

**PSYCHOLOGY 445 Section A1, Winter 2021: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND CINEMA:
UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR THROUGH THEORY, RESEARCH, AND THE CINEMA**

INSTRUCTOR: Jeff Schimel

OFFICE: BIO SCI, P319J; Meeting students in office is discouraged for Winter 2021.

CLASSES MEETINGS: Asynchronous

E-MAIL: jschimel@ualberta.ca

T.A.: Andy Scott

OFFICE: BIO SCI, P347; Meeting students in office is discouraged for Winter 2021.

E-MAIL: ascott2@ualberta.ca

COURSE PREREQUISITES

One of STAT 141 or 151 or PSYCO 212, and one of PSYCO 333, 342, 343, or 347. PSYCO 212 is strongly recommended. Note: Not open to students with credit in PSYCO 405: Studies of the Self Through Cinema.

COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES (Faculty of Arts course)

The purpose of this course is to use a combination of social psychological theory, research and feature length films to explore the psychological determinants of important forms of human social behavior. Although theory and research in social psychology has taught us a great deal about human behavior, there is a great deal more to be learned. All creative expressions that attempt to portray human thoughts, feelings or actions, whether through the medium of prose, poetry, music, painting, sculpture, theater or film, involve assumptions and assertions about the psychological determinants and consequences of human behavior, but perhaps none do so in a manner as vivid, impactful, and accessible as film. Feature length films will therefore be combined with social psychological theory and research to explore the extent and limits of current knowledge concerning topics such as the existential realities of the human condition, aggression, obedience, prejudice, interpersonal attraction, relationships and well-being. The films will be an important complement to the scholarly readings in this endeavor by serving the following functions: a) illustrating specific and significant instances of particular forms of social behavior as they occur in their natural context; b) reminding us in vivid and memorable ways of the real world phenomena social psychological theories and research are intended to explain; c) providing clues as to how various types of social issues are portrayed in the mass media and perceived by audiences; and d) helping us to clarify and assess existing knowledge and remaining questions.

READINGS

There will be a set of fairly extensive readings for each module. The readings will consist of compilations of relevant theoretical analyses and empirical reports from a wide variety of social science sources. Please keep up with the readings. This is not the type of material you can adequately comprehend in an all-nighter the night before having to complete the associated assignments, nor would that be the right approach for enjoying and benefiting from the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

Grades will be based on completing the essay questions associated with each module. The essay questions for Part I include the essay questions for each module and the Part I summary questions (35% of your course grade). The essay questions for Part II include the essay questions for Modules 5-7 (35% of your grade). The final assignment is a 10-12 page term paper (30% of your grade). The term paper will require you to choose a film from a list (that I will provide) and analyze the film according to the social psychological theories and research findings discussed throughout the course. I will provide some examples of a few well-written papers by former students on E-Class.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: If you hand in an assignment late (e.g., the term paper, or module essay questions), I will subtract 5% from your mark for each day late up to a max of 5 days.

COURSE SCHEDULE
(All times are Mountain Standard Time - MST)

Introduction: Social Psychology and the Cinema

- I. Download syllabus and introductory course notes via E-Class

Part I

Module 1: CULTURE & THE SELF-ESTEEM MOTIVE (Complete by January 25)

- I. Complete Reading Packet #1
- II. Watch Video Lecture: INTRODUCTION TO THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF MEANING
- III. Review supplemental instructor's notes (power point slides)
- IV. Review Black Robe study questions; Watch the film: BLACK ROBE (101 minutes)
- V. Watch BLACK ROBE DISCUSSION VIDEO LECTURE
- VI. Complete Module 1 essay question (due January 25, before 12am - MST)

Module 2: THE DENIAL OF DEATH (Complete by February 5)

- I. Complete reading packet #2
- II. Watch Video Lecture: MEANING AND DEATH
- III. Review Melancholia study questions; Watch the film: MELANCHOLIA (130 minutes)
- IV. Watch MELANCHOLIA DISCUSSION VIDEO LECTURE
- V. Complete Module 2 essay question (due February 5, before 12am - MST)

Module 3: THE FETISHIZATION OF EVIL & AGGRESSION IN THE INDIVIDUAL (Complete by February 22)

- I. Complete reading packet #3
- II. Watch Video Lectures: THE FETISHIZATION OF EVIL
- III Watch Video Lecture: AGGRESSION IN THE INDIVIDUAL
- IV. Review Taxi Driver study questions: Watch the film: TAXI DRIVER (128 minutes)
- V. Watch TAXI DRIVER DISCUSSION VIDEO LECTURE
- VI. Complete Module 3 essay question (due February 22, before 12am - MST)

Module 4: THE SPELL CAST BY PERSONS (Complete by March 5)

- I. Complete reading packet #4
- II. Watch Video Lecture: TRANSFERENCE, OBEDIENCE & SOCIAL INFLUENCE
- III. Review Guyana Tragedy study questions; Watch the film: GUYANA TRAGEDY (188 minutes)
- IV. Watch Guyana Tragedy discussion video lecture
- V. Complete Module 4 essay question (due March 5, before 12am)
- VI. Complete Part I summary essay questions (due March 12, before 12am - MST)

Part II

Module 5: THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF PREJUDICE (Complete by March 26)

- I. Complete reading packet #5
- II. Watch Video Lecture: THE NORMALITY OF PREJUDGMENT
- III. Watch Video Lecture: MOTIVATED PREJUDICE
- IV. Review DTRT study questions; Watch the film: DO THE RIGHT THING (120 minutes)
- V. Watch DTRT discussion video lecture
- VI. Complete Module 5 essay question (due March 26, before 12am – MST)

Module 6: Is ROMANTIC LOVE A MYTH? (Complete by April 7)

- I. Complete reading packet #6
- II. Watch Video Lecture: ROMANTIC LOVE; GROWTH & SECURITY IN RELATIONSHIPS
- III. Review H & W study questions; Watch the film: HUSBANDS AND WIVES (108 minutes)
- IV. Watch H & W discussion video lecture
- V. Complete Module 6 essay question (due April 7, before 12am - MST)

Module 7: HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING (Complete by April 16)

- I. Complete reading packet #7
- II. Review Instructor notes on Happiness, Generativity and the Redemptive Self (power point slides)
- III. Review Another Year study questions; Watch the film: ANOTHER YEAR (129 minutes)
- IV. Watch Another Year discussion video lecture
- V. Complete module 7 essay question (due April 16, before 12am - MST)

April 23: Final Term paper due by 12am (MST)

Readings for Psych 445: Social Psychology and Cinema

READING PACKET #1

Birth and Death of Meaning, Becker, preface and pp. 1-12; pp. 38-86; 112-154; 180-199
The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts, Triandis, pp. 506-517

READING PACKET #2

Denial of Death, Becker, pp. 1-8; pp. 11-34
Toward a dual motive depth psychology, Greenberg, et al., pp. 73-80.
Pride and prejudice, Solomon, et al., pp. 200-204

READING PACKET #3

Escape from Evil, Becker, pp. 91-95
Escape from Evil, Becker, pp. 146-170
Aggression, Geen, pp. 1-24;
Moderating role of trait aggressiveness, Bushman, pp. 950- 960

READING PACKET #4

Denial of Death, Becker, pp. 127-158
Making sense of the nonsensical, Osherow, pp. 68-86
Influence, Cialdini, pp. 19-34; pp. 58-64

READING PACKET #5

The nature of prejudice, Allport, pp. 17-27; pp. 367-380
Social cognition & stereotypes, Kunda, pp. 381-393
Toward the elimination of racism, Gaertner & Dovidio, pp. 203-207
The nature of prejudice, Allport pp. 41-46

READING PACKET #6

Denial of death, Becker, pp. 159-175
Defining and studying romantic love, Pope, pp. 1-26
On the peculiarities of loyalty, Drigotas, et al., pp. 596-609
Toward a dual motive depth psychology, Greenberg, et al., pp. 82-96
Love and the dynamics of personal growth, Csikszentmihalyi, pp. 306-326
Falling in love, Aron, Paris, & Aron, pp. 1102-1112

READING PACKET #7

Funds, Friends, and Faith, Myers, pp. 56-67
Materialism and its alternatives, Kasser, pp. 200-214
Happiness and Spending, Dunn et al., 115-125
Generativity and the Redemptive self, McAdams, pp. 235-242
Sequences of Redemption and Contamination, McAdams, et al. pp. 474-485
Lending a Hand, Coan, et al., pp. 1032-1039

The following is the grade distribution I will (roughly) use to assign grades in this course.

A+	Top 8%
A	Next 12%
A-	Next 17%
B+	Next 16%
B	Next 16%
B-	Next 12%
C+	Next 7%
C	Next 5%
C-	Next 3%
D+	Next 2%
D	Next 1%
F	Next 1%

Additional information and resources

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

Academic Integrity and the *Code of Student Behaviour*

<https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-integrity>.

General student resources:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.