

## Applied Social Psychology PSYC 415

(2007-2008, Terms 1 and 2)

**When: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00 – 3:20 pm**  
**Where: Angus 223**

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### Required Readings:

There is no textbook to buy. Instead, I want you to read dozens of published articles. All articles are identified on the Reading List that appears on the course website. Most of these articles will be available electronically via the course website. For those few papers that aren't available electronically, I'll find another means of making sure you have access to them (and I'll tell you about it in class).

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### Course Objectives and Overview:

PSYC 415 is designed to reveal how basic scientific research in social psychology yields novel insights that can be applied to address common problems that affect people in real life. Ideally, by the end of the course, you will have gained a better appreciation for the many ways in which social psychological research can be applied to help solve social problems and global issues, and you will have developed your own ability to apply research findings to the real world in thoughtful, creative, and beneficial ways.

Because PSYC 415 is an advanced course, I assume that students already have some solid introductory background in social psychology, and in psychological research methods. Prerequisites include PSYC 308 (Social Psychology), as well as courses on research methods and statistics (either PSYC 217 / PSYC 218, or PSYC 366, or the equivalent).

And because it is a 4th-year course, a high level of motivation and participation will be expected of students. A considerable amount of class time will be devoted to critical appraisal and discussion of course material.

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### Participation in Class:

The success of this course depends on your thoughtful preparation for and participation in class. It is essential that you read the assigned readings *prior* to the classes for which they are assigned. It is also essential that you actually come to class so that you can participate in discussions about topics covered in these readings.

I want your eventual final course grade to reflect the extent to which, over the course of the term, you regularly came to class prepared. Therefore, I'm going to do this: On approximately ten different occasions, I will give you some quick little unannounced quiz. These quizzes will be very brief (e.g., 2 questions). If you've attentively read the assigned readings and have come to class, you should have no troubling answering the quiz questions; but if you haven't, then the questions will be very difficult. (I'm using these quizzes also as a rough indication of attendance and so, of course, there will be no make-up quizzes.)

In addition to assessing your class preparation and attendance with these quizzes, I will also assess your class participation based on my own informal appraisal of each student's useful contributions to class discussions.

Altogether, class participation (assessed through quizzes and my individual appraisal) will comprise 20% of your final course grade.

### **Papers:**

There are five paper assignments: Three "Reaction Papers," and two "Intervention Proposals."

*Reaction Papers:* I want you to digest course material in a thoughtful, critical, and constructive way. The goal of the each Reaction Paper is to give you an opportunity to take some of your initial reactions to course material, and transform these critical thoughts into a coherent written product. (A separate handout elaborates in detail on the potential scope and scale of these Reaction Papers, and the criteria along which they will be marked.)

*Intervention Proposals:* This course is designed to get you thinking rigorously and creatively about the various ways in which basic social psychological research can be applied to the real world. Many of our readings focus on real-world interventions that are based on insights from laboratory research. The goal of each Intervention Proposal is to give you an opportunity to thoughtfully create – and describe in detail – some sort of intervention that you think might actually help solve some real-world problem or otherwise improve the lives of real people. (A separate handout elaborates in detail on the potential scope and scale of these Intervention Proposals, and the criteria along which they will be marked.)

Your three Reaction Papers will be due during Term 1 (on October 9, November 6, and November 27). Your two Intervention Proposals will be due during Term 2 (on February 12 and April 1).

Your performance on each of the three Reaction Papers will count 10% toward your final course grade. Your performance on each of the two Intervention Proposals will count 25% toward your final course grade.

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated. If you are unable to attend class on that day for any reason, then please turn the paper earlier, or make arrangements to have the paper delivered to me by the due date. You must deliver a hardcopy of your paper (do *not* email it).

If you turn in a paper late, you'd better have a very good reason for doing so. I'll expect to see some sort of credible written documentation (i.e., a note from a health professional). In the absence of such documentation, I will deduct marks for every day that the paper is late.

You should retain a copy of all of your papers, to guard against the possibility of loss. (You should also retain any marked assignments that are handed back to you, in case you later wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standings.)

**Class Presentations:**

I will be setting aside enough class time (distributed across several different class periods) for each of you to give a brief presentation to the rest of the class. Here's what I want you to do for your class presentation: Give us an overview of something that you're thinking about proposing for one of your Intervention Proposal papers, and give the rest of us a chance to give you some constructive feedback. All told your presentation should fit within a 20-minute time period: A 10-15 minute presentation by you to the rest of the class, and about 5-10 minutes for class feedback and discussion. (I'll provide more information in class elaborating on my expectations for these presentations.)

You won't be given any mark for your presentation. But you have to do it. (If you don't do it, you will receive a failing grade for the course.)

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**Exams:**

There will be no exams.

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**Computation of Final Course Grade:**

Your final course grade will be based on a weighed average of your performance as assessed by Reaction Papers (10% each), Intervention Proposals (25% each), and class participation (20%).

The purpose of course grades is not to reflect performance in any absolute sense, but rather to fairly reflect your performance *relative* to other students taking this course. Therefore, grades will be scaled in order to conform to the specific distributional norms and expectations for this particular course. I will provide more details about these grading norms and expectations in class.

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**Other Practical Matters:**

**Special accommodations:** UBC accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre (DRC). If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this class, please make sure you have contacted the DRC to arrange for accommodations. Please let me know of these accommodations as soon as possible.

**Academic dishonesty:** UBC has a very clear policy on cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty. Please make sure that you are familiar with this policy. Review the UBC Calendar "Academic regulations" for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Take a look at the Psychology Department's policy on academic misconduct. Also visit the Academic Integrity page on UBC Faculty of Arts website.

**Changes along the way:** This syllabus and the accompanying reading list comprise a roadmap for the course, but it is possible that some revisions (in scheduling, in policy, etc.) may have to be made as we work our way through the material. Any announcements made in class "count" just as much as policies outlined in this written syllabus.

**Other stuff:** Further information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates and credits can be found in the University Calendar.

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