Psychology of Prejudice and Stereotyping
Psych 391 S
TTh 11:15—12:30

Instructor
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Course objectives
This course is designed to familiarize you with basic psychological research on intergroup relations, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, so that you can: (1) evaluate and analyze the scientific merit of this research, and (2) apply this research to real world situations—e.g., reflect on the effect of cultural identity on achievement, performance, mental health, physical health, etc. In order to connect the psychological phenomena you will read about in the scientific literature to its real world manifestations, I’ve assigned a couple of popular non-fiction readings and in-class films to illustrate how these phenomena may actually affect people’s lives. I will assess your ability to analyze the scientific research and to apply research findings to real world situations by asking you to write two short papers and two exams discussing the material in this class. You will get feedback on both your papers as well as the opportunity to revise. I’ll require one revision of each paper, but you may revise more than once if you wish.

Course content
In this class we will use a broad definition of social/cultural groups, although particular attention will be given to social groups based on race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. The first part of this course will examine how people’s own group membership and the environment in which they live influence their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior toward others who are dissimilar versus similar. The second part of this course will identify interventions that may help alleviate inter-group prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination that arise during social interactions among people of differing cultural backgrounds. The final part of this course will focus on the different ways in which cultural stereotypes affect members of disadvantaged groups (e.g., in terms of their mental health, physical health, performance, achievement, self-esteem etc.). In this section of the course, we will also pay attention to the different ways in which individuals from various disadvantaged groups protect themselves and show psychological resilience.

Readings
Two books and a reading packet
• The reading packet is available at Copy Cat Print Shop, 37 E. Pleasant Street, Amherst (549-2854).

**Requirements**

1. **Discussion questions and class participation:** In order for all of us to get the most out of each class meeting, it is important that we all do the reading ahead of time, and spend some time thinking critically about the issues raised in the readings. In order to facilitate critical thinking and discussion, I would like each of you to write discussion questions for class. The class will be divided into two groups based on where students’ names fall in the alphabet and only one group will be required to submit questions on a given day. Students with last names starting with A-L are in GROUP 1 and students whose last names start with M to Z are in GROUP 2. Be sure to look at the course schedule for the specific class meetings for which Group 1 or Group 2 must submit discussion questions. You must submit one discussion question by 6 PM the night before the class meets. We will use the questions you have raised for class discussion the next day. The questions should be thought-provoking and designed to generate discussion. The best types of questions are those that (a) integrate the class readings, (b) go beyond the readings to question its implications, applications, etc. The quality of your questions, your class attendance, and class participation will be worth 10% of your final grade.

2. **Quizzes.** Four quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Your highest three quiz grades will count toward your final grade. The quizzes will cover all material discussed in class (including all assigned readings, lectures, discussions, videos, etc.). The quizzes will be noncumulative. Makeup quizzes will not be given. Missed quizzes will be entered as a zero. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped when determining your final grade. 20% per quiz; 60% of your final grade.

3. **Thought papers.** Throughout the semester, you will be required to write two thought papers about topics related to prejudice and stereotyping that we are currently studying. Each paper should be 4-5 pages (typed, double-spaced in a font no greater than 12-point and margins no greater than one inch). The details for each paper assignment and the due dates are provided at the end of this syllabus. I will grade these papers based on your ability to critique and integrate psychological research, the depth and clarity of your analysis, and the clarity of your writing. If you want to improve the grade you received on your paper, you may revise and resubmit each paper once. All revisions must be handed in to me within one week after you get feedback from me. Late revisions will not be accepted. If you choose to revise, only the grade on the revised paper will be used to calculate your final grade. 15% per paper for a total of 30% of your final grade.

**A summary of deadlines**

Tue Feb 22: Quiz #1
Tue Mar 3: Thought Paper #1 due
Thu Mar 24: Quiz #2
Tue Apr 19: Quiz #3
Tue May 3: Thought Paper #2 due
Thu May 12: Quiz #4
Readings

Thurs Jan 27: Introductions and logistics

Motivations that lead to stereotyping and prejudice

Tues Feb 1: Frustration, projection, and the prejudiced personality

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 1/31 BY 6 PM

Ch. 1 (“What is the problem?”), Chapter 21 (“Frustration”), Ch. 24 (“Projection”),
Ch. 25 (“The prejudiced personality”)


Thurs Feb 3: Feeling threatened and protecting one’s ego

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 2/2 BY 6 PM

prejudice. In S. Oskamp (Ed.), *Reducing prejudice and discrimination*. Mahwah,


Tues Feb 8: Feeling threatened and ego protection (cont’d)

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 2/7 BY 6 PM

the self through derogating others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*,
73, 31-44.


Thurs Feb 10: Values, ambivalence, and prejudice

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 2/9 BY 6 PM

Gaertner & J. F. Dovidio (Eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism*. San

Tues Feb 15: Justifying the existence of stereotypes

Film in class: Killing us softly 3

Thurs Feb 17: Justifying the existence of stereotypes (cont’d)

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 2/16 BY 6 PM


Tues Feb 22: QUIZ # 1

Cognitive approaches to stereotyping and prejudice

Thurs Feb 24: The role of social categorization in the development of stereotypes

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 2/23 BY 6 PM


Tues Mar 1: Unconscious prejudice and stereotyping

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 2/28 BY 6 PM


Thurs Mar 3: Unconscious prejudice and stereotyping (cont’d)

Film in class: Hidden bias

THOUGHT PAPER #1 DUE
Reducing stereotypes and prejudice

Tues Mar 8: Ways to reduce prejudice and stereotypes

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 3/7 BY 6 PM


Thurs Mar 10: Ways to reduce prejudice and stereotypes (cont’d)

Film in class: *A class divided*

Tues March 15 and Thurs March 17 (no classes—Spring Break)

Tues Mar 22: Ways to reduce prejudice and stereotypes (cont’d)

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 3/21 BY 6 PM


Thurs Mar 24: QUIZ #2

The effect of prejudice and stereotypes on members of disadvantaged groups

Tues Mar 29: Theories of social identity

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 3/28 BY 6 PM


Thurs Mar 31: Protecting the self from the effect of stereotypes
GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 3/30 BY 6 PM


**Tues Apr 5: Protecting the self from the effect of stereotypes (cont’d)**

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 4/4 BY 6 PM


**Thurs Apr 7: Protecting the self from the effect of stereotypes (cont’d)**

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 4/6 BY 6 PM


**Tues Apr 12: Protecting the self from the effect of stereotypes (cont’d)**

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 4/11 BY 6 PM


**Thurs Apr 14: The effect of stereotypes on the self – academic performance**


Film in class: *Stand up and deliver*

**Tues Apr 19: QUIZ #3**

**Thurs Apr 21 (no class—Monday’s schedule)**
Tues Apr 26: The effect of stereotypes on the self – intellectual performance as an example

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 4/25 BY 6 PM


Thurs Apr 28: The effect of stereotypes on the self – body image and self image as an example

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 4/27 BY 6 PM


Tues May 3: The effect of stereotypes on the self – body image and self image (cont’d)

Film in class: *Dreamworlds 2*

THOUGHT PAPER #2 DUE

Thurs May 5: The effect of stereotypes on the self – physical health

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 5/4 BY 6 PM


**Tues May 10: The effect of stereotypes on the self – mental health**

**GROUP 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE ON 5/9 BY 6 PM**


**Thurs May 12: QUIZ #4**

**Paper 1**

Due date: Tuesday, March 3, 2005
The psychological readings your syllabus (the section entitled “Motivational approaches to stereotyping and prejudice”) offer various theories explaining how and why prejudice and stereotypes develop in people’s mind and how they manifest in people’s everyday behavior. By comparison, John Griffin’s book *Black like me* introduces you to several characters who display strong prejudicial attitudes and behavior. In this paper, I would like you to use some of the scientific theories of prejudice you have read about in order to explain the attitudes and actions of a few characters in Griffin’s book. Choose the characters you find most interesting and explain how their thoughts and actions may be understood through the application of social psychological theories. I recommend that you choose only a few characters (no more than 4) and try to analyze each person’s behavior using as many theories as you can.

**Writing guidelines**
1. In the introduction of your paper (first paragraph or two), introduce the characters you will be discussing and why you find them interesting; i.e., why have chosen to analyze their behavior. Provide a “road map” describing how you intend to organize your analysis of these characters’ thoughts and actions.

2. Organize the body of your paper into paragraphs based on the characters you will be discussing. In the body, describe specific stereotypes and prejudices involved in each character’s thoughts and actions. If you give examples of incidents from the book, be sure to cite the relevant page numbers—e.g., (Griffin, 1960, pp. 7-13). Then, using specific psychological theories, explain where you think the character’s prejudice/stereotype or discriminatory behavior comes from. For example, what is the motivation that made the
character behave in the way s/he did? Was it the result of prejudiced feelings (fear, anxiety, disgust), ego threat, a prejudiced personality, something else? Be sure to provide enough details/explanations about the theories you’re using to explain the character’s behavior; cite the relevant articles and chapters—e.g., (Allport, 1954, Chapter 2).

3. In the conclusion of your paper, summarize your arguments, and describe the benefit of applying psychological theories to understand these characters’ actions.

4. Your paper should be typed and no more than 5 pages long. Check your spelling and grammar. Make your arguments clear and concise. Pay attention to the logic and flow of your arguments. If other instructors in the past have expressed concern about the clarity of your writing, there’s a good chance I will too. To avoid this, take your paper to a writing counselor before you hand it to me.

5. Please be careful to avoid plagiarism. This is a very serious offense. If a student cheats or plagiarizes, s/he will fail the class. With regard to plagiarism, here are the issues you need to pay attention to:
   • DO NOT COPY from any other student’s paper.
   • When you use psychological research from the readings, BE SURE TO CITE the researchers by putting their last name(s) and year of publication in parentheses after you summarize their work (e.g., Sherif, 1955, p. 34). This makes it clear to the person reading your paper, that you’re acknowledging the use of another person’s work/ideas to support your argument.
   • DO NOT QUOTE too many sentences or paragraphs from any of your readings. Instead, always try to summarize the idea in YOUR OWN WORDS and cite the source after your summary.

**Paper 2**

Due date: Tuesday, May 3, 2005

In the section on “The effect of prejudice and stereotypes on members of disadvantaged groups” you have read about the different ways in which cultural stereotypes affect how members of stigmatized groups perceive themselves. Pick two social groups that are stereotyped or stigmatized by the mainstream American culture—one group should be “visible” in the sense that individuals who belong to that group should be easily identifiable by their outward appearance; the other group should be “invisible” in the sense that individuals who belong to that group should be typically unidentifiable by their outward appearance unless they choose to make their identity known. For the two groups you’ve selected, describe their similarities and differences in terms of how members of these groups respond to stereotypes and prejudice about their group circulating in
the larger culture. Specifically:
(a) Can individuals who belong to these disadvantaged groups protect themselves from the effect of negative stereotypes? If so, what strategies do they use? What are the benefits and drawbacks of those strategies?
(b) Are individuals likely to have different strategies to deal with the effect of negative stereotypes on their self-conceptions depending on how strongly or weakly they identify with their group?
(c) What impact (if any) might negative stereotypes have on individuals’ level of identification with their group? In answering these questions, support your arguments with social psychological theory and data wherever you can. Also, illustrate your arguments using examples from any of the books or films in your syllabus.

Writing guidelines
1. In the introduction of your paper (first paragraph or two), introduce the two groups you will be discussing and why you find them interesting; i.e., why have chosen to analyze their responses to stigma? Provide a “road map” describing how you intend to organize your analysis of how members of these two groups respond to negative stereotypes.

   • In these three sections, compare and contrast how the “visible” and “invisible” groups respond to stereotypes about their respective groups in terms of self-protection strategies they use, how their level of identification may affect those strategies, and in turn, what impact stereotypes may have on their level of group identity.

2. Organize the body of your paper into separate sections based on the three sets of questions I’ve posed (“a”, “b”, and “c” above).

   • Support your arguments using specific psychological theories (provide citations whenever you refer to psychological evidence). Be sure to provide enough details/explanations about the theories you’re using and how they apply to the argument you’re making.
   • Wherever relevant, give examples from the books you’ve read for class or films you’ve watched in class (be sure to cite the book or film).

3. In the conclusion of your paper, summarize your arguments, and describe the benefit of applying psychological theories to understand how people respond to being the target of stereotypes and prejudice.

4. Your paper should be typed and no more than 5 pages long. Check your spelling and grammar. Make your arguments clear and concise. Pay attention to the logic and flow of your arguments. If other instructors in the past have expressed concern about the clarity of your writing, there’s a good chance I will too. To avoid this, take your paper to a writing counselor before you hand it to me.
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