*. Students should follow the websites' activities over the course of the term in order to report their observations about global websites in relation to psycho-social issues raised in class readings and discussions. (Approx. 2000 words)

Example: www.fairtrade.org.uk

Or www.beyondgreen.co.uk (on sustainable living)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Full attendance is required. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class session.

Assessment Plan:

There will be six points of assessment, each carrying a percentage of the overall grade for the course. All assignments must be completed in order to receive a pass grade.

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| 1. Class participation | 10% |
| a. Students will be given an opportunity to participate in individual and group discussions on a weekly basis. This assessment is also based on observation, and will be linked to attendance (see above). | |
| 2. Presentation | 15% |
| 3. Observation Journal | 10% |
| 4. Mid-term Exam | 20% |
| 5. Interactive Project: Website Report | 15% |

6. Final Exam

30%

As a guide, the following general criteria apply to all work.

Grade A applies only to the exceptional work which has continued beyond the B grade band to develop a more advanced analytical and integrative command of the material and issues. It is awarded for work which is superior (A-) or outstanding (A), in recognition of the substantial work and thought which will inevitably have been involved. Work at this level gives evidence of very wide reading and extensive knowledge of relevant theory and recent research, going well over and above course requirements. In written work as well as presentations A work is well structured, putting forward cogent arguments that are well supported by carefully evaluated evidence.

Grade B applies to work, which, although not exceptional, does go beyond the foundation level to develop a more questioning and analytical approach. It is awarded to work, which is of good quality (B-), very good (B), or excellent (B+). This grade band is achieved by students who go beyond the basic required reading to study and discuss recommended texts and articles. It indicates an increasing ability to appreciate an extensive body of knowledge and to conceptualize the key theories, issues, debates and criticisms, along with the skills to present a balanced and comprehensive discussion. Work in the B range has been completed with a degree of energy and thoroughness which has evidently aimed to get an above-average amount out of the coursework.

Grade C is the passing grade band which applies to work which is basically competent, although undeveloped. This may be as a result of lack of time given to the subject, lack of interest or because the relevant skills or knowledge has not been demonstrated. It is awarded to work of just below average (C-), average (C), or showing signs of reaching above average (C+). It indicates an ability to fulfill the requirements of the assignment at a foundation level, involving adequate coverage of the essential information specified.

Grade D applies to unsatisfactory work (D-), very poor work (D) and work which is weak (D+). This is the grade band which often applies to work which has been done in a hurry, or has been done without proper understanding of the requirements. Written work and presentations may be too short, or long and unedited, lack structure, rely on superficial, subjective statements, and/or use incorrect or confused information without proper use of named references and quotations.

Grade F, a fail, applies to non-submission of work, to work which is illegible and/or chaotic, and to work which may be competent, but is either irrelevant (i.e. does not address the requirements of the assignment) or which uses unattributed material (plagiarism).

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the use of thoughts, writings, ideas etc., of another person as one's own, i.e. without proper reference, and is taken extremely seriously.