

## Attitudes and Persuasion

### Course Description

Because attitudes involve the evaluation of a particular concept, they are an integral aspect of much contemporary social psychological theory and research. Prejudice, romantic attraction, social influence, self-perception, and group dynamics--to name a few--all have important attitudinal components. Rather than focusing on these particular content areas per se, this course focuses on the general constructs of attitudes and attitude change. Mandatory writing intensive and laboratory components are features of the Spring 2006 iteration of the undergraduate section of the course. Given that familiarity with social psychology and statistics is necessary for adequate completion of reading and writing assignments, both Psyc343 and Psyc209/212 are prerequisites for the undergraduate students in the course.

### Course Requirements and Evaluation

**Critical Reviews.** Critical reviews of research are an important aspect of scientific enterprise. Students who pursue careers in psychology and allied fields ultimately will be reviewing works-in-progress (e.g., manuscript submissions; conference proposals), but practicing on published work is a good starting point insofar as published pieces are not perfect. In addition, critical reviews ideally facilitate appreciation for how empirical research is conducted, and encourage careful consideration of how theory informs methods of data collection and analysis. Student critiques also are intended to enhance discussion quality, by encouraging critical thinking about readings prior to class. These articles are available on-line through ERES. (<http://eres.library.tulane.edu/>). The password is ELM.

Please provide me with two **hardcopies** of your review. Reviews are due by 2pm on Monday for the Wednesday discussions (i.e., submit them by the beginning of lab), and by 3pm Wednesday for the Friday discussions (i.e., submit them by the beginning of class). **If you are cofacilitating the discussion, do not provide a critical review.**

Given that critical reviews contribute significantly to the organization of the discussion, **late reviews will not be accepted whether or not you attend the class meeting.** The best 20 of 21 possible reviews will be used to compute the grade, so you can afford to miss writing one critique if your world is falling apart on a particular day. If you are late submitting a second critical review, recognize that my unwillingness to accept it is not the end of the world. The cumulative effect of being late could be costly, but one slip is not a catastrophic event. Here are some guidelines for your reviews:

1. Be professional. A review typically is viewed as an opportunity to provide feedback to the authors while simultaneously assuring that publishable research finds its best home. Reviewers usually are anonymous, and the fact that you are not actually providing the review to the authors may evoke a similar no-retaliation-is-possible mindset. Even so, please resist the temptation to be flippant, pedantic, or savage, or to wax poetic. Your job is to indicate what is laudable and what is problematic about the article in its current form, and why you have made that assessment.

2. Focus on theory. Draw upon your experience in social psychology and related fields to consider the theoretical rationale: Is the theory outlined well, does it contradict or support theoretical work that is not cited, is it old wine in new skins, is it a minor test of the theory or an important new contribution? Do the methods provide a compelling test of the theory? Are there artifacts and fatal flaws that slipped through the cracks, and how do

these features interfere with valid conclusions about the theory? Are the chosen analyses the best or most appropriate way to test the theory?

3. Try to make and support at least 2 points. A laundry list of questions or complaints is not a critical review. What specifically is praiseworthy or problematic about the article, and *why*? (e.g., how does it contradict a prevailing social psychological theory; how does the flaw lead to erroneous conclusions). Likewise, a mere summary of the article is not a critical review. You may include a 2 sentence summary to demonstrate that you understand the thrust of the argument, but that is not a critique. As an aside to the "length-conscious" students: a thorough review typically requires at least 1/2 page single-spaced commentary.

**Cofacilitation.** Leading an organized discussion is a fundamental skill for most careers pursued by educated individuals, including psychologists. Cofacilitators will have copies of the critical reviews prior to the class meeting. I would suggest comments ahead of time, and expressively setting objectives. The role is **discussion** co-leader, not presenter. That is, your goal should be to facilitate an organized discussion, encouraging people to address one another's points while keeping the conversation on track. As noted earlier, do not submit a critique on the week that you are assigned as co-facilitator.

**Class Participation.** Class meetings will focus primarily upon discussion of the empirical articles. Contributing meaningfully to a discussion is not commensurate with monopolizing it. Try to make a few good points during each discussion, and address your classmates as well as the instructor. Participation during final classes of the semester (i.e., during student presentations) comprises attentiveness and possibly questions to the presenter about his/her project. From January 25-April 28, we have 25 meetings (one of which you are cofacilitating). The best 22 of 24 class participation grades will create the final participation grade. Consequently, missing class twice during the semester will not count against you, but be advised that there is no way to "make up" participation if you miss additional class meetings.

**Laboratory (Psyc480 only).** The laboratory component of the course comprises two written assignments, participation in workshops on library research, SPSS, and APA style, and participation in workshop on designing the research proposal. The laboratory instructor will take attendance and make note of active participants, which will be factored into the grade for the laboratory. The workshops on library research, SPSS, and APA style are intended to facilitate your understanding of the readings and to hone skills needed for the research proposal. The written assignments are small scale practice for the research proposal. The first is a one-page (single-spaced) lab report that focuses primarily on APA-style methods and results sections. The second is a two-page (single spaced) "conference submission" that additionally requires the theoretical rationale and implications included in an APA-style introduction and discussion, as well as a 50-word abstract. These due dates of these assignments are timed to provide feedback well in advance of the longer proposal. Late submissions will be penalized 1/2 grade **each working weekday** (MTWRF) that they are late, and will be on the "bottom of the stack" for grading purposes. The remainder of the lab involves development of research proposal in consultations with the lab instructor, with classmates actively but civilly critiquing the ideas.

**Research Proposal.** The research proposal involves the proposition of an empirical study that tests a novel hypothesis derived from attitudes and persuasion theories. One of the most difficult but critical steps is determining a topic. I suggest that you begin with a mixture of inductive and deductive reasoning: What out there in the social world grabs you and makes you ask 'I wonder why...' and how do the attitudes/persuasion theories possibly address that question. Try to focus on *why* questions (i.e., the mechanisms that underlie behavior and attitudes) rather than *what* questions (i.e., descriptive differences that fail to specify causal mechanisms). Once you have some possible hypotheses—and perhaps some general ideas about methodology--, you are urged strongly to discuss them with the laboratory instructor or me.

By April 3, you will submit a hardcopy of the methodology section of the research proposal. It should include a title page, abstract, a paragraph describing the hypotheses, a methodology section, and proposed analysis section. Note that although you will not have written the theoretical rationale yet, the basis for the predictions should be in your head in some form. Psyc480 students will have received feedback on their lab reports and conference submissions by this point, and should generalize that feedback to the writing of the research proposal. Psyc745 are presumed to have had prior experience in writing these aspects of a paper. The methods section submitted on April 3 is worth 15% of the final grade. Papers submitted after April 3 will be penalized 3 points for **each working weekday** (MTWRF) that they are late, and will be on the "bottom of the stack" for grading purposes.

By Monday May 1 (i.e., in lieu of a final exam), you will submit a hardcopy of the entire research proposal, along with the graded copy of your April 3 submission. In addition to a revision of the April 3 submission, the proposal should include an introduction that outlines the theoretical rationale to the hypotheses and how the existing literature bears on the question at hand. Many of the assigned articles contain excellent examples of an introduction. Although I am loathe to assign a page length, please understand that five or six pages of introduction likely are necessary to do justice to your predictions.

Please be advised that modest variations on papers from previous and concurrent courses are not acceptable. Journals do not allow multiple submission and self-plagiarism, and neither will I. Please do not solicit pre-submission feedback from friends, roommates, professors, or other sentient entities when outlining, wording, revising, et cetera. Papers submitted after May 1 will be penalized will be penalized 3 points for **each day** (SMTWRFS) that they are late.

**Presentation.** The last three days will be reserved for students to present their project to the group. Given the paper due date of the 1<sup>st</sup>, I will ask the Psyc745 students to present on the 21<sup>st</sup>, along with volunteers from Psyc480. I will figure out the time allotment depending on the number of students enrolled and the presentation dates, and I will hold each student to that maximum time.

### Graduate/Undergraduate Distinctions

A handful of students are enrolled in the Psyc745 graduate section of Attitudes and Persuasion. I can imagine questions might arise about differences in requirements and criteria. I will attempt to clarify in writing here:

Evaluation in the bulk of the course (critical reviews, presentation, cofacilitation, class participation) will be at the 400-level of an advanced undergraduate seminar. These grades will be assigned in an *absolute* rather than a *relative* sense. That is, after over 15 years of teaching undergraduate laboratories and seminars, I have a very clear idea of what comprises a "A" for juniors and seniors in terms of class participation, presentations, cofacilitation, and critical reviews in 400-level course. Psyc480 students are not being compared to Psyc745 students, nor to one another.

Graduate students are not enrolled in the laboratory, and are expected to prepare a longer research proposal (~15-20 pages) that draws upon theories, methodologies, and statistical techniques appropriate for students beyond the baccalaureate level. Graduate student proposals ultimately contribute 15% + 50% of the course grade, and are graded against criteria that I use in 700-level courses. In contrast, the research proposals (~10 pages) submitted by students enrolled in Psyc480 will be evaluated on the basis of appropriateness for a 400-level course comprising students who have had Psyc209/212 and Psyc343. **Psyc480 papers are not being compared to papers in the graduate section.**

All papers will be graded upon four equally weighted criteria: appropriate use of material (including theoretical background for predictions), critical thought (including study design, hypothesis generation), organization/flow, and technical writing (including APA style). Again, I reiterate, I have a very clear understanding of what an "A" (or any other grade) connotes for these criteria in a 400-level course and for a 700-level course.

### Summary of Psyc480 Requirements and Evaluation

Task	N	Weight	Due
Critical Reviews	20 of 21	15%	M 2pm; W 3pm
Cofacilitation	1	5%	TBA
Presentation	1	5%	April 21, 26, or 28
Class Participation	22 of 24	10%	Weekly
Lab Grade		15%	Weekly plus assgnmts
Methods Portion of Proposal	1	15%	April 3
Research Proposal	1	35%	May 1

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Task	N	Weight	Due
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Cofacilitation	1	5%	TBA
Presentation	1	5%	April 21
Class Participation	22 of 24	10%	Weekly
Methods Portion of Proposal	1	15%	April 3
Final Research Proposal	1	50%	May 1

### Letter Grades

	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	
93-100	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-
					59	≥	F

Note: Per Graduate School policy, grades of B- or above are required for graduate credit.

### General Policies

**Blackboard**, a secure website, will be used to post grade information, as well as announcements and course materials (<http://blackboard.tulane.edu>). Unless you request explicitly **in writing** not to post your information, it will be posted. Blackboard access is automatic if you are in the system already and/or have an @Tulane email address. If you are not in the system or have difficulty logging on, please contact the ILC Help Desk at 862-8888.

**Academic honesty** is expected, and breaches of the honor code will not be tolerated. Our blackboard site is linked to the honor code of Tulane University's Liberal Arts and Sciences (<http://www.tulane.edu/~lasdean/honor%20code.htm>) and to my own examples of plagiarism and inappropriate citation (<http://www.tulane.edu/~jruscher/dept/plagiarism.html>).

**CellPhones and beepers** should be turned off during class. If you anticipate an emergency (e.g., you belong to the TEMS unit), please set it to vibrate or some other silent signal.

**Electronic Mail** is the primary way in which I will contact class members, and by which appointments should be made. For security reasons, I do not send grades via email or phone. Please do not ask. Be advised that your @tulane.edu address is the one loaded into blackboard, and will be the address that I use when e-mailing the entire class (i.e., please check this address regularly, or have it forward automatically to your preferred address).

**Special Needs.** Please bring any authorized accommodations from the ERC (<http://erc.tulane.edu/>) to my attention during the first week of the semester. Consistent with ERC policy, there are no retroactive accommodations. Unless approved by the ERC and cleared with the instructor, audio- or video-recording of lecture is prohibited.

## Spring 2006 Reading List

### January 25 and 27: Attitude Measurement

Ito, T. A., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2000). Electrophysiological evidence of implicit and explicit categorization processes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 36*, 660-676.

Vargas, P. T., von Hippel, W., & Petty, R. E. (2004). Using partially structured attitude measures to enhance the attitude-behavior relationship. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30*, 197-211.

### February 1 and 3: Implicit Attitudes and Accessibility

Devos, T., & Banaji, M. R. (2005). American = White? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 88*, 447-466.

Giner-Sorolla, R. (2004). Is affective material in attitudes more accessible than cognitive material? The moderating role of attitude basis. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 34*, 761-780.

### February 8 and 10: Attitude Structure and Organization

Huskinson, T. L. H., & Haddock, G. (2004). Individual differences in attitude structure: Variance in the chronic reliance on affective and cognitive information. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40*, 82-90.

van Harreveld, F., & van der Pligt, J. (2004). Attitudes as stable and transparent constructions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40*, 666-674.

### February 15 and 17: The Attitude-Behavior Relation

Ajzen, I., Brown, T. C., & Carvajal, F. (2004) Explaining the discrepancy between intentions and actions: The case of hypothetical bias in contingent valuation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30*, 1108-1121.

Ferguson, M. J., & Bargh, J. A. (2004). Liking is for doing: The effects of goal pursuit on automatic evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*, 557-572.

### **February 22 and 24: Attitude Polarization**

Crawford, M., & McCrea, S. M. (2004). When mutations meet motivations: Attitude biases in counterfactual thought. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40*, 65-74

Fleming, M. A., Petty, R. E., & White, P. H. (2005). Stigmatized targets and evaluation: Prejudice as a determinant of attribute scrutiny and polarization. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 31*, 496-507.

### **February 26 Through March 3 Carnival Break**

### **March 8 and 10: Attitudinal Ambivalence**

Kachadourian, L. K., Fincham, F., & Davila, J. (2005). Attitudinal ambivalence, rumination, and forgiveness of partner transgressions in marriage. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 31*, 334-342.

van Harreveld, F., van der Pligt, J., de Vries, N. K., Wenneker, C., Verhue, D. (2004). Ambivalence and information integration in attitudinal judgment. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 43*, 431-447.

### **March 15 and 17: Attitude Formation**

Briñol, P., & Petty, R. E. (2003). Overt head movements and persuasion: A self-validation analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 1123-1139.

Jones, J. T., Pelham, B. W., Carvalho, M., & Mirenberg, M. C. (2004). How do I love thee? Let me count the Js: Implicit egotism and interpersonal attraction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*, 665-683.

### **March 22 and 24: Metacognition and Implicit Theories**

Ames, D. R., & Iyengar, S. S. (2005). Appraising the unusual: Framing effects and moderators of uniqueness-seeking and social projection. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 41*, 271-282.

Douglas, K. M., & Sutton, R. M. (2004). Right about others, wrong about ourselves? Actual and perceived self-other differences in resistance to persuasion. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 43*, 585-603.

### **March 29 and 31: Dual Process Model of Persuasion**

Claypool, H. M., Mackie, D. M., Garcia-Marques, T., McIntosh, A., & Udal, A. (2004). The effects of personal relevance and repetition on persuasive processing. *Social Cognition*, 22, 310-335.

Rucker, D. D., & Petty, R. E. (2004). When resistance is futile: Consequences of failed counterarguing for attitude certainty. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86, 219-235.

### **April 5 and 7: Dissonance**

Albarracín, D., & McNatt, P. S. (2005). Maintenance and decay of past behavior influences: Anchoring attitudes on beliefs following inconsistent actions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 719-733.

Botti, S., & Iyengar, S. S. (2004). The psychological pleasure and pain of choosing: when people prefer choosing at the cost of subsequent outcome satisfaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 312-326.

### **April 12 and 19: Attitude Change and Groups**

Matz, D. C., & Wood, W. (2005). Cognitive dissonance in groups: The consequences of disagreement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88, 22-37.

Rydell, R. J., & McConnell, A. R. (2005). Perceptions of entitativity and attitude change. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 99-110.

### **April 14 Through April 17 Passover/Easter Break**

### **April 21, 26, and 28: Class Presentations**

## Laboratory Syllabus

1/23	IAT
1/30	PsycLit and Library Research
2/6	SPSS
2/13	APA Style
2/20	work-shop on method + results write-up IAT (due 3/6)
<b>2/27</b>	<b>Carnival Break</b>
3/6	dual process models conference pres (due 20th)
3/13	workshop on conference pres (due 20 <sup>th</sup> )
3/20	workshop on methodology for proposal (meth due 4/3)
3/27	workshop on methodology for proposal
4/3	workshop on proposed analyses for proposal (due 4/10)
4/10	workshop on introduction for proposal (due 4/24)
<b>4/17</b>	<b>Passover/Easter Break</b>
4/24	office hours