

PSYC 308: Social Psychology

(Winter 2024-2025, Term 1 / Sections 001 and 002)

When and Where:

PSYC 308-001: T/Th 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm, HENN 202

PSYC 308-002: T/Th 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm, HENN 202

Course website (UBC Canvas): <https://canvas.ubc.ca/courses/147729>
(Only students officially registered in this course can access the course webpage on Canvas.)

Land Acknowledgement:

UBC's Vancouver campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the $x^w m \theta k^w \acute{e} y \acute{e} m$ (Musqueam) people. The land occupied by our campus has historically been a place of learning for the Musqueam who, for millennia, have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. We are enormously lucky to have access to this beautiful land, and to be able to use it for our scholarly pursuits. Let us use it respectfully, and with gratitude.

Teaching Team:

Instructor: Dr. Mark Schaller (he / him)

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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:30; and by appointment

TA (Section 001): Manya Bothra (she / her)

Office: Kenny 4003 / Email: mbothra@student.ubc.ca

Office hours: Tuesdays 12:00 – 1:00; and by appointment

TA (Section 002): Irein Thomas (she / her)

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Office hours: Fridays 2:00 – 3:00; and by appointment

Guidelines for Using Email to Contact Instructors and TA's:

You may have questions that you're unable to ask during a class session, or you may want to have some other outside-of-class conversation about an issue that is specific to you. If so, great; the members of the teaching team will be delighted to talk one-on-one with you. But *not* via email. Email is a fine way to arrange a meeting if you're unable to attend regularly-scheduled office hours, but email is a terrible way to have a useful conversation. A good rule of thumb is this: If you have a question that will require more than a one-sentence response, don't use email to ask it. Instead: Please ask it in person, either during an appropriate moment during class, or during office hours. (Also, if you do send an email inquiry, please maintain realistic expectations about response time. We all do our best to respond responsibly and speedily, but you are unlikely to receive an immediate response—especially on evenings or weekends.)

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 interactions with other people. Research in social psychology covers a wide range of topics, including such things as self-concept, impression formation, stereotypes and prejudices, attitudes and attitude change, interpersonal attraction, altruism, aggression, and group behavior. This course provides an overview of 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 the many interesting things that happen in our lives.

Psychologists are scientists and, accordingly, study these topics using scientific methods. For this reason, another goal of this course is to expose you to the methods that social psychologists use to study these topics. If we are successful, by the end of this course you will have a deeper understanding of the process through which hypotheses about social psychological phenomena can be rigorously tested.

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 goal of this course is to encourage you to think carefully about ways in which social psychological research findings can be usefully applied 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.

The material presented in this course (e.g., readings, lectures, etc.) have been designed to help you accomplish these objectives, and the assessments of learning (e.g., exams) will be designed to assess your success in doing so.

Course Format and Structure:

This class is scheduled to meet twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursdays, and that's what we'll do. This is a big class, and I will use those class meetings to present course material in a lecture format, punctuated occasionally by opportunities for discussion of that that material. I'll try as best as I can to keep you alert and mentally active in class. Please feel free to ask questions and/or make cogent comments during class.

Since this is an in-person course (and *not* an online course), I'm expecting you to attend our class meetings in person, and it will almost certainly be to your educational benefit if you do. (Of course, if you are sick, it is best that you stay home and not infect others, no matter what you think you may be sick with.) What if you miss a class for some reason? I do *not* plan to record our in-person class meetings, but I *do* plan to make the PowerPoint files that I use for lectures available to you on Canvas. Those files will typically be stripped-down versions from which I've removed things—e.g., photos—that are copywrited or otherwise problematic to put on Canvas. The essential content will be there, but some of the dazzle and/or context might be missing. Regardless, if you do miss a class session, it would be a good idea to reach out to one or more your classmates to get additional notes regarding what you missed.

In addition to material presented in lectures, a lot of course material will be presented in readings (and, occasionally, in other media such as videos). This material will be available to you on Canvas, and will organized in the form of “modules.” Each module corresponds to one of our scheduled class meetings.

The material that appears in the readings (and, occasionally, other media) and the material that I present in class are designed to be complementary. There will be some overlap, of course. But there is lots of material in the readings that we won't have time to talk about in class; and I will present lots of material in class that doesn't appear in the readings. You are responsible for learning all of it! If you want to do well in this class, be sure to keep up with the readings, and be sure to come to class.

Required Reading Material:

We will *not* be using any textbook for this course. Instead, I have selected a set of readings that correspond to the topics that we will be covering. Many of these readings are scholarly articles, and most of these articles were published in the journal *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (which publishes not-too-long and not-too-painful review articles on psychological research topics.) There are also readings of other kinds too (e.g., blog posts on the “Character & Context” blog—hosted by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology—for which psychologists write especially not-too-long and especially not-too-painful blog posts about recent research findings).

All of the assigned readings will be made freely available to you on Canvas. And (except for an occasional reading that might be explicitly marked as “optional”) you will be expected to read them all.

You'll find the assigned readings for each class meeting in the “Modules” section of the Canvas course page. It will be to your educational benefit if you read those readings carefully and thoughtfully *before* class (and to re-visit those readings again afterwards).

Brief Summary of What Will Happen When:

Tuesday, Sept. 3: NO CLASS MEETING (“Imagine UBC”)
 Thursday, Sept. 5: Introduction
 Tuesday, Sept. 10: Aggression (Illustration of key themes of social psychology)
 Thursday, Sept. 12: Counterfactual thinking (Another illustration of key themes)
 Tuesday, Sept. 17: Cumulative science (Yet another illustration of key themes)
 Thursday, Sept. 19: Heuristics and biases
 Tuesday, Sept. 24: Expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies
 Thursday, Sept. 26: Self-esteem in a social context
 Tuesday, Oct. 1: Self-concept and self-knowledge
 Thursday, Oct. 3: MIDTERM EXAM 1
 Tuesday, Oct. 8: Faces and first impressions
 Thursday, Oct 10: Causal attributions and social judgments
 Tuesday, Oct. 15: Moral principles and social judgments
 Thursday, Oct. 17: Moral conflict (Milgram revisited)
 Tuesday, Oct. 22: Love and relationships
 Thursday, Oct. 24: NO CLASS MEETING
 Tuesday, Oct. 29: Liking people and things
 Thursday, Oct. 31: Persuasion and attitude change
 Tuesday, Nov 5: Self-persuasion (Cognitive dissonance)
 Thursday Nov. 7: MIDTERM EXAM 2
 Tuesday Nov. 12: NO CLASS MEETING (UBC Midterm Break)
 Thursday, Nov. 14: Social norms and social influence
 Tuesday, Nov. 19: Social categorization
 Thursday, Nov. 21: Prejudice(s)
 Tuesday, Nov. 26: Being stereotyped
 Thursday, Nov. 28: Reflexive and strategic altruism
 Tuesday, Dec 3: The tragedy of the commons
 Thursday, Dec. 5: Applying social psychology thoughtfully
 Date (and place) to be announced later: FINAL EXAM

Assessments of Learning – Exams

There will be three exams. The first (Midterm Exam 1) will be on **Thursday, October 3**. The second (Midterm Exam 2) will be on **Thursday, November 7**. The third (Final Exam) will held during the **final exam period, on a date to be determined later**.

All exams will be in-person, in the classroom, and on paper. (The two Midterm Exams will be take place during our regularly-scheduled class time, in our regularly-scheduled classroom. The Final Exam will take place at a time and in a place to be determined later.)

Each exam will consist primarily of multiple-choice items, and will also include a small number of short-answer items. These exams will test you on material covered in the

assigned readings and on material presented in lectures (with roughly equivalent attention to reading material and lecture material). The exams are *not* designed in any explicit way to be cumulative; each exam will focus on “new” material. (Of course, a lot of “new” material builds upon older material, and your comprehension of new material will be increased if you have retained your knowledge of that older material.)

Exams won't be handed back to you. Students at UBC have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the university.

If you miss a scheduled exam you will receive a mark of “0” for that exam. The only exception would be if an event outside of your control—such as an acute health issue—prevents you from taking the exam as scheduled. If such a circumstance arises, I will adhere to [UBC policies on “academic concession”](#) to determine the appropriate course of action. Make sure you're familiar with these policies! (See also the syllabus section on “Academic Concession,” below.)

Your performances on each exam will be weighted *unequally* when figuring out your final course grade. If you choose to *not* submit a term paper (see below for information about the *optional* term paper assignment), then your *highest* exam score will count 40% toward your final course grade, and the other two exam scores will each count 30% toward your final course grade. If you do choose to do the optional term paper assignment (the mark for which would count 10% toward your final course grade), then your *highest* exam score will count 40% toward your final course grade, your *lowest* exam score will count 20% toward your final course grade, and your other exam score will count 30% toward your final course grade.

Optional Term Paper

You have the *option* of writing and submitting a Term Paper, due on **Thursday, November 28**). That is: In the middle of the term, I will post a Term Paper assignment on Canvas, and you will have the option of either completing the assignment or not. (Term Papers will be limited to a maximum length of 4 pages, double-spaced, and will be marked on a 0 – 100 scale corresponding to the UBC grading scale. When I post this optional Term Paper assignment, I will also post a marking rubric so that you'll have some explicit guidance about how it's going to be marked.) Your final course grade will be computed differently, depending on whether you submit a Term Paper or not.

If you do *not* submit a Term Paper, then your final course grade will be based only upon your scores on the three exams (see above): Your *highest* exam score will count 40% toward your final course grade, and the other two exam scores will each count 30% toward your final course grade.

If you *do* submit a Term Paper, your final course grade will be based upon your Term Paper mark as well as your scores on the three exams: The Term Paper mark will count 10% toward your final course grade, your *highest* exam score will count 40% toward your final course grade, your *lowest* exam score will count 20% toward your final course grade, and your other exam score will count 30% toward your final course grade. (In other words: If you do the optional Term Paper assignment, then your score on the Term Paper will replace part of your lowest exam score when the time comes to figure out your final course grade.)

Again, completing the Term Paper assignment is *optional*. Also, please bear in mind that if you do exercise this option—if you do submit a Term Paper—it will be marked (according to the rubric that accompanies the Term Paper assignment) and that mark will count 10% toward your final course grade, regardless of what that mark is. So, while there is the potential for you to use this optional Term Paper assignment to improve your final grade—by submitting an impressive Term Paper that receives a high mark—there's no guarantee that it will improve your final grade. (A bad Term Paper—one that receives a low mark—could even have the opposite effect.) You'd probably be wise to submit a Term Paper only if you're prepared to devote the time and thoughtful effort required to write a good one.

Extra Credit (Department of Psychology Research Participation System):

You may earn up to 3 extra credit percentage points added to your final course grade by serving as a participant in one of the many different psychological studies that are being conducted by the department. To do so, you must use the Department of Psychology's Research Participation System: <https://ubc-psych.sona-systems.com/>. (As an alternative to serving as a research participant, you can also earn these extra credit points by completing a "library option, for which you must write summaries of peer-reviewed research articles, submitted on Turnitin.) Detailed instructions about how you can earn these extra credits (either by participating in in psychological studies or through the library option) can be found on the [Psychology Department's Human Subject Pool \(HSP\) website](#).

Please be aware that the teaching team for this course has no involvement whatsoever with the administration or record-keeping of the Psychology Department's Human Subject Pool (HSP). We're simply provided, at the end of the term, with a list of students and the extra credit points they've earned, which we then add to the final course grade. So if you have any questions about how it works—or about the credits that you've earned, or whatever—you'll need to consult the HSP website, which has a lot of useful information on it (including a detailed how-to guide, FAQs, and an email address that can be used to communicate with the folks who handle HSP administration and record-keeping.)

Final Course Grades:

The UBC Psychology Department has a new policy governing the assignment and distribution of final course grades, and instructors have been asked to plug this policy into our syllabi. Here it is:

In the Psychology Department, we aim to offer learning experiences that welcome and challenge all students to engage meaningfully in our discipline. We strive for grades that accurately reflect student learning and achievement of course learning objectives, rather than solely reflecting their performance relative to others.

The Psychology department employs department-wide grading standards to promote equitable alignment, supporting students and course instructors as they learn and teach across many diverse courses and sections. For each Course Section, instructors should aim for a grade average in the following Target Ranges (before any bonus HSP points are added, but including any mandatory HSP points): B- (68-71%) in Introductory 100-level and 200-level courses; B (72-75%) in Intermediate 300-level courses; B+ (76-79%) for Advanced 400-level courses and Selective-Entry lower-level courses (e.g., PSYC 277, 278, 312, 370, 371, 349, 359, 365).

Ranges are intended to provide some flexibility to instructors and account for differences that can occur between classes. Ranges increase across year levels to account for improvements in student learning, and students' ability to self-select into more specialized courses.

During the course, instructors may choose to adjust grades and/or difficulty of the assessments, to align with the Target Range. At the end of the course, if the average falls outside the Target Range (either direction), instructors will typically be expected to use a linear transformation to adjust final grades (i.e., add or subtract the same number of points to all students' marks, while ensuring no student fails the course due to this transformation).

If a course mean falls in within one +/- letter grade band above the Target Range (e.g., in the B+ range for Intermediate courses), and the instructor believes these grades to be justified, the instructor may submit a justification request using the departmental approval final grades submission form, and the grades may stand. This Upper Range is intended to inspire further excellence in learning and teaching, and allow for the possibility that some classes select for higher performing students. Courses with means exceeding the Upper Range will be expected to provide justification as well as use a linear transformation to fall within the Upper Range.

Grades are not official until they appear on students' academic record. Students will receive both a percent and a letter grade for this course. At UBC, they convert according to the key below:

A+	90-100%	B+	76-79%	C+	64-67%	D	50-54%
A	85-89%	B	72-75%	C	60-63%	F	0-49%
A-	80-84%	B-	68-71%	C-	55-59%		

Whew, there are a lot of words in that policy statement (and some of those words were written more for instructors than for students), so I'll draw your attention to the key points that apply to this course, and that you should know:

Prior to the addition of any extra credit points (see above), final grades will be distributed around a mean grade somewhere in the 72-75 range (i.e., the average grade will be a B). After ensuring that that's the case, I'll then add any extra credit percentage points (up to a maximum of 3) that students have earned.

If the mean grade for any of the individual exams falls outside that B range, I'll make adjustments to students' exam scores to ensure that it does fall within that range. (That is: exam scores might be scaled up or scaled down, depending on whether the mean score is below 72 or above 75.) In other words, I'll do what I can to ensure that your scores on each individual exam provide you with a reasonably accurate forecast for what your final grade might be.

Special Accommodations:

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](#). The Centre will determine that student's eligibility for accommodation. (Academic accommodations are not determined by instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, instructors may consult with the Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.) If you have already arranged for accommodations through Centre for Accessibility, please let me know of these accommodations as soon as possible.

UBC also allows accommodations for all students' religious observances and for the cultural observances of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. If this applies to you, please make sure you're familiar with the relevant UBC policies (which you can read about [here in the UBC Academic Calendar](#)), and let me know as soon as possible—and well in advance of any assignment or examination that poses a conflict for you—if you will require any accommodation on these grounds.

Academic Concession:

Under [UBC's academic concession policies](#), students who are unable to complete required coursework in a timely way *might* qualify for academic concession for any of three reasons: conflicting responsibilities; medical circumstances; and compassionate grounds. You should make sure that you are familiar with these policies prior to seeking any form of academic concession. If you miss marked coursework (e.g., an exam or

term paper deadline) and, after reviewing those policies carefully, you believe that you qualify for academic concession, here's what you should do: Contact the Instructor and your TA as soon as possible! You will be asked to complete an Academic Concession Self-Declaration form (which looks like [this](#)) and submit it to both your Instructor and TA. They will determine the appropriate course of action, strictly in accordance with UBC's academic concession policy. Please be aware that submission of an Academic Concession Self-Declaration form does *not* ensure the granting of the academic concession; it simply represents a request for academic concession. Requests will be granted only if the request is justified, according to [UBC's academic concession policies](#). Again, make sure you're familiar with the policies!

(If a student makes repeated requests for academic concession, the student will be referred to the Academic Advising office of their home faculty, who will be asked to consider the situation in greater detail in order to advise the teaching team on the most appropriate course of action.)

Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct (Cheating, etc.):

All students are expected to know, understand, and follow UBC policies regarding academic integrity and student conduct (which you can read about in the [UBC Academic Calendar section on Student Conduct and Discipline](#), and can read more about on [UBC's explainer on academic misconduct](#). Harsh sanctions are imposed on students who violate these policies by engaging in cheating (e.g., receiving unauthorized assistance on an exam, or providing unauthorized assistance to another student), plagiarism (e.g., copying the work of others and pretending that it's work done by you), or other forms of academic misconduct. Incidences of cheating or plagiarism may result in a mark of zero, and more serious consequences may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean. Let me put it more plainly: Don't cheat and don't plagiarize. Not only because it violates UBC's policies on student conduct, but also because it's dishonest, unethical, and morally wrong. For your own sake—for the sake of your self-concept and happiness as a human being—don't do it.

A special note about generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT): Use of AI tools (or any other kind of assistance) is *not* permitted during midterm exams and final exams in this course. (That would be cheating; see above.) Students will be permitted to use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) in a limited way—to gather relevant scholarly information, for example—when working on the optional Term Paper. However, students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit, and any content generated or supported by an AI tool must be carefully and transparently documented by students in an addendum to the Term Paper. (Additional guidance will be provided when students are presented with the optional Term Paper assignment.)

Class Conduct:

Comings and goings during class are disruptive, so please do your very best to show up on time and to stay for the entire class session. Also please make sure that cellphones and other distracting electronic stuff are silenced during class. And please don't chatter when someone else is saying something that is intended for the whole class to hear. I do want you to actively participate in the class—to ask questions and to offer thoughtful comments and things like that—but please do so in respectful way.

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 [Student Code of Conduct](#) and with [UBC's policies on building an environment of respect, diversity, opportunity and inclusion](#). (You can find additional information and resources pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the ["Equity, Diversity and Inclusion" section of Psychology Department's website](#).)

Some course content may introduce topics that could be perceived to be controversial or sensitive; in talking about these topics it will be especially important for us all to express ourselves in a thoughtful, nonjudgmental, and socially responsible manner. Of course, people aren't perfect and slip-ups are possible (e.g., someone might say something that is perceived by someone else to be insensitive to the diversity and inclusion goals identified above); and it's important to respond to those slip-ups in a responsible manner too. If something is expressed by someone—whether it's by me, a TA, a fellow student, or an author of one of the readings for this course—that you perceive to violate these goals of equity and inclusion and diversity and universal respect, I encourage you to bring it to my attention in whatever way you feel most comfortable doing so. (You can let me know directly, or you can do so anonymously—for instance by asking a third party to relay a message to me.)

Copyright and Intellectual Property:

Readings for this course are copyrighted, and cannot be redistributed without permission of the copyright owner. Other course materials (e.g., lecture PowerPoint files) are the intellectual property of the instructor and 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.

Unanticipated Events that Might Disrupt the Delivery of this Course:

Just as students sometimes experience a health crisis or disruptive personal event, it is possible that the instructor or a TA might also experience such a thing—which could potentially affect plans for the course (e.g., delivery of course material, timeliness of feedback, etc.). If so, we will let you know about it as soon as possible using the announcements and/or email features in Canvas, along with any modifications to course planning. We sure hope this doesn't happen! But if it does, we will ask for your patience, flexibility, and compassion, as well as continued dedication to your own and classmates' learning during that time.

Additional Useful Resources for Students:

Additional resources may also be helpful as you contend with the challenges of taking university courses, and just dealing with life's challenges more broadly. Here are some helpful resources offered by UBC:

- Guidance on useful skills for students: <https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/student-toolkits/>
 - Student's guide to Canvas: <https://students.canvas.ubc.ca/>
 - Support for dealing with stress: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/health-topics/understanding-stress>
 - Counselling Services: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/counselling-services>
 - Wellness Centre: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/wellness-centre>
 - Student Health Services: <http://students.ubc.ca/health/student-health-service>
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Potential for Changes to This Syllabus:

This syllabus provides a roadmap for how this course will proceed. 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 achieve the learning objectives. Any such revisions—which will be announced and posted on the class website on Canvas—will “count” just as much as policies outlined in this syllabus.
