

Social Psychology Seminar

PSYC 254

Spring 2026 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/29/2026

Welcome! This course provides familiarity with social psychological research, theory, and application. Together we will read and discuss contemporary scholarship related to macro-level structures and phenomena - power, intergroup relations, institutions, social justice, and social policy. Our readings will introduce you to major trends and debates in the field of social psychology with an emphasis on social justice research. Justice-related concerns, particularly the potential of social psychological scholarship to identify and inform meaningful strategies for addressing social, economic, racial, and other inequities are emphasized in our readings and discussions.

Contact Information

The best way to contact me is via email @ desiree.ryan@sjsu.edu.

I will do my best to reply to emails within 48 hours, but response times may take longer at the beginning of the semester and during finals.

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9 am - 10:30 am, DMH 316, or by appointment

Phone: 408-924-5653

Course Information

Course Time: TR 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Classroom: HB 405

Course Description and Requisites

Theoretical and practical approaches to the understanding of human behavior within a social context.

Prerequisite(s): PSYC 154 (or equivalent).

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Inclusivity and Engagement Principles: Together, we will co-create a classroom environment that is inclusive and welcoming to everyone. In this course, we will respectfully discuss diverse experiences related to gender identity, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, among others. To ensure that everyone's identities and experiences are valued and heard, I expect each of you to regard one another with the utmost respect. If you feel these principles are not being met by me or your peers, please let me know immediately.

Note on Device Use: To ensure the environment is marked by respect and inclusivity, I ask that you please refrain from texting, browsing the internet, and/or using social media. I understand some of you may need to check your texts or phones for family emergencies, etc., so I ask that you please do so quietly and mindfully. *If you are becoming distracted and not listening to or engaging with the course material, me, or your peers, I will ask to speak to you privately. If the behavior continues, I will ask you to leave the classroom.*

Accessibility: I aim to make our learning community as accessible as possible. This means that I will provide accessible materials and create opportunities for different kinds of classroom engagement (i.e., traditional test taking, written assignments, group discussions, personal reflections, take-home assignments). If course materials are inaccessible, or you experience a barrier to participating in class, please bring this to my attention immediately, and I will gladly work with you to ensure accessibility. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access to this course, please visit the [Accessible Education Center](https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/>). Additionally, please get in touch with me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably during the first few weeks of the semester, so I can ensure your needs are being met and I am doing all I can to support you.

Academic Integrity: All submitted work must be your own original work and produced exclusively for this course. Academic integrity includes following exam and paper rules, using only permitted materials during an exam, keeping what you know about an exam to yourself, incorporating proper citation of all sources of information, and only submitting your own original work. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented.

The use of AI (e.g., ChatGPT) at any stage of course assessments is prohibited. For example, students may not use AI to generate ideas, guide paper writing, or construct sentences, paragraphs, or full papers. Violations will be taken seriously and may result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or the course. I cannot guide you in developing your critical thinking and writing skills if you use AI during this course.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, disclosing exam content during or after you have taken an exam, accessing exam materials without permission, copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source, that is submitted for grading as your own, and plagiarism such as using internet material without proper citation.

Violations will be taken seriously and may result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or the course. If you have any questions, please talk with me before completing an assignment.

Distribution of Lecture Notes and Other Course Materials: All materials in this course are the intellectual property of their creators. As a student, you have access to many of the materials in the course for the purpose of learning, engaging with your classmates, and completing assignments. You have a moral and legal obligation to respect the rights of others by only using course materials for purposes associated with the course. You are not permitted to share, upload, stream, sell, republish, share the login information for, or otherwise disseminate any of the course materials, including video and audio files, assignment prompts, slides, notes, syllabus, simulations, datasets, discussion threads.

Please note that teaching and learning is an iterative process, and as such, the course schedule and other syllabus content may shift as we progress through the semester.

Program Information

Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are skills and knowledge that students will have achieved upon completion of the MA in Research and Experimental Psychology degree. Each course in our curriculum contributes to one or more of these PLOs. The PLOs for the degree are:

1. Advanced Knowledge Base in Research and Experimental Psychology. Students completing the Research and Experimental Psychology MA program will be able to demonstrate advanced knowledge of the major theoretical perspectives and research methods across areas of experimental psychology (e.g., Developmental, Social, Cognitive, and Physiological).
2. Research Skills and Scholarship. Graduates of our program will possess an advanced level of competence in research methods, statistical techniques, and technical writing skills. Students completing the Research and Experimental Psychology MA program are required to complete a thesis. The thesis will demonstrate:
 - 2.1 creative problem-solving in the design and implementation of empirical research.
 - 2.2 project management skills in the implementation of empirical research.
 - 2.3 advanced competency in the statistical analysis and interpretation of empirical research findings.
 - 2.4 communication (oral and written) of research findings at a professional level.
3. Career Enhancement. Students completing the Research and Experimental Psychology MA program will achieve career enhancement through placement in a doctoral program or acceptance of a position requiring a master's in psychology in the public or private sector.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

This course includes content-specific and skill-focused objectives. After successfully completing this class, you should:

1. have a better understanding of social psychological concepts, theories, methodologies, and findings
2. appreciate how contextual and societal factors influence individual and group behavior
3. be able to discuss and describe interrelationships between psychology, social policy, and social justice
4. be more adept at reading original research
5. have greater competency synthesizing research findings and evaluating research designs

Course Materials

Required readings (no purchase needed):

All course readings are available via Canvas. Required readings should be completed before each class meeting. We will be doing a significant amount of reading so please budget your time accordingly!

Supplemental readings are optional and offered for those who want to read more about a particular topic. Based on your interests, you may choose to "swap" out one of our weekly required readings with a supplemental reading.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Format

I will provide an overview/presentation of our weekly topics, however, most of our time together will be dedicated to discussing the readings and sharing ideas. Please come to class prepared to talk!

Seminar Participation (30%)

- ***Attendance.*** Please plan to attend all of our class meetings. If you need to miss a class, please let me know.
- ***Discussion facilitation.*** During the quarter, you will facilitate one class meeting. You will prepare discussion questions, offer comments on the two readings for that day, and be ready to engage with your peers as the discussion unfolds during that class meeting. Please be sure to let me know what discussion questions you plan to ask your peers as part of your facilitation, no later than 9 am the morning of your day.
- ***Weekly observations and participation in class discussions.*** Each class meeting you should come to class prepared to share 2 questions/points/observations based on the that day's readings (one observation point per reading). *Please post your response on our Canvas site by 12 pm before our class meeting, and please be sure to read your colleagues' responses, too. On the weeks that you are facilitating our meeting, you do not need to submit questions/comments.* Instead, you should come to class prepared to facilitate the discussion.
- ***Share one of your favorite papers that is relevant to our class.*** Each one of us brings different perspectives, focal areas, and interests to our class. To build our 211B "library," please upload one article/chapter/report to our Canvas site by November 19th. Be prepared to summarize the paper to your colleagues, explain why you chose to share it, and discuss the paper's importance and/or meaning to you (more information to come on this requirement).

Brief Analysis Papers (30%)

- You will complete two brief double-spaced analyses (15% each) related to our readings. The first paper must be completed by 3/26. The second paper must be completed by 4/23.
- Your paper should be 2-3 pages and should address one or more of the week's readings and can be critiques (methodological or theoretical), integrations, insights, and provocative questions. If you offer a

critique, you must offer a concrete alternative. You may wish to discuss connections to other readings, questions the material raised for you, and suggestions for further research in the area. Creativity and application are welcome! For example, you might want to write an editorial. You select which weeks to write your brief analysis papers but you must complete the paper in the week from which you chose to draw your papers from.

- Your paper should be formatted using the American Psychological Association's publication guidelines (7th edition).

Class Presentation of Your Final Paper (10%) and Final Paper (30%)

Your final paper should explore a topic relevant to the class and of great interest to you. I want to encourage creativity and your projects can take different forms and directions (e.g., literature review, research proposal), however, several core elements are essential to all papers: a clear research question and statement of focus, articulation of the perspective from which you are approaching the question/issue, and a description of how you will examine the question/issue.

Your paper should also include a literature review in which you illuminate key findings. An excellent paper will not only foster understanding of the issues, but also include your own analysis and interpretation. Final paper should be approximately 8-pages in length, not including your title page or references. Your paper should be formatted using American Psychological Association publication guidelines (7th edition). Your final paper is due 5/11, 11:59 PM.

At our last class meeting on Wednesday, December 3rd, each of you will give a 10-12-minute presentation of your paper followed by time for questions. This will be an excellent opportunity to share what you have learned with your colleagues and practice giving a professional presentation. After your presentation, I will provide detailed feedback on your presentation.

Grading Information

Grading Breakdown:

93-100% A 87-89% B+ 80-82% B- 70-76% C

90-92% A- 83-86% B 77-79% C+ 60-69% D

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS AND READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
1	TR 1/22	COURSE OVERVIEW (NO READINGS)	
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS			
2	T 1/27	POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND OPPRESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none">● BOWLEG (2017)● BULLOCK ET AL. (2020)	FACILITATORS: TUES: QUANG THURS: ERIKA <ul style="list-style-type: none">● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#1) (TUES, 12 PM)● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#2) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 1/29	POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND OPPRESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none">● DRAKULICH ET AL. (2019)● BULLOCK & SINGH (2023)	
3	T 2/3	STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION (GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION) <ul style="list-style-type: none">● HEREK (2016)● FISKE ET AL. (2021)	FACILITATORS: TUES: MARC THURS: DESIREE <ul style="list-style-type: none">● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#3) (TUES, 12 PM)● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#4) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 2/5	STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION (INDIGENOUS GROUPS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">● CASANOVA (2022)● DA COST SILVA (2019)	

4	T 2/10	<p>STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION (MEN AND MASCULINITY)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VALLERGA & ZURBRIGGEN (2022) ● RAY & PARKHILL (2023) 	<p>FACILITATORS:</p> <p>TUES: ANDREW</p> <p>THURS: SERRELL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#5) (TUES, 12 PM) ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#6) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 2/12	<p>STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION (MEN AND MASCULINITY)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VESCIO ET AL. (2025) ● DEMIR & TIRYAKI (2025) 	
5	T 2/17	<p>STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION (REPRODUCTION AND MOTHERHOOD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MARY ET AL. (2019) ● WHITE (2017) 	<p>FACILITATORS:</p> <p>TUES: MONICA</p> <p>THURS: SOPHIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#7) (TUES, 12 PM) ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#8) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 2/19	<p>STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION (VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AIN ET AL. (2023) ● HARSEY ET AL. (2017) 	<p>LAST DAY TO DROP WITHOUT A "W" (2/17)</p> <p>LAST DAY TO ADD/DROP VIA MySJSU (2/17)</p>

6	T 2/24	STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION (INDIGENOUS AND DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE) ● FREYBERG ET AL. (2016) ● FICKLIN ET AL. (2022)	FACILITATORS: TUES: ABI THURS: MICAHEL • TUES DISCUSSION POST (#9) (TUES, 12 PM) • THUR DISCUSSION POST (#10) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 2/26	INTERGROUP RELATIONS ● KAWAKAMI ET AL. (2021) ● PETTIGREW (2016)	

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

7	T 3/3	SOCIAL JUSTICE ● VELEZ ET AL. (2020) ● RAMIREZ & LANGHOUT (2023)	FACILITATORS: TUES: DEVIN THURS: ABBY • TUES DISCUSSION POST (#11) (TUES, 12 PM) • THUR DISCUSSION POST (#12) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 3/5	SOCIAL JUSTICE ● TYLER (2013) ● BOUDIN ET AL. (2022)	
8	T 3/10	SOCIAL JUSTICE ● CHOMA ET AL. (2018) ● MIJS ET AL. (2016)	FACILITATOR: TUES/THURS: DESIREE • TUES DISCUSSION POST (#13) (TUES, 12 PM) • THUR DISCUSSION POST (#14) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 3/12	SOCIAL JUSTICE ● SCHRODER ET AL. (2017) ● SKITKA (2009)	

9	T 3/17	PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION, "CITIZENSHIP" AND WAR (DEHUMANIZATION) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KTEILY ET AL. (2015) ● SAINZ ET AL. (2020) 	FACILITATORS: TUES: JENNIFER THURS: NAT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#15) (TUES, 12 PM) ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#16) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 3/19	PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION, "CITIZENSHIP" AND WAR (WAR TORTURE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MOTYLE ET AL. (2009) ● BRUNEAU ET AL. (2017) 	
10	T 3/24	PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION, "CITIZENSHIP" AND WAR (WAR TORTURE & MEDIA DISCOURSE ON WAR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ZURBRIGGEN (2008) ● MARTIKAINEN & SAKKI (2024) 	FACILITATORS: TUES: GIO THURS: DESIREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#17) (TUES, 12 PM) ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#18) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 3/26	PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION, "CITIZENSHIP" AND WAR (ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OPOTOW (2016) ● DROLET ET AL. (2016) 	
11	T 3/31	SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS	
	TR 4/2		

12	T 4/7	PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION, "CITIZENSHIP" AND WAR (ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FUSELL (2014) ● HAKIM ET AL. (2023) 	FACILITATOR: TUES/THURS: DESIREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#19) (TUES, 12 PM) ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#20) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 4/9	PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION, "CITIZENSHIP" AND WAR (ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LANGHOUT & FERNANDEZ (2016) ● JETTEN ET AL. (2016) 	
13	T 4/14	LEGITIMIZING IDEOLOGIES AND EXCLUSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AZEVEDO ET AL. (2017) ● COHRS ET AL. (2010) 	FACILITATORS: TUES: DESIREE THURS: LESLIE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#21) (TUES, 12 PM)

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

	TR 4/16	COLLECTIVE ACTION (FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VAN STEKELENBURG & GAIDYTE (2023) ● VAN ZOMEREN ET AL. (2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#22) (THUR, 12 PM) LAST DAY TO FILE LATE DROP/SEMESTER WITHDRAWAL PETITION
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14	T 4/21	COLLECTIVE ACTION (FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BULLOCK ET AL. (2013) ● GRABE (2022) 	FACILITATOR: TUES/THURS: DESIREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#23) (TUES, 12 PM) ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#24) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 4/23	PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GRZANKA & COLE (2021) ● MUÑIZ (2021) 	
15	T 4/28	PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HANEY ET AL. (2022) ● AGTARAP & ADAIR (2025) 	FACILITATOR: TUES/THURS: DESIREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#25) (TUES, 12 PM) ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#26) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 4/30	PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BULLOCK (2015) 	
16	T 5/5	PRESENTATION AND PAPER PREP DAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TUES DISCUSSION POST (#27) (TUES, 12 PM) ● THUR DISCUSSION POST (#28) (THUR, 12 PM)
	TR 5/7	PRESENTATIONS (5 STUDENTS ON DAY 2)	LAST DAY OF INSTRUCTION FOR OUR CLASS

17	TR 5/19	PRESENTATIONS (10 STUDENTS ON DAY 2)	1:00 PM-3:00 PM (IN OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM FINAL PROJECTS DUE ON PRESENTATION DAY BEFORE CLASS)
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