COU 655 Social and Cultural Context and Systems

Time ~ A learned value...

Ritual ~ Sharing symbolic understanding

Love and Interpersonal Attraction ~ Who knows...
Course Description. This course examines the effect of social influence on the development of human behavior. Attitude formation, group behavior, cultural subgroups, and general systems theory are addressed. Additional topics include studies in the relationships between individual and social spheres with attention to such issues as conformity, role patterning, leadership, persuasion, self-justification, aggression, prejudice, intimacy and attraction, and the influence of social and cultural systems and context on patterns of relationship development. Course study concerns social interaction in situations of (1) social influences on individuals, (2) dyads or face-to-face groups, and (3) larger social systems. Special attention is given to the manner in which social roles and system expectations are relevant to counseling practice. Concepts, theories, data, research methods, and applications of varied substantive topics are examined. Critical thinking, writing, and the sharing of experiential knowledge by students are stressed. This course draws from the theoretical perspectives of social psychology, applying relevant concepts and theories to graduate counseling majors. We are particularly interested in understanding and explaining how the “thought, feeling, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others” (Allport, 1985: 3) and in what context and systems behavior occurs.

This course is a refreshingly different approach to the traditional study of human behavior. The goal is for the course to be a highly engaging experience connecting course material to students’ everyday lives and to their practice of counseling. The course integrates material showing the field's relevance to human problems and incorporates motivation, social evolution, and culture, not as after-thoughts, but as intrinsic features of the human condition. The course focuses on five core social motives: Belonging, Understanding, Controlling, Enhancing Self, and Trusting. We look at the concept of adaptation from a social and cultural context approach that is progressive, responsible, and complete. Within this framework, we integrate culture throughout, providing a realistic sense of how human persons operate in an increasingly multi-cultural world, weaving issues of gender and ethnicity into the understanding of human behavior in most contexts and systems.

As a requirement of the course, students will make presentations on several reading selections of enduring intellectual value--classic articles, book excerpts, and research studies--that have shaped the study of social behavior and our contemporary understanding of it. These selections, written by some of the greatest thinkers in social psychology, are organized topically around major areas of study within social psychology: the social psychological approach; social cognitive processes; attitudes; social interaction and relationships; social influence and group processes; helping and aggression; and applications of social psychology. Students will critique the presentations and note their reflections in a journal each class session. This is to promote an understanding of social behavior and help the class think about how context, social and cultural, and systems may affect human behavior, especially in the context of the student’s future counseling practice.

Course Goals. This course is designed to be a challenging academic experience. The goal is for the course participant to grow as a result of this scholarly pursuit by gaining a better understanding of “self" and the others in one’s life. In this regard, the course can help the participant obtain an understanding of the concepts of social psychology and be able to relate this understanding to real life situations, social interactions, and counseling practice. Also important is for participants to become more proficient communicators, both in verbal and written communicative skills, and to gain confidence as a leader/facilitator working in a multifaceted, diverse group environment.
Prerequisite(s):
Graduate Standing and Permission of the Instructor.

Course Integrated in to the Program Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Health Focus</th>
<th>Addictions Focus</th>
<th>School Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course as Relates to External Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CACREP Requirements (2009)</th>
<th>Nebraska Licensure Addictions</th>
<th>NDEA Rule 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Social and Cultural Diversity. This course focuses on studies that provide an understanding of the social and cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society, including all of the following:

a. becoming aware of the importance of antecedent variables or underlying factors in and/or affecting a client’s life circumstances and world view;

b. understanding the importance of social and cultural influences and context of a client’s life and the systems in which the client exists;

c. multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally;

d. attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities designed to foster students’ understanding of self and social and/or culturally diverse clients;

e. counselors’ roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, and other culturally supported behaviors that promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body; and

f. counselors’ roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression, exclusion, and discrimination.

Evaluation of Learning Outcomes. Course participants will be evaluated to determine whether or not the learning outcomes are achieved. Grading will encompass class attendance; the oral presentations; participation in class discussion, critiques, the degree of preparedness for each class session; quality and depth of the course journal in terms of content, concept or theory development, insights and reflections, and the application of theory and concepts (learning objectives) in the journal. In total, these means of evaluations address all stated course learning objectives. Preparation for each class session is essential if these objectives are to be met. In this regard, staying current in the assigned readings is very important.
**Course Learning Objectives.** Through intellectual dialogue and critical evaluation of course materials and other sources of information, at the course conclusion, each participant should:

1. understand the core concerns and important theoretical perspectives in social psychology;
2. understand and be able to apply the critical thinking perspective to the evaluation of social psychological concepts and theory;
3. understand the concepts of socialization and related components and issues; such as self, self-schema, self-image, self-concept, self-esteem, and social identity;
4. understand the concepts of social perception, world view or *lifeworld*, impression formation, and attribution;
5. understand the concepts of attitude, to include development, maintenance, and change relating to attitudes, and the various methods used to measure attitudes;
6. comprehend symbolic communication and language from a counselor’s perspective;
7. understand the concepts of social influence and persuasion and implications for counselors;
8. understand the concepts of self-presentation and impression management;
9. comprehend the concepts of helping and altruism, aggression, and interpersonal attraction;
10. comprehend the concepts of group cohesion and conformity, group structure and interaction, group performance, and intergroup conflict;
11. understand the concept of adaptation from a social and cultural context approach;
12. understand the concepts of social structure and personality and implications for the client’s social development;
13. comprehend the concepts of deviant behavior and social reaction, especially relating to social and cultural context;
   - comprehend the concepts of collective behavior and social movements;
   - understand the five core social motives: Belonging, Understanding, Controlling, Enhancing Self, and Trusting; and
   - master the practical application of course theory and concepts to everyday, real life counseling situations.

There are **FIVE** primary learning outcomes for this course:

a. becoming aware of the importance of antecedent variables or underlying factors in and/or affecting a client’s life circumstances and world view;

b. understanding the importance of social and cultural influences and context of a client’s life and the systems in which the client exists;

c. understanding multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally;

d. becoming aware of attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities designed to foster students’ understanding of self and social and/or culturally diverse clients; and

e. understanding the counselors’ roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, and other culturally supported behaviors that promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body and counselors’ roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression, exclusion, and discrimination.
Course Requirements and Evaluations (Grading):

1. **Attendance and participation** in classroom discussions. This includes being prepared to discuss assigned readings, handouts, films and videos, etc. Twenty points toward the final grade will be based on participation and attendance. After reading the syllabus, you can understand that attendance is important to take full advantage of all the learning opportunities of this course. If you know in advance that you must miss a class, speak to me so that I can give you assignments to make-up the absence. One absence can be made-up. Two absences will result in the loss of 10 points, plus will require make-up work. If you anticipate more than two absences, please enroll for the course at a time more convenient to your schedule.

2. **Oral Presentation** in class on the assigned theoretical perspective. The presentation is worth 10 points.

3. **Journal.** Students will maintain a course journal in which they will enter insights and reflections about readings from the text, presentations by other students, and class discussions. The journal should be integrative in that insights and reflections are tied together and relate to one’s counseling practice. For each Fiske chapter, generate brief questions or comments (maybe an insight or two), highlighting what’s interesting, convincing, unconvincing, confusing, or pointless, and what makes sense, and briefly why. For presentations, summarize what was presented in a few sentences and provide the same analysis as for the text chapters. In class, use your comments, summaries, and objections as a basis for your contributions (participation). The journal is worth 70 points and is due one week after the final class session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-97=A+</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96-94=A</td>
<td>Journal 70 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-90=A-</td>
<td>Oral Presentation 10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-87=B+</td>
<td>Attendance/Participation 20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-84=B</td>
<td>Total Possible Points 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Integrity Policy.** The Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and written materials will represent your own work. The use of other's ideas and words shall be properly cited. Please ask if you are unsure as to how or what a proper citation of a source is.

**Required Text:**
A text is available in digital format for $19.95 online at the link provided below.
http://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course/1255009

**Critical Thinking.** Remember, in seeking the elusive truth, we have two basic questions to ask:

*How do you know?...What does it mean?*

I hope that you will enjoy this learning journey.
Course Outline:

Required hours for each session of the 9-week course: 4 hrs. in class; 5 hrs. completing reading assignments; and 5 hrs. class preparation and reflective journal writing. Total required weekly hours are 14 hours x 9 wks. = 126 hours.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 1: Introducing Social Psychology
(Read prior to class)

Session One.
1. Introduction and explanation of the course and learning expectations.
2. Discussion of course requirements and assignments.
3. Introduction of course participants.

Topics Include:
- Definition of Social Psychology
- Four Core Concerns of Social Psychology
- Five Social Motives: Belonging, Understanding, Controlling, Enhancing Self, and Trusting.
- Theoretical Perspectives of Social Psychology
- Allen Model of Social Psychology (Handout)
- Basis of Social Psychology as a Science
- Characteristics of Empirical Research
- Research Methods
- Ethics in Social Psychological Research

6. Discussion concerning video.
7. Overview of oral presentations.
8. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 15, and 16.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 2: Social Learning and Social Cognition
(Read prior to class)

Session Two.
1. Discuss role theory, reinforcement theory, cognitive theory, and symbolic interaction theory from a critical thinking perspective.
2. Discuss term paper requirements. (View example papers)(Handout)
3. LECTURE: Who are you and of what worth?

Topics Include:
- Socialization Agents Processes Outcomes
- Secondary Socialization
- Impression Formation
- Attribution Theory
- Bias and Error in Attribution

5. Discussion of video (Self-image, self-worth, self-concept, reference groups)
6. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
   a. Role Theory
      Presenter: ______________________________
   b. Cognitive Theory
      Presenter: ______________________________

7. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 15, and 16.
Session Three

1. **LECTURE:** The Social Self in the Everyday World ~ Understanding Attitude Change.

   **Topics Include:**
   - Schemas
   - Attitude Formation
   - Cognitive Dissonance
   - Balance Theory
   - Emergence and Source of Self
   - Self-Schema, Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, and Self-Esteem (Handout)
   - Attitude Change Through Methods of Persuasion
   - Threats and Promises
   - Obedience to Authority
   - Social Power, Compliance, Obedience
   - Conformity Language and Verbal Communication
   - Nonverbal Communication
   - Social Structure and Communication
   - Self-Presentation
   - Impression Management
   - Socialization, Cultural Message, PeerPressure
   - Gender Stereotypes
   - Gender-Based Evaluation Bias

2. **VIDEO:** "Time for Burning." American Lutheran Church, 1965.
   “Creating Social Reality.” Discovering Psychology Series, Annenberg Foundation

3. Discussion of video.

4. Discuss social influence and persuasion.
   a. Communication-Persuasion Paradigm
   b. Obedience to authority

5. **ORAL PRESENTATIONS:**
   a. Reinforcement Theory
      Presenter: ________________________________________________
   b. Symbolic Interaction Theory
      Presenter: ________________________________________________

6. **LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, and 17.
Reading Assignment: Chapter 6: Perceiving Others
(Read prior to class) Chapter 8: Interpersonal Attraction

Session Four.

1. LECTURE: Relax and Meet Shirley Valentine.
   Topics Include: Interpersonal Attraction, Love, and Intimacy
   Physical Attraction
   Matching Hypotheses
   Homogeny of Norms
   Proximity
   Same Sex Attraction
   Components of the Life Course
   Influences on Life Progression
   Stages in the Life Course: Age and Sex Roles
   “The Natural Order”
   Historical Variations
   Socialization    Cultural Message    Peer Pressure
   Gender Stereotypes
   Gender-Based Evaluation Bias

2. Discuss symbolic communication and language.

3. VIDEO: “Shirley Valentine.”

4. Discuss video.

5. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
   a. Comparison of Perspectives
      Presenter: ______________________________________
   b. Comparison of Perspectives
      Presenter: ______________________________________

6. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16.
Reading Assignment: Chapter 9: Helping and Altruism
(Read prior to class)

**Session Five.**
1. LECTURE: Going my way?
   Topics Include: Motivation to Help Others
   Other Factors in Helping Others
   Status Attainment Individual Values Alienation Role Theory
   Social Influences on Health Symbolic Interaction Theory
   Alienation

3. Discussion of video (e.g., Social Psychological theory, impression management, interpersonal attraction and relationships, attitudes [prejudice], self-esteem, and social perception and attribution, etc.).

4. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
   a. Article ________________________________________________________________
      Presenter: _____________________________________________________________________
   b. Article ________________________________________________________________
      Presenter: _____________________________________________________________________

5. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 10: Hurting Others: Why We Become Aggressive
(Read prior to class)

**Session Six.**
1. LECTURE: Having a hard time getting along.
   Topics Include: Aggression and the Motivation to Harm
   Other Aspects of Aggression
   Status Attainment Individual Values Alienation Role Theory
   Alienation

2. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
   a. Article ________________________________________________________________
      Presenter: _____________________________________________________________________
   b. Article ________________________________________________________________
      Presenter: _____________________________________________________________________

4. Discussion of the video – aggression.
5. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1 - 16.
Session Seven.

   Topics Include: Development of Intergroup Conflict
   Persistence – Effects -- Resolution
   Group Cohesion        Group Goals        Group Norms
   Minority/Majority Influence
   Role Differentiation in Newly Formed Groups
   Status Characteristics and Social Interaction
   Equity and Reward Distribution
   Stability and Change in Authority
   Group Performance        Group Tasks        Leadership        Groupthink

2. Discussion relative to lecture and contemporary events.


4. Discussion --- Bringing the course together --- How many Soc Psy concepts are identified in the video?

5. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
   a. Article
      Presenter:

   b. Article
      Presenter:

6. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1 - 16.

Session Eight.

1. LECTURE: Follow me...
   Topics Include: Obedience to Authority
   Social Power        Compliance        Obedience
   Conformity Language and Verbal Communication
   Nonverbal Communication
   Social Structure and Communication
   Self-Presentation
   Impression Management


3. Discussion about video.

4. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
   a. Article
      Presenter:

   b. Article
      Presenter:

5. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1 - 16.
Reading Assignment: Chapter 13: Competition and Cooperation In Our Social Worlds
(Read prior to class)

Session Nine.

1. **LECTURE: Bringing It All Together.**
   Topics Include: Norms Violations, Reactions to Norms Violations, Formal Social Controls, Labeling and Secondary Deviance, Crowds, Collective Behavior Underlying Causes, Precipitating Events to Collective Behavior, Social Movement Development, Social Movement Organizations, The Consequences of Social Movements


3. Discussion on the application of Social Psychological theories and concepts to real situations, as reflected in the video. Does this knowledge help us to better understand and explain human behavior in everyday life? How can this be beneficial to you and to society in general, and what are some ethical considerations?

4. **ORAL PRESENTATIONS:**
   a. Article ________________________________________________________________
      Presenter: ___________________________________________________________________
   b. Article ________________________________________________________________
      Presenter: ___________________________________________________________________

5. Questions….answers?

6. Course evaluations.

7. **LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED:** 1 through 16.

   All work is due one week after the final class session.