

## Theory and Research in Social Psychology<sup>1</sup>

46-560 (01)

Winter 2013

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**Class time and place:** Tuesdays 1:00 – 3:50 p.m. Chrysler Hall South 278

**Class instructor:** Dr. Charlene Y. Senn  
180 Chrysler Hall South  
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**Office hours:** Thursdays 1:30 – 4:00 p.m. (except on Thursday Feb 14 when my hours will be 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.) – you may sign up in advance at <https://www.timetrade.com/book/8142S> for one or two 15 min blocks to ensure you do not have to wait in line. I will also attempt to make myself available at other times by appointment if you absolutely cannot make it to my regularly scheduled office hours.

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**Course description:** A review of research design and methodology in social psychology, in the context of social psychological theory. Students will develop proposals for research projects. (3 seminar hours a week.)

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### Course objectives:

- 1) This course aims to familiarize students with the variety of research methodologies useful in the study and practice of Social Psychology. As such, its goal is not to develop expertise in a particular methodology, but to provide students with general knowledge of the basic issues relevant to commonly used methodologies. Emphasis will be placed on the advantages and disadvantages of specific methods and on the factors that must be considered when choosing among them.
- 2) Theory is an essential component to social psychological studies and cannot be divorced from sound research methodology. All methods will be discussed in the context of various social psychological theories.
- 3) Students will gain experience in critically reading and discussing published research, focussing on methodological concerns within a particular theoretical context; and writing and presenting a research proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> This course was designed and the course outline written by Greg Chung-Yan. It was adapted by me in relatively minor ways.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

- understand and appreciate differences and similarities between positivist/post-positivist and social constructionist epistemological approaches to research;
- understand and appreciate common research methods and when to use them;
- understand the importance of using psychological theory when conducting research;
- critically examine research studies within the epistemological tradition which they embrace;
- effectively guide a seminar discussion;
- design research studies that complement one another to investigate a particular issue;
- anticipate problems when planning research and generate potential solutions;
- evaluate and incorporate peer and faculty feedback to develop a research project;
- clearly communicate (orally and verbally) a research proposal and complex research methods.

**Text:**

Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin. (**required**)

Jaccard, J., & Jacoby, J. (2010). *Theory construction and model-building skills*. New York, NY: Guilford. (**recommended**)

Additional required readings are available through the course website (CLEW) or will be made available for photocopying from the course instructor. Make sure that you check the availability of the reading in advance so you are leaving enough time to get the reading done.

**Expectations:**

- 1) We will not be able to discuss all social psychological theories or research methodologies. This would be an impossible task. I assume that students in the class are capable of independent learning. In the end, success in this course depends on your own time and effort; on your commitment to expanding your knowledge of theory and research; and on your willingness to take an active part in the learning process.
- 2) Participation, course attendance, and punctuality are mandatory.
- 3) All formal oral components for the course are expected to be conducted professionally (i.e., standing up and using PowerPoint).
- 4) All written components should be formatted according to APA standards. Your APA style manual is your friend; get to know it well and refer to it often.

**Evaluation:**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>
Class attendance & active participation	20%	All
Attend Dept. Colloquia and formulate 1 question at each (ask it to move up half a letter grade) - .75% weight each	3%	By next class after colloquium
Topic presentations and facilitating active discussion	22%	Pick by 2 <sup>nd</sup> week
Confound Assignment	15%	February 26
Research Proposal Topic due via e-mail		March 5
Research Proposal presentation	10%	March 26
Research Proposal	30%	April 11 between 1:30 – 4:00 pm in my office

**1) Participation in Departmental Colloquia**

Part of the experience of being a graduate student is becoming a full member of the Department's research culture. Our Department holds research talks, brown bag seminars, and other public events that are all part of the research culture beyond the collection of faculty and students doing their individual and collaborative research projects. To encourage you to continue on your journey to get involved, you will attend the four talks scheduled as part of the Department's Colloquium Series this term. Even great talks are made better when members of the audience ask good questions in the question period. It can take a while to build up your confidence to ask questions publicly. Therefore you will develop a question immediately following the talk, and if you can, you will ask it. Whether or not you ask it, you will submit that question to me electronically before the next class. I will usually remember if you asked a question at the talk, but please remind me whether you did or not in your submission.

**2) Weekly topic presentation and directing seminar discussion (20%)**

You will be in charge of the discussion for 2 weeks.

You will choose two of the weekly topics on which to make presentations and facilitate those weeks' discussion. The first 15-20 minutes may consist of a more formal presentation of the topic; the remaining class time you will guide a discussion of the topic. Alternatively, you may intersperse parts of your presentation with discussion. Presenting for longer than this suggested time limit is not recommended.

For the weeks you facilitate, you are required to provide one or two examples of social psychology research studies from recent journal articles that use the method under review (you will upload them to CLEW 48 hours prior to class). Ideally, the examples you choose will represent both good and not so good applications of the topic at hand. For every study presented, in addition to demonstrating the method under review, the social psychological theories that are being tested should be highlighted. Give a brief background on the theory (i.e., where it was derived from, how it has evolved, etc.)

Some discussion questions should be circulated to all seminar participants (on CLEW) at least 24 hours prior to the class time.

### ***Directing seminar sessions and facilitating active discussion***

*As a discussion facilitator, you will be evaluated as much—if not more—on your ability to elicit quality participation from the seminar participants as you will be on a demonstration of your ability to present the topic the material.*

“Facilitating meaningful discussions is the most rewarding, yet most difficult, task in running a [graduate seminar]. Discussions allow students and teachers alike to synthesize readings and insights, to gain confidence in their own ideas, and to learn from each other. Yet discussions can also contain dangerous pitfalls—tangents, single-person domination, one-direction-only conversations, silences, and monotony. While we often think of discussions as open forums for sharing ideas, with careful preparation, participants can be pushed to think more deeply about the course material”

“[Participants] want to know what to expect from the conversation and why it is relevant to their learning. Defining key terms, posting your objectives on the board or explaining them aloud, and making connections to previous topics is a good way to get started.”

“Ways to encourage participants to talk to one another”:

- Craft questions that require varying levels of knowledge, comprehension, and analysis.
- Shift the focus away from yourself by trying not to respond to every comment. Invite students to call on one another and refine other students’ comments.
- In general, when making prepared comments during a discussion, they should last no longer than 3 minutes at a time; any more than that and you risk the disengagement of participants.
- Take time at the end of class to reflect on what everyone has learned and how the conversation addressed the day’s objectives. When participants leave class, they should understand how the day’s discussion relates to the course’s larger themes and to previous conversations in section.

*All direct quotes and paraphrased material from:*

*<http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/teaching/discussion.html>*

### **3) Confound Assignment (15%) – due February 26**

This assignment will involve the critical evaluation of research designs. You will be given a choice of studies and asked to identify alternative interpretations for the research findings (i.e., point out the potential confounds). This assignment has a page limit of **7 double-spaced** pages with 12-point, Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins.

### **4) Oral Presentation of Research Proposal (10%) – March 26**

A formal presentation (10 - 15 minutes) of your proposal will be given prior to submitting your written proposal. After every presentation, there will be a question and answer period where feedback can be offered to improve upon the proposed studies.

**5) Research Proposal and Response to Reviewers (30%) – Topic idea due (by email) Mar. 5; full assignment due Apr. 11.**

The major written assignment for this course consists of writing a research proposal. You must include more than one research method to investigate your topic. For instance, you should not propose to conduct survey research to the exclusion of other methods. In other words, you should propose two to three studies, each using a different research methodology. Multiple methodologies are important because any single research design will have weaknesses. Therefore, you should also comment on the strengths and weaknesses of your proposed research designs and how they complement one another.

The proposal should include the theory/theories upon which the studies are based. Although it is possible to use one grand theory on which to base your studies, many studies are based on an integration of theories. You are encouraged to draw upon more than one theory or elements of different theories to develop your proposal.

The proposal should be between 15-20 double-spaced pages (Times New Roman font, 1" margins), not including references or title page, and in APA format.

You will be presenting your proposal (see above) before it is submitted. It is thus expected that you will incorporate the feedback from your colleagues into your written proposal. To ensure that you get practice responding directly to critiques (this needs to be done for resubmission of journal articles and grant applications), you will also submit a one page single spaced *Response to Reviewers* where you provide answers to the feedback you received. It is usual that you would need to collapse some issues or even ignore minor issues to fit your response into a single page. Examples of these types of documents will be provided on CLEW.

More details about the assignment will be discussed in class.

**PLAGIARISM AND EXAMINATION MAKE-UP POLICIES**  
*(Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences – May 2012)*

**1. Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense. Students who plagiarize are dishonestly and fraudulently using someone else's work as their own. In the preparation of essays, papers, reports, and any other types of assignments, students must necessarily rely on the work of others. However, the source of any ideas, wording, or data obtained from others **must** be disclosed and properly acknowledged by citations, quotation marks, and bibliographic references in the proper format. **Using the work of others without acknowledgement is plagiarism.**

**Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:**

- a) Copying material, for example, from the **Internet**, or purchasing material and submitting it as one's own;
- b) Paraphrasing (changing some of the words) the ideas and concepts of others (whether published or unpublished) without proper referencing;
- c) Using a passage or passages of any length from published or unpublished work of others without placing the passage(s) in quotation marks (or using indentation for long quotation(s)) and acknowledging the source(s).

Other Forms of Academic Misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- a) Submitting work to more than one course, unless prior permission to do so has been given in writing;
- b) Submitting work completely or largely identical to that of other students, unless group work and joint submissions are explicitly permitted by the instructor.

For additional Examples of Academic Misconduct please and more on the definition of plagiarism refer to Senate By-law 31, Appendix A at [www.uwindsor.ca/senate](http://www.uwindsor.ca/senate) and click on bylaws and policies.

**Consequences:**

If the instructor believes that plagiarism has occurred, s/he assigns a grade of IN (incomplete) to the work in question and with agreement of the Department Head, reports the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty, **and to the student(s) involved**. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated pursuant to Senate Bylaw 31, which could result in suspension or expulsion from the University in cases of repeated plagiarism. Normally, students will not be allowed to re-write or re-submit work to compensate for grades assigned as a result of plagiarism. Students will be given the opportunity to address the matter of plagiarism to the Department Head and/or to the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and ultimately to a Judicial Panel at the University. Students can appeal a finding of plagiarism or a sanction decision to the Discipline Appeal Committee of the University. (See Bylaw 31 for complete details.)

**2. Exam Makeup/Late Submission/Aegrotat/Incomplete Policy**

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences requires students to provide **acceptable and documented medical** (or equivalent compassionate) **reasons** to allow make-ups for scheduled tests, midterms, and final exams; the submission of late assignments; or grades of Incomplete or Aegrotat.

Acceptable reasons include hospital stays, serious illness, family emergencies (such as serious accidents or illnesses, death) or similar circumstances outside the student's control. Normally, written documentation is required stating specific reasons and dates. Arrangements for make-up exams must be made as soon as possible. The instructor sets the date and format for make-up exams. The make-up exam will usually be different than the original exam, but will be equivalent in terms of testing objectives, format, level of difficulty, material covered, length of examination, etc., (in accordance with Bylaw 51).

**Tentative Schedule and Weekly Topics**

<b>Week 1 (Jan. 8): Course Overview and Organizing Meeting</b>	<b>Charlene</b>
<b>Week 2 (Jan. 15): Epistemology, Theory, and Research Methods</b>	<b>Charlene</b>

Jaccard, J., & Jacoby, J. (2010). Chapter 3: Science as an approach to understanding. *Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills*.

McGrath, J.E., & Johnson, B.A. (2003). Methodology makes meaning: How both qualitative and quantitative paradigms shape evidence and its interpretation. In P.M. Camic, J.E. Rhodes, & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design* (pp. 31-48). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Fiske, Susan (2004). Mind the gap: In praise of informal sources of formal theory. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8(2), pp. 132-137

<b>Week 3 (Jan. 22): Experiments and Generalized Causal Inference</b>	Charlene
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Chapter 1: Experiments and generalized causal inference.

***Confound assignment discussed and articles posted on CLEW***

<b>Week 4 (Jan. 29): Internal and External Validity (Example articles not required)</b>	
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Chapter 2: Statistical conclusion validity and internal validity

Chapter 3: Construct validity and external validity

<b>Week 5 (Feb. 5): Quasi-Experimental Designs</b>	
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Chapter 4: Quasi-experimental designs that either lack a control group or lack pretest observations on the outcome

Chapter 5: Quasi-experimental designs that use both control groups and pretests.

<b>Week 6 (Feb. 12): Basics of Experimentation</b>	
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Chapter 8: Randomized experiments: Rationale, designs, and conditions conducive to doing them.

Haslam, S.A. & McGarty, C. (2001). 100 years of certitude? Social psychology, the experimental method and the management of scientific uncertainty. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 40, 1-21.

<b>(Feb. 19): Reading Week; No class</b>	
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<b>Week 7 (Feb. 26): Survey Research</b>	
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***Confound assignment due***

Fowler, F. J. Jr. (2002). *Survey Research Methods (3rd edition)*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage (Chapters 1-5). [borrow to photocopy – on reserve at library]

Schalm, R. L., & Kelloway, E. K. (2001). The relationship between response rate and effect size in occupational health psychology research. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 6, 160-163.

Schwartz, N. (1999). Self-reports: How the questions shape the answers. *American Psychologist*, 54(2), 93-105.

<b>Week 8 (Mar. 5): What to Study</b>	Charlene
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***Topic idea for research proposal due (via e-mail)***

Jaccard, J., & Jacoby, J. (2010). Chapter 4: Creativity and the generation of ideas. *Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills*.

Jaccard, J., & Jacoby, J. (2010). Chapter 13: Epilogue. *Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills*.

Cohen, J. (1990). Things I have learned (so far). *American Psychologist*, 45 (12), 1304-1312.

<b>Week 9 (Mar. 12): Qualitative Research</b>	
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Maxwell, J. A. (2009). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Bickman & D.J. Rog (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* (pp. 214-253). Los Angeles: Sage.

Stewart, D. W., & Shamdasani, P. N. (1990). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (Chapters 1 to 5). [borrow to photocopy – on reserve at library] [reading on Interviewing may be substituted – see me in advance if you are facilitating]

<b>Week 10 (Mar. 19): Research Proposal Discussion and Revisiting Psychological Theory</b>	<b>Charlene</b>
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Jaccard, J., & Jacoby, J. (2010). Chapter 7: Causal models. *Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills*.

Jaccard, J., & Jacoby, J. (2010). Chapter 12: Reading and writing about theories. *Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills*. (Including Appendix 12A)

Bem, D.J. (2004). Writing the empirical journal article. In J. Darley, M.P., & Zanna, M.P. & H.L. Roediger III (Eds.), *The Compleat Academic: A career guide*. Washington: APA. Electronic access available from <http://dbem.ws/WritingArticle.pdf>

<b>Week 11 (Mar. 26): Research Proposal Presentations (Use feedback in final write-up)</b>	
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Olseson, K.C. & Arkin, Robert M. (2006). Reviewing and evaluating a research article. In F.T.L. Leong & J.T. Austin (Eds.), *The Psychology Research Handbook 2nd edition* (pp. 59-74). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

<b>Week 12 (Apr. 2): Practical Problems (Last formal class)</b>	
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Chapter 9: Practical Problems 1: Ethics, participant recruitment, and random assignment.

Chapter 10: Practical Problems 2: Treatment implementation and attrition

<b>Week 13 (Apr. 9):</b> This is an additional week in what is normally a 12 week term. I will be available in my office during the class time to provide last minute consultation on your research proposals	<b>Charlene</b>
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<b>Research Proposal Due Apr. 11 in my office hours (between 1:30 and 4).</b>
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