

C8202 Social & Health Psychology (2014-2015)

20 credits

Class Leader:	Dr Mark Elliott (Rm GH679)
Lecturers:	Dr Susan Rasmussen (Rm GH680) Dr Louise Brown (Rm GH655)
Practical:	Dr Allan McGroarty (Rm GH580)

Aims:

1. To provide students with a conceptual overview of the main theoretical strands of research within social psychology, illustrated with reference to both contemporary and classic studies
2. To introduce students to the field of health psychology, specifically with a view to demonstrating how social psychological principles are used to help understand health-related issues such as dietary behaviour, smoking and alcohol-use, and suicide

Content:

Following an introductory lecture, the course is broken down into four 'blocks' (the order in which these blocks are taught might not be the order presented here):

Block 1: A review of the notion of 'attitude', different approaches to attitude measurement, and the topic of how people behave in groups.

Block 2: Social psychological theories and associated research that provide insight into why people believe what they believe and why they behave the way they do. Topics covered include attribution theory, aggression, and prosocial behaviour.

Block 3: This block provides a review of a number of classic social psychological studies of group influence, norms, conformity and obedience.

Block 4: Health psychology. This final block provides an introduction to health psychology and aims to demonstrate how social psychological principles (covered in blocks 1 to 3) are applied to pressing, real-world, health issues.

Place in course:

This second year core class will build upon the introductory social psychology module taught in **C8105/6** and prepare students for subsequent social and health psychology classes in third and fourth year (e.g. level 3 **C8307 Social Psychology**; level 4 **Health Psychology**). Limited prior knowledge of social psychology, from **PY105/6**, is assumed but no prior knowledge of health psychology is assumed.

Outcomes:

The learning outcomes for this class are as follows:

1. Students will develop their knowledge and conceptual understanding of the literature (theories and research findings) within a range of topics in social and health psychology.
2. Students will develop an awareness of the methods employed in social and health psychology research, and the limitations of various theories and empirical studies.
3. Students will be able to describe psychological theories and research in the domains of social and health psychology.
4. Students will develop their academic writing skills (via essay and practical report writing) and basic research skills (incl. data collection, data-entry, basic analysis).
5. Students are expected to develop/enhance independent learning skills (e.g. independent library research/reading around the class topics).

Methods of teaching:

Lectures, practical, tutorials, online multiple choice quiz.

Format:

There will be two lectures per week: see class timetable on myPlace. One of these lecture slots is dedicated to the class practical. There will also be two tutorials. Tutorial 1 provides support for writing psychological essays and tutorial 2 is on literature searching. Both tutorials will operate entirely online (via myPlace). Following online discussions in tutor groups, students are required to work as a group to provide a brief synopsis of their discussions and post it on myPlace. Tutorial work is not assessed but students are expected to take part in tutorials (for their own benefit). Further details on tutorials will be provided in the introductory lecture and via the class myPlace page. The deadline for completion of tutorial 1 is: **Wednesday 15th October 2014, 1pm** (week 3). The deadline for completion of tutorial 2 is: **Wednesday 5th November 2014, 1pm** (week 6).

Students will also be required to complete seven multiple choice quizzes, administered via myPlace. Each quiz relates to a class topic. Feedback on performance will be provided upon the completion of each quiz. The quizzes are designed to help consolidate students' understanding of the class material, identify their current level of knowledge and promote further independent learning in areas where improvement is needed.

Assessment:

Final examination (contributes 50% towards the final mark for the class). The end of term examination will be an essay paper. The examination will be held in January with an opportunity to resit in August. The exam paper will comprise two sections, with three questions in each section (i.e. six questions in total). Students are required to answer three out of the six questions, and at least one question from each section.

Coursework 1: Essay (contributes 25% towards the final mark for the class). The essay will be formally set in the introductory lecture and a handout will be made available on the Social and Health Psychology myPlace site (under the 'assignments' heading). The essay must be submitted via myPlace by **1pm, Wednesday 29th October 2014** (week 5). A starting reference will be provided on the essay handout but students are required to make use of additional references, identified through their own independent reading (library research).

Coursework 2: Practical report (contributes 25% towards the final mark for the class). The practical will be set up and explained during a practical session. Supporting documentation for the practical will be provided on the Social and Health Psychology myPlace site. The practical report must be submitted via myPlace by **1pm, Wednesday 26th November 2014** (week 9). A starter reference will be provided but students are required to make use of additional references, identified through their own independent reading (library research).

Students who fail to submit either the essay or the practical report by two weeks following their respective deadlines will receive a zero for that piece of coursework, which will count towards their final class mark. Attendance/participation in the practical class is compulsory. A deduction of 5% from the overall class mark will be made for failure to participate. Students who show poor attendance may also be required to explain their absences to the Year Tutor or Course Leader for BA Psychology and further disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with Faculty regulations. Although we do not take attendance registers at lectures, regular lecture attendance is also required. Experience shows that students who attend lectures regularly perform much better in examinations than those who do not. Reading lecture notes on myPlace is not a substitute for attendance, and your marks are likely to suffer if you do not come to your lectures.

Course outline:

Following an introductory lecture, the lectures will be divided into 4 blocks (not necessarily in the order specified below):

Lectures	Lecturer(s)	Topics
Introductory Lecture	Mark Elliott	Aims of class and assessments. Introduction to social psychology
Block 1 (8 lectures)	Mark Elliott	Attribution theory; prosocial behaviour; aggression.
Block 2 (3 lectures)	Louise Brown	Classic studies of: conformity; obedience and authority; the power of the situation).
Block 3 (3 lectures)	Susan Rasmussen	Attitudes and attitude measurement; people in groups; intergroup conflict
Block 4* (4 lectures)	Susan Rasmussen	Introduction to health psychology; relationships & health; attributions & health; attitudes & health; aggression & health

Reading:

Students should note that the first two of the following texts are essential reading. The remainder deal with similar issues to the two main texts but place different emphases on certain theories and studies. They are therefore highly recommended if you wish to develop a good understanding of the class topics. The Crisp and Turner (2010) and the Smith and Haslam (2012) books will also represent useful reference material for students wishing to take the third year Social Psychology class next year.

- Hogg, M. A., & Vaughan, G. M. (2011). *Social Psychology: An introduction* (6th ed.). Prentice Hall.
- Salovey, P., & Rothman, A. J. (2003). *Social Psychology of Health*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Crisp, R. J., & Turner, R. N. (2010). *Essential social psychology* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Smith, J. R., & Haslam, S. A. (2012). *Social Psychology: Revisiting the Classic Studies*.
- Stroebe, W. (2000). *Social Psychology and Health* (2nd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

These texts are available for purchase in the University bookshop and several copies are available for both 1 week loan and short loan in the Andersonian Library. There are also many other texts on Social and Health Psychology available in the Andersonian Library which are of interest. Additional reading lists may be provided during the course by individual lecturers.