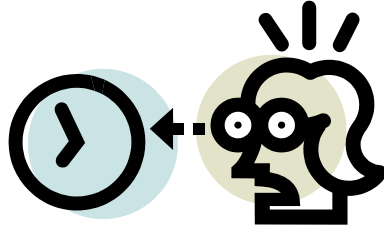


# COU 655 Social and Cultural Context and Systems

Time ~ A learned value...



Ritual ~ Sharing symbolic understanding



Love and Interpersonal Attraction ~ Who knows...



# COU 655 Social and Cultural Context and Systems

(3 Hours)

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**Course Description.** This is an applied course in the theoretical perspectives of social psychology especially geared to graduate counseling majors. *Social Psychology* can be defined as a discipline that uses scientific methods to "**understand and explain how the thought, feeling, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others**" (Allport, 1985: 3). 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 is a refreshingly different approach to the traditional study of social psychology. 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 social psychology operates 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 psychology 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 psychology 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.

**Evaluation of Learning Objectives.** Course participants will be evaluated to determine whether or not the learning objectives 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 definition of social psychology, and comprehend how social psychology bridges the gap between sociology and psychology;
2. understand the core concerns and important theoretical perspectives in social psychology;
3. comprehend social psychology as a science, major research methods used by social psychologists and associated ethical issues;
4. understand and be able to apply the critical thinking perspective to the evaluation of social psychological concepts and theory;
5. understand the social psychological concept of socialization and related components and issues; such as self, self-schema, self-image, self-concept, self-esteem, and social identity;
6. understand the social psychological concepts of social perception, social construct or *lifeworld*, impression formation, and attribution;
7. understand the social psychological concept of attitude, to include development, maintenance, and change relating to attitudes, and the various methods used to measure attitudes;
8. comprehend symbolic communication and language from a social psychological perspective;
9. understand the social psychological concepts of social influence and persuasion;
10. understand the social psychological concepts of self-presentation and impression management;
11. comprehend the social psychological concepts of helping and altruism, aggression, and interpersonal attraction;
12. comprehend the social psychological concepts of group cohesion and conformity, group structure and interaction, group performance, and intergroup conflict;
13. understand the concept of adaptation from a social and cultural context approach;
14. understand the social psychological concepts of social structure and personality;
15. comprehend the social psychological concepts of deviant behavior and social reaction;
16. comprehend the social psychological concepts of collective behavior and social movements;
17. understand the five core social motives: Belonging, Understanding, Controlling, Enhancing Self, and Trusting; and
18. master the practical application of social psychological theory and concepts to everyday, real life counseling situations.

### Required Text:

Elliot R. Smith and Diane M. Mack, Social Psychology: Third Edition, Psychology Press, New York, NY, USA.



## Course Outline:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 1: what is social psychology? (pp. 3–20)  
(Read prior to class) Chapter 2: asking and answering research questions (pp. 25–55)

### Session One.

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

LECTURE: Social Psychology Defined: Seeking a Better Understanding of Individual and Group Behavior Using Scientific Methods.

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  
[What is social psychology?](#)  
[Asking and answering research questions](#)  
[Perceiving individuals](#)  
[The self](#)  
[Perceiving groups](#)  
[Social identity](#)  
[Attitudes and attitude change](#)  
[Attitudes and behavior](#)  
[Groups, norms, and conformity](#)  
[Norms and behavior](#)  
[Liking and loving](#)  
[Interaction in groups](#)  
[Aggression and conflict](#)  
[Helping and cooperation](#)  
  
[Research questions and the role of theory](#)  
[Testing theories: From theory to research](#)  
[The role of ethics and values in research](#)

5. VIDEO: "Country Boys", PBS, 2008.
6. Discussion concerning video.
7. Overview of oral presentations.
8. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 17.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 6: social identity (pp. 187–224)  
(Read prior to class) Chapter 3: perceiving individuals (pp. 57–93)

**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 Schemas  
Impression Formation Nonverbal Communication  
Attribution Theory Implicit Personality Theories  
Bias and Error in Attribution

[Categorizing oneself as a group member](#)

[Me, you, and them: Effects of social categorization](#)

[When group memberships are negative](#)

[Forming first impressions: Cues, interpretations, and inferences](#)

[Beyond first impressions: Systematic processing](#)

[The impact of impressions: Using, defending, and changing impressions](#)

4. VIDEO: “The Power of the Situation.” *Discovering Psychology* Series, Annenberg Foundation
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: 2, 3, 5, 17, and 18.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 4: the self (pp. 95–137)  
(Read prior to class) Chapter 7: attitudes and attitude change (pp. 229–267)  
Chapter 8: attitudes and behavior (pp. 269–305)

**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 Peer Pressure  
Gender Stereotypes  
Gender-Based Evaluation Bias  
[Constructing the self-concept: What we know about ourselves](#)  
[Constructing self-esteem: How we feel about ourselves](#)  
[Effects of the self: Processes of self-regulation](#)  
[Defending the self: Coping with stresses, inconsistencies, and failures](#)  
  
[Attitudes and their origins](#)  
[Superficial and systematic routes to persuasion: From snap judgments to considered opinions](#)  
[Defending attitudes: Resisting persuasion](#)  
  
[Changing attitudes with actions](#)  
[Guiding actions with attitudes](#)
2. VIDEO: "Consuming Images." PBS, Bill Moyers, 1990.  
"The Gender Gap."
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, and 17.

**Session Four.**

1. LECTURE: Relax and Meet Shirley Valentine.

- Topics Include: Interpersonal Attraction, Love, and Intimacy  
Physical Attraction  
Matching Hypotheses  
Homogeneity 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

[Initial Attraction](#)

[From Acquaintance to Friend: Relationship Development](#)

[Close Relationships](#)

[Romantic Love and Sexuality](#)

[When Relationships Go Wrong](#)

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, 13, 14, 17 and 18.



Reading Assignment: Chapter 14: helping and cooperation (pp. 517–550)  
(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  
[When do people help?](#)  
[Why do people help? Helping for mastery and connectedness](#)  
[Role of superficial or systematic processing in helping and cooperation](#)  
[Prosocial behavior in society](#)
2. VIDEO: “Time for Burning.” Lutheran Church of America, 1965.
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, 17, and 18.

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Reading Assignment: Chapter 13: aggression and conflict (pp. 473–515)  
(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  
[Aggression, conflict, and human nature](#)  
[Interpersonal aggression](#)  
[Intergroup conflict](#)
2. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
  - a. Article \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Article \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_
3. VIDEO: “Ground Truth.” 2007.
4. Discussion of the video ~ aggression.
5. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1 - 18.



Reading Assignment: Chapter 5: perceiving groups (pp. 141–183)  
(Read prior to class)

**Session Seven.**

1. LECTURE: Applying Social Psychological Concepts to the Real World.  
Topics Include: Development of Intergroup Conflict  
Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination  
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  
[Forming impressions of groups: Establishing stereotypes](#)  
[Using stereotypes: From preconceptions to prejudice](#)  
[Changing stereotypes: Overcoming bias to reduce prejudice](#)
3. Discussion relative to lecture and contemporary events.
- 4.
4. VIDEO: "Cross of Fire." NBC, 1990.
- 5.
5. Discussion --- Bringing the course together --- How many Soc Psy concepts are identified in the video?
- 6.
5. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
  - a. Article \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Article \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_
6. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1 - 18.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 9: groups, norms, and conformity (pp. 306–349)  
(Read prior to class) Chapter 10: norms and behavior (pp. 350–391)

**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  
[Conformity to social norms](#)  
[The dual functions of conformity to norms: Mastery and connectedness](#)  
[How groups form norms: Processes of social influence](#)  
[Conformity pressure: Undermining true consensus](#)  
[Minority influence: The value of dissent](#)

2. VIDEO: "American Hollow." HBO, 2001.

3. Discussion about video.

4. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:

a. Article \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Article \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

5. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1 - 18.



Reading Assignment: Chapter 12: interaction in groups (pp. 439–471)  
Chapter 10: norms and behavior (pp. 350–391)

**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  
[The mere presence of others: The effects of minimal interdependence](#)  
[Performance in face-to-face groups: Interaction and interdependence](#)  
  
[Norms: Effective guides for social behavior](#)  
[The norm of reciprocity: Treating others as they treat you](#)  
[The norm of commitment: Keeping your promises](#)  
[The norm of obedience: Submitting to authority](#)  
[Rebellion and resistance: Fighting back](#)  
[Putting it all together: Multiple guides for behavior](#)
2. VIDEO: . "Stranger with a Camera." Appalshop, 2002.
7. 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 18.

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All work (examinations and term paper) is due one week after the final class session.  
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## 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. Fifteen 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 15 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.

### Grading Scale:

100-97=A+  
96-94=A  
93-90=A-  
89-87=B+  
86-84=B  
83-80=B-  
79-77=C+  
76-74=C  
73-70=C-  
60-67=D

### Possible Points:

Journal	70 points
Oral Presentation	15 points
Attendance	
/Participation	<u>15 points</u>
Total Possible Points	100

4. 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.
5. 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.

