Seminars: Monday 1:00-3:50 in 224K
Instructor: Roger Buehler
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Course Description:

The objective of this seminar course is to provide graduate students with in depth coverage of a wide range of important topics in social psychology. Each week our starting point will be a review article from the Social and Personality Psychology Compass. This is an online journal that publishes original, peer-reviewed surveys of the current state of research and theory on a topic. The articles typically target issues that have had a major impact on the field, and review the existing research through the lens of the authors’ theoretical perspective. Thus each week we will be exposed to an extensive, systematic, review of research examining significant issues in the field.

Assigned Readings:

Each week there will be two or three assigned readings: typically a review article from compass and one or two empirical research reports related to the topic at hand. The assigned readings will be available as pdf files on myLS. See schedule of readings below.

Course Requirements:

20% Participation: This is a seminar style course that relies on your active participation in class discussions. The discussions are an integral part of the course, where I expect much of the learning and exposure to critical ideas to occur. Each week you should come to class prepared with comments and questions about issues in the readings that caught your interest. Your participation grade will be based not only on the quantity of your participation but also the quality – your contributions in class should demonstrate that you have read the material carefully and given it some thought and reflection.

10% Discussion questions or comments: To help you think about the readings, you are expected to prepare one discussion question (or comment) concerning each of the assigned readings. Questions are to be turned in at the beginning of class and will be evaluated using a simple three point scale (1 = needs improvement, 2 = good, 3 = excellent). Questions will be considered 'good' if they demonstrate that you read and carefully thought about the material; excellent questions will be outstanding and show careful critical thinking or creative insight. I will give you specific feedback only on any questions/comments that need improvement. Questions may be handwritten as long as they are legible. The questions should serve as a stimulus for class
discussion – you should keep a personal copy of your questions so that you will have them readily available during the discussion period. When there is a lull in discussion, I am likely to ask a student for a new question. Although we may not get a chance to cover every question, your credit will not depend on whether we discuss your question in class.

20% Article presentations: On two separate occasions, you will be expected to present an empirical research article and to lead discussion concerning the article. The presented articles are optional reading for the other students. You can select an article from the list of optional readings below. Alternatively, you may choose to locate another recent empirical article from one of the following sources: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. Either way, avoid choosing research reports that are so short that they do not have enough substance (e.g., “flash reports” or very brief Psych Science articles). The article you choose to present should fit with the focus of the week, and you should consult with me about your choice at least two weeks before the date of the presentation.

Each article presentation should be about 20-25 minutes long including discussion (approximately 15 minute talk and 10 min discussion). When you present, keep in mind that the rest of the class will likely not have read the article. You should carefully describe the research, including the theoretical background, the hypotheses, the design, the method, and a summary of the results (a few key tables or figures can be helpful). Visual aids and class activities are encouraged. A projector with Power Point will be available. A good presentation will “go beyond” the article itself; for example, you could discuss practical and theoretical implications of the research and relate it to other ideas (e.g., material covered in this course, other courses, or your own personal experiences), or you could conduct a class activity or demonstration. You should also prepare a short list of issues or questions for the class to discuss.

20% Thought papers: You are expected to write two brief “thought papers” throughout the term. Thought papers should be 3-6 pages, typed, double spaced. The topic of your thought paper is open, as long as it clearly relates to the seminar readings and discussions from the previous weeks. You are expected to provide more than just a summary of readings, but exactly what you talk about is up to you. You may want to consider problems you’ve identified with a theory or a research approach, or to suggest some way to extend a line of research in a new direction. You could discuss the ways in which a program of research may have practical implications in the “real world” and illustrate with real or hypothetical examples. You could try to connect ideas arising in the course to ideas found in other disciplines or other domains of psychology. You could consider how the concepts in the course could relate to and extend your own primary research interests. **Due dates for the thought papers are Feb 14 and March 14.**

30% Research proposal: The final paper will be a research proposal in which you present a research question that is related to topics covered in the course, and describe an empirical study that would address it. In the research proposal you should (a) outline a hypothesis that you would be interested in testing, (b) present a literature review pertinent to your hypothesis, (c) specify a method for testing the hypothesis, (d) describe the expected results, and (e) discuss implications and potential alternative accounts. The paper should be 10-20 pages long, excluding references (double-spaced, APA format). **Due date for the research proposal is April 18.** During the last
two weeks of class you will also present your proposal to the class and receive comments that may help you with the final version of your proposal. This brief presentation will be incorporated into your overall grade for the research proposal.

Schedule:

Below is a preliminary schedule of topics along with the corresponding review article for each week. This schedule will be updated soon with the complete list of readings for the term, including the optional articles for presentations.

The assigned readings are marked with asterisks (**). The remaining articles are optional readings that may interest you if you want further information on a topic, and/or may be presented by students for their article presentations. Articles will be posted as pdf files on myLS.

**Week 1 (Jan 6)**
**Introduction and organization of course**


**Week 2 (Jan 13)**
**Priming and automatic behavior**


**Week 3 (Jan 20)**

**Psychological distance and construal level**


**Steinhart, Y., Carmon, Z., & Trope, Y. (2013). Warnings of adverse side effects can backfire over time. *Psychological Science, 24*(9), 1842-1847.**


**Week 4 (Jan 27)**

**Self regulation and control**


**Week 5 (Feb 3)**

**Goal pursuit and motivation**


**Week 6 (Feb 10)**

Lay theories of change


**Week 7 (Feb 24)**

**Self Affirmation**


**Week 8 (Mar 3)**

**Terror Management**


**Week 9 (Mar 10)**

**Exclusion and belonging**


**Week 10 (Mar 17)**

**Prejudice and discrimination**


**Week 11 (Mar 24)**

**Happiness and Subjective Well Being**


**Week 12 (Mar 31)**

**Presentation of research proposals**

**Week 13 (Apr 7)**

**Presentation of research proposals**