

# PSYC 308A: Social Psychology (Fall 2020)

## Meet Your Instructors



**Dr. Mark Schaller**  
Call me: Mark or Dr. Schaller  
Email: [schaller@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:schaller@psych.ubc.ca)  
Student hours: Book a time at  
<https://calendly.com/markschaller>



**Dr. Elizabeth Dunn**  
Call me: Dr. Dunn  
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## Meet Your Teaching Assistants (TA's)



### TA to Contact

Kiarah O'Kane  
Email: [kiaokane@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:kiaokane@mail.ubc.ca)

**Other TA's:** Rachele Benjamin, Raechel Drew

**Before reading further, please read this:**

This course has both asynchronous components (e.g., pre-recorded videos) as well as a weekly synchronous component (live Zoom meetings with the instructor). The synchronous component will occur on one day per week during the scheduled class time.

**Schedule for Synchronous Sessions (Live Zoom Meetings):**

<p><b>Section 002</b> (Dunn) Thursdays 3:30 – 4:30</p>	<p><a href="#">Click Here to Join</a> Meeting ID: 618 3550 0717 Password: 636202</p>
<p><b>Section 101</b> (Schaller) Fridays 11:00 – 12:00</p>	<p><a href="#">Click Here to Join</a> Meeting ID: 695 9722 3662 Password: 214176</p>
<p><b>Section 102</b> (Schaller) Fridays 1:00 – 2:00</p>	
<p>It is important to participate in the live synchronous component for your section of the course. If you sign up for this course, we assume that you will normally be available to attend the once-a-week synchronous session. If you anticipate that this will be difficult for you, please switch into a different section or consider taking this course in a future term.</p>	

**Contacting Instructors and TA’s**

**If you have a question about course material:** We would love to talk with you if you have questions about course material). But *not* via email. Email is an ineffective way to have a real conversation. (You shouldn’t expect more than a one-sentence response to email inquiries. Nor should you expect any response on evenings or weekends.) If you do have a question about course material, please ask it during synchronous class sessions, or during student hours on Zoom. If you are unable to do so, you can use email to arrange an alternate time to talk with either your instructor or TA. (If you contact your instructor, make sure to contact the instructor of *your* section of the course! You can contact your TA regardless of the section you are in.)

**If you have an issue that is personal or specific to you:** You can use email to arrange a time to talk individually with *your section’s* instructor, or your TA.

**If you have a technical or logistical question about the course:** We hope everything goes smoothly and that you’ll have no problems accessing course materials, or submitting assignments on Canvas, etc. But, unexpected glitches might arise. Instructors and TA’s are *not* information technology experts. So if you do have a question about something technical or logistical related to the course, the best way to get help is this: Post your question on the **Course Logistics Discussion Board** so that everyone in the class can see it. You’ll get help faster (and you’ll be helping any other student who may be facing the same technical/logistical issue).

**Course Overview and Learning Objectives**

Social psychology is the subfield of psychology that investigates the many ways in which our thoughts and behaviors are influenced by the real or implied presence of others, and how this affects our interpersonal interactions. Research in social psychology covers a wide range of topics, from stereotypes and self-knowledge to love, altruism, and aggression. This course provides an overview of important theories and research findings on these and other topics.

These topics are relevant to the lives of all human beings. For this reason, one of our goals in teaching this course is to engage, and inform, your natural curiosity about people. If we are successful, by the end of this course, you will be able to draw upon many different lines of research in social psychology in order to better understand yourself, other people, and important world events (**Learning Objective 1**).

There are lots of different ways that curious people might seek to satisfy their curiosity about social psychological topics. Psychologists are scientists and, accordingly, study these topics using scientific methods. For this reason, another important objective of this course is to provide you with a deeper understanding of the methods that scientists use to study these social psychological phenomena, and to help you think critically about those methods. If we are successful, by the end of this course you will be more skilled at transforming ordinary speculations about the causes of human behavior into carefully-articulated scientific hypotheses that can be rigorously tested (**Learning Objective 2**).

By providing deeper insights into the causes and consequences of human behavior, many social psychological research findings can inform the strategies that people use to help address real-world problems and to make people's lives better. For this reason, a third important objective of this course is to encourage you to think carefully and creatively about ways in which social psychological research findings can be applied usefully in the real world. If we are successful, by the end of this course, you will be better equipped to harness the power of social psychology to improve people's lives and, more generally, to improve the world that we share (**Learning Objective 3**).

We have designed all aspects of this course (including the methods that we use to assess your performance) in order to accomplish these objectives. This course is divided into 3 units, and we will devote special focus to one learning objective during each unit, although you will have a chance to make progress toward all three objectives throughout the course.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Course videos, readings, or discussions may cover sensitive topics, such as gender, race, sexuality, LGBTQI+ issues, violence, politics, and religion. If you are uncomfortable with these issues or you are studying abroad and could face negative repercussions, please contact your academic advisor or course instructor immediately.**

## Course Structure

Course material (along with specific short assignments associated with that material) will be presented in the form of "modules." There will be two modules each week (25 modules total). Each module is devoted to a specific topic. Material specific to each module will be presented asynchronously in two forms: a small set of short videos (analogous to lectures), all of which you are expected to watch, and a reading or two that you are expected to read. The complete set of modules are organized into 3 big clumps ("units"), each of which lasts about one month. At the end of each of these three units, two additional assignments are due that will further assess your engagement with and comprehension of the material presented across all the modules that comprise that unit.

(By the way: There will be no exams!)

## Asynchronous Course Materials (Videos and Readings)

To access course materials, you will need to log into Canvas (with your UBC CWL) and choose this course. Materials are only accessible to registered students. For each module, there are two main kinds of asynchronous materials:

**Videos:** For each module, lecture material will be delivered in the form of several short, pre-recorded video lectures that have been prepared by the instructors of this course and/or web-based videos or podcasts. Please watch these videos carefully and thoughtfully. This can be a challenge! (It's easy to zone out and let your mind wander when you're watching videotaped lectures, even if they are fairly brief.) In order to help you stay attentive and engaged while watching these lecture videos, most videos will periodically have questions embedded within them, and you will be required to respond to those questions before proceeding to watch the rest of the video.

**Readings:** There is no textbook for you to buy. (You don't have to buy anything!) Instead, we have assembled a set of readings that correspond to the topics that we will be covering. Most of the readings are articles published in actual scholarly journals in psychology. You will be expected to read all the readings on the reading list.

The videos and readings are designed to be complementary. There will be some overlap, of course. But there is lots of material in the readings that won't be covered in the videos; and we will present lots of material in those videos that doesn't appear in the readings. If you want to do well in this class, be sure to keep up with the readings, and be sure to watch each of the videos thoughtfully, from beginning to end.

## Synchronous Sessions: Live Zoom Meetings

There will be a live (synchronous, real-time) component too. The live component will occur on one day per week during the scheduled class time. Therefore, depending on the section of this course that you are registered in, you should be available to participate via Zoom in these synchronous sessions (Zoom links and times for each section are shown above).

These synchronous sessions will *not* be lectures, and are *not* designed to provide students with new course material in any formal way. Rather, these sessions will provide you with opportunities for active discussion about, elaboration on, and deeper understanding of the course material (presented in videos and readings). This is likely to be useful to you when you're working on your End-of-Unit Paper assignments. These sessions also provide you with opportunities to engage actively with that course material--and so may be useful for the purposes of preparing the Engagement Portfolios that you will also be expected to turn in at the end of each unit.

We are aware that participation in these synchronous sessions may be a challenge for some students depending on their geographical and/or technological circumstances. For that reason, we cannot make it compulsory for you to attend. (And, be assured: there are other kinds of opportunities to also engage actively with course material--which can also be documented within students' Engagement Portfolios.) Still, we expect that you will benefit if you do attend these synchronous sessions regularly, and participate in them actively. So please make an effort to do so!

## Summary of Assignments (and How Much They Count toward your Grade)

Type of Assignment	Brief Description and Deadlines for Completion	Weight
<b>Video Quizzes</b> (Every module; 2 modules per week)	Most videos will have one or more brief quiz questions inserted into them. (You will need to respond to these questions in order to continue watching). <b>Deadlines for completion: Every week, by 5:00 pm Wednesday</b>	5%
<b>Module Comprehension Checks</b> (Every module; 2 modules per week)	These short comprehension checks contain multiple choice questions pertaining to material presented in videos and reading material, and brief open-ended questions assessing your thoughts about that material. <b>Deadlines for completion: Every week, by 5:00 pm Wednesday</b>	10%
<b>Reading Reflections</b> (Every module; 2 modules per week)	At the conclusion of each module you will be asked to write a paragraph reflecting on the reading contained within that module. These paragraphs are an opportunity for you to demonstrate thoughtful reflection on the reading material. <b>Deadlines for completion: Every week, by 5:00 pm Friday</b>	25%
<b>Term Papers</b> (Three total, 15% each)	At the conclusion of each unit, you are expected to write a short term paper (2 – 3 pages long; double-spaced). Each term paper provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate deep and sustained intellectual reflection on course material. <b>Deadlines for completion: October 9, November 6, December 4 (by 5:00 pm)</b>	45%
<b>Engagement Portfolios</b> (Three total, 5 % each)	At the conclusion of each unit, you are expected to submit a summary of activities—beyond simply reading the assigned readings and watching the assigned videos—that demonstrate active participation and engagement in this course. <b>Deadlines for completion: October 9, November 6, December 4 (by 5:00 pm)</b>	15%
Total		100%

Note: Dates and times for deadlines are specified in Pacific time (Vancouver time).

[Click Here for a Detailed Description of Each Assignment](#)

### Extra Credit (Psychology Department Human Subjects Pool)

You may earn up to 3% extra credit to your final course grade through participating in research studies (or by completing library assignments). More information can be found at <https://psych.ubc.ca/undergraduate/opportunities/human-subject-pool/>

## **Oops! Token**

We've built a lot of flexibility into every aspect of the course, but at some point—despite your best efforts—something might go wrong (“Oops!”) and you might need an extra bit of flexibility. For example, maybe your WiFi goes out just as you're about to submit an assignment that you've worked really hard on, and you need an extra few hours to submit it. So, each student gets one *Oops! Token* which you can use to get a little extra flexibility *once* during the term. Ideally you'll never need to use your Oops! Token. But if you have a problem and would like to use your Oops! Token, email your TA with the subject line “Oops! Token” and explain what additional flexibility you are requesting.

## **Learning Communities**

Important scientific advances rarely come from brilliant individuals working alone--but rather from teams engaging in effective collaboration (and this makes science much more fun too!). So, throughout this course, we will encourage you to discuss course work and collaborate with students in your “learning community.” You must join a learning community to get started on coursework, and you will have a choice of various learning communities linked to different time zones or interests (if you have friends in the course, you might want to plan on joining the same learning community). We expect that you will remain with your learning community throughout the term.

## Schedule of Units, Modules, and Assignments

Dates	Modules	Weekly Assignments due
<b>Unit 1: Use social psychology to understand yourself and other people</b>		
<b>Sept 8 – 11</b>	Course Orientation	Video quizzes
<b>Sept 14 – 18</b>	Aggression	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Social Cognition	
<b>Sept 21 – 25</b>	Belonging & Self-esteem	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Self-knowledge	
<b>Sept 28 – Oct 2</b>	Group decision-making	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Self-control & Science	
<b>Oct 5 – 9</b>	Causal Attribution	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Judging Other People	Term Paper 1 Engagement Portfolio 1
<b>Unit 2 : Transform speculations about social behavior into testable hypotheses</b>		
<b>Oct 12 – 16</b>	Appearances Matter	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Physical Attractiveness	
<b>Oct 19 – 23</b>	Liking	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Love & Close Relationships	
<b>Oct 26 – 30</b>	Cognitive Dissonance	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Persuasion	
<b>Nov 2 – 6</b>	Norms & Conformity	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Obedience to Authority	Term Paper 2 Engagement Portfolio 2
<b>Unit 3: Use social psychology to make the world a better place</b>		
<b>Nov 9 – 13</b>	Bystander Intervention	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Reflexive & Strategic Helping	
<b>Nov 16 – 20</b>	Stereotyping Others	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Being Stereotyped	
<b>Nov 23 – 27</b>	Reducing Prejudice	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Protecting the Environment	
<b>Nov 30 – Dec 4</b>	Improving the Legal System	Video quizzes Module Comprehension Checks Reading Reflections
	Finding Happiness	Term Paper 3 Engagement Portfolio 3

## What to Do and When to Have it Done by

	<b>Section 002 (Dr. Dunn)</b>	<b>Sections 101 &amp; 102 (Dr. Schaller)</b>
<b>FRIDAYS</b>	New content for 2 modules available on Canvas	New content for 2 modules available on Canvas
<b>SATURDAYS</b>	Work independently on content for both modules (videos & readings)	Work independently on content for both modules (videos & readings)
<b>SUNDAYS</b>		
<b>MONDAYS</b>		
<b>TUESDAYS</b>		
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>	Video Quizzes & Module Comprehension Checks due by 5:00 pm for both modules	Video Quizzes & Module Comprehension Checks due by 5:00 pm for both modules
<b>THURSDAYS</b>	Synchronous session (Live Zoom meeting) 3:30 – 4:30 pm	
<b>FRIDAYS</b>	Reading Reflections due by 5:00 pm for both modules	Synchronous session (Live Zoom meeting) Section 101: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm Section 102: 1:00 – 2:00 pm  Reading Reflections due by 5:00 for both modules
<b>END-OF-UNIT FRIDAYS</b> (Oct. 9, Nov. 6, Dec. 4)	Submit Term Papers and Engagement Portfolios (due by 5:00 pm)	Submit Term Papers and Engagement Portfolios (due by 5:00 pm)



## **POTENTIAL FOR CHANGES TO THIS SYLLABUS**

This syllabus provides a roadmap for how this course will proceed. But, let's face it: This course is being offered in an unusual format under unusual circumstances, and it's possible that some aspects of this roadmap will be revealed to be less-than-optimal. Consequently, it's possible that some revisions (in course materials, in scheduling, in policy, etc.) may have to be made as we proceed through the course, in order to help students achieve the learning objectives. Any such revisions--which will be discussed with students and communicated to students on the class website--will "count" just as much as policies outlined in this syllabus.

## **COURSE WEBSITE**

In this online course, the course website is essential!  
For students registered in the course, all course materials—including any updates to information presented in this syllabus—can be found here:

[www.canvas.ubc.ca](http://www.canvas.ubc.ca)

### **ATTRIBUTION:**

*This syllabus was co-authored by Elizabeth Dunn & Mark Schaller with significant contributions from Rachele Benjamin, Lillian May, Catherine Rawn, and the 2020 Summer Community of Practice.*

## **Other Important Stuff (University Policies, Resources, Etc.)**

### **Psychology Department Policy on Grade Distribution and Scaling of Grades**

In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, all Psychology classes are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions. However, in the spirit of flexibility and compassion in light of COVID-19 and the associated pivoting to online teaching, the usual departmental norms have been adjusted upwards by 5% for only 2020W. According to these adjusted norms, the average grade in 300-level Psychology classes will be 75 for an exceptionally strong class, 73 for an average class, and 71 for a weak class, with a standard deviation of 13. (In other words: The average grade in this class will be in the B range, and most likely it will be in the lower end of the B range.) Grades may be scaled in order to comply with these norms (grades may be scaled up or down as necessary by an instructor or the department).

### **UBC Grading Policies**

Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record. You will receive both a numerical and a letter grade for this course. (See the UBC Course Calendar for additional information about [UBC grading scale--showing letter grades and corresponding numerical grades.](#))

### **Academic Integrity**

As members of the academic community, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. For details on University policies and procedures pertaining to student conduct and academic dishonesty, please see the [UBC Calendar: Student Conduct and Discipline.](#)

### **Academic Accommodation for Student with Disabilities**

Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the [Centre for Accessibility.](#)

### **Academic Concession**

UBC has well-articulated policies regarding what sorts of circumstances do and don't qualify for academic concession. Please make sure that you are familiar with [UBC policies on academic concession, in the UBC course calendar.](#)

### **Equity and Inclusion and Diversity and Respect:**

University courses should be conducive to learning and rigorous intellectual inquiry within a context in which everyone feels included and respected—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, political or religious affiliations, ability, age, social status, etc. All students in this class are encouraged to express themselves thoughtfully when discussing course material; and, when you do express yourself, it's important that you do so in a manner that shows respect for every other member of this class. Therefore, please make sure that you're familiar with [UBC's policy on building and maintaining a respectful environment.](#) You can find additional information about resources pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion on the Psychology Department's website: <https://psych.ubc.ca/about/equity-inclusion/>

## Zoom

All live interactions with instructors will be held over Zoom. More information on Zoom at UBC can be found at: <https://keeplearning.ubc.ca/technologies/#zoom>

## Copyright and Intellectual Property

All readings for this course are copyrighted, and cannot be redistributed without permission of the copyright owner. Lecture videos and other course materials are the intellectual property of the instructor(s) and these also cannot be redistributed (e.g., posted on any other website, or shared in any other way) without instructor permission. Violation of these policies may lead to academic discipline.

## UBC Academic Calendar

Further information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates and credits can be found in the [Academic Calendar](#).

### Issues for Students Studying Abroad and Remotely

During this pandemic, the shift to online learning has greatly altered teaching and studying at UBC, including changes to health and safety considerations. Keep in mind that some UBC courses might cover topics that are censored or considered illegal by non-Canadian governments. This may include, but is not limited to, human rights, representative government, defamation, obscenity, gender or sexuality, and historical or current geopolitical controversies. If you are a student living abroad, you will be subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction, and your local authorities might limit your access to course material or take punitive action against you. UBC is strongly committed to academic freedom, but has no control over foreign authorities (please visit <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0> for an articulation of the values of the University conveyed in the Senate Statement on Academic Freedom). Thus, we recognize that students will have legitimate reason to exercise caution in studying certain subjects. If you have concerns regarding your personal situation, consider postponing taking a course with manifest risks, until you are back on campus or reach out to your academic advisor to find substitute courses. For further information and support, please visit: <http://academic.ubc.ca/support-resources/freedom-expression>

## Additional Useful Resources for Students

Additional resources may also be helpful as you contend with the challenges of taking university courses during a pandemic, and just dealing with life's challenges more broadly.

- Guidance for online classes: <https://keeplearning.ubc.ca/>
- Assistance with working remotely: <https://it.ubc.ca/ubc-it-guide-working-campus>
- Guidance on useful skills for students: <https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/student-toolkits/>
- Student's guide to Canvas: <https://students.canvas.ubc.ca/>
- COVID-19 health guidance: <https://covid19.ubc.ca/health-guidance/>
- Mental health support: <https://students.ubc.ca/covid19/mental-health-during-covid-19-outbreak>
- Counselling Services: <http://students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/counselling-services>
- Wellness Centre: <http://students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/wellness-centre>
- Student Health Services: <http://students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/student-health-service>