

Social Cognition 380: Agronomy 2050 (Wednesdays 3:10)

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Class Website: http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/madon/socialcognition/welcome_to_social_cognition.htm
This website includes the syllabus, power point slides presented in class, study guides, and grading information. This website will be updated periodically.

Required Texts: One copy of each text is on reserve at Parks Library.

- 1) Pennington, D. C. (2000) *Social cognition*. London: Routledge.
- 2) Nelson, T. D. (2006). *The psychology of prejudice* (2nd Edition). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Prerequisites: Psychology 280 or Psychology 101.

Social Cognition: What is it?: Social cognition is the study of how people understand themselves and other people. You have probably engaged in many of the social cognitive processes that you will learn about in this class. For example, you have engaged in these processes if you typically explain other people's failures as resulting from their dispositional attributes, but your own failures as resulting from situational factors; lied on a survey; stereotyped another individual; or monitored your behavior to make a good impression. This course is designed to give you the opportunity to learn more about these and other cognitive processes. Topics covered include attributions, errors and biases, schemas, the self, heuristics, stereotypes, prejudice, stigma, racism, and being the target of stereotyping and prejudice.

Class meeting: This class meets only one time per week which has both advantages and disadvantages. The two primary disadvantages that concern students are the length of the class (it's hard to pay attention for 2 – 2.5 hours) and the amount of material covered each lecture. Classes that meet one time per week must cover the same amount of material that would normally be covered over two or three class periods. That is a lot of material to cover in one lecture and some students find it overwhelming at times. I will address these concerns by including a break mid-way through each lecture, providing extra credit activities, and by showing films on occasion. However, I encourage you to seriously think about your learning style when deciding whether this class is right for you.

Group quizzes: A group quiz will be given the class before each exam (i.e., 3 quizzes total). The purpose of these quizzes is give students the opportunity to learn from each other and to get to know other students in the class, which may lead to the formation of study partners. Before each quiz, students will form into groups of 3 - 5. Groups will discuss answers to the quiz questions and decide on their group's answers. Each quiz will include 4 multiple choice questions that are based only on lecture material presented since the last exam.

Exams: There will be three hourly exams. Each exam is equally weighted and will include 50 multiple choice questions and two short answer questions. Each multiple choice question is worth 1 point. Each short answer question is worth 3 points. Exams 1 and 2 will be given during the regular meeting time on the dates listed in the "Tentative Lecture and Reading Schedule" below. The time and date of Exam 3 will be announced.

Extra credit: There will be unannounced class activities that you can participate in to earn extra credit. These activities are designed to be fun, and no activity will require more than your attendance in class that day. If you miss class then you will earn no points for that extra credit activity. There may also be opportunities to earn extra credit via research studies. You cannot make up extra credit points.

Grading: Exams allow a maximum total score of 168 (three exams: 50 multiple choice questions - worth one point each, and two short-answer questions - worth 3 points each). Quizzes allow a maximum of 12 points (3 quizzes at 4 points each). The number of points that you obtain out of the 180 possible points will be used to determine your grade. I anticipate that scores will be curved to approximate the following distribution:

A's = Top 15%

B's = 30%

C's = 40%

D's = 13%

F's = Bottom 2%

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If all students score high, there will be no curve and you will all earn high grades. In other words, I will never curve downward. With this grading system, the exam scores of other students either have (a) no effect on your grade if most students score high or (b) benefit you if most students score low. Extra credit will be added in after the final distribution of grades is determined – so it is really *extra credit!*

Missed exam: Students who miss an exam should make arrangements to take a makeup during finals week. The makeup exam will be an alternative version of the missed hourly exam (i.e., it will cover the same material, but the questions will be different). Although any student can make up **one** exam at the end of the semester for any reason, a 5 point penalty will be applied. For example, let's say you miss Exam 2 and make it up at the end of the semester. If you got 45 points on the makeup, you will lose 5 points as a penalty and end up with 40 points on that exam. A penalty will not be applied if you have a legitimate excuse (e.g., death in the family, serious illness, etc.) **AND** written documentation from a legitimate source (e.g., note from student health center, pastor, etc.). If you expect to miss an exam, let's talk about it so you can know ahead of time if it constitutes a legitimate excuse and source. Students who miss more than one exam should drop the course.

Disability: Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Disability Resources Office at 515-294-7220 in room 1076, Student Services Building to coordinate reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities. The webpage for disability resources is: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/dr/>

Tentative Lecture and Reading Schedule

Aug 25	Introduction to course; Attributions (Part 1)	No reading
Sep 1	Attributions (Part 2)	Pennington: Ch 1 & 2; pp.139-145; Nelson: p. 16-18
Sep 8	Errors and Biases	Pennington: Ch 3
Sep 15	**Schemas Part 1: Function, activation, and structure	Pennington: pp. 61-69
Sep 22	Exam 1: Covers lectures and readings from 8/28 thru 9/18	
Sep 29	Schemas Part 2: Types and models; Feedback Exam 1	Pennington: pp. 69-76
Oct 6	The self	No reading
Oct 13	Heuristics	Pennington: pp. 79-89
Oct 20	**Stereotypes Part 1: Types, measures, and assumptions	Nelson: Ch. 1 & Ch. 8
Oct 27	Exam 2: Covers lectures and readings from 10/2 thru 10/23	
Nov 3	Stereotypes Part 2: Models of stereotype change and maintenance; Self-fulfilling prophecies, Feedback Exam 2	Pennington: pp. 76-79; Nelson: pp. 26-46 and pp. 147 - 148
Nov 10	Stigma, Prejudice and Racism	Nelson: pp. 46-55 and 180 – 182 & Ch. 3 & 10
Nov 17	Prejudice and Racism	Pennington: p. Ch 5; Nelson: Ch. 4 & 5
Nov 24	Thanksgiving Break	
Dec 1	**Target of prejudice ¹	Nelson: Ch. 6 & 9
Dec 8	To be announced	To be announced

**Group quiz.

¹ Student Evaluations.