

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER  
Department of Sociology  
Spring 2006

*SEMINAR IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY*

SOCY 5531

Tuesdays 3:00- 5:50 Ketchum 33

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Office hours: Tuesday 2-3 (and by appointment)

Social Psychology is an interdisciplinary situated between psychology, which examines inner lives and selves, and sociology, which examines the relationships between collectivities and organizations. Social psychologists examine how the self and the social interpenetrate, as well as how individuals influence one another. In other words, social psychology looks at the micro-macro link, also known as the relationship between structure and agency.

By setting out as its terrain the intersection of two disciplines, social psychology has the benefits of borrowing from both intellectual histories. Yet, because of the organizational structure of American universities, social psychologists tend to be in either psychology departments *or* sociology departments (although more often in the former). Thus, there is *psychological* social psychology, and *sociological* social psychology. This course recognizes the contributions of both traditions, but emphasizes the sociological view. Within *sociological* social psychology, there are two predominant approaches, loosely categorized as experimental and symbolic interactionist. This course will examine both approaches, but will place more emphasis on the latter.

**GOALS OF THE COURSE**

At the end of this semester, you should understand the major debates, theories, and concepts of social psychology. You are required to submit four short essays addressing questions that I provide. You are also required to write a final paper. The goal is to produce a paper that uses social psychological insights to advance your dissertation topic or some aspect of it. Ideally, you will finish this course with a paper that can be the foundation for a dissertation chapter and/or publication.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Books to obtain:**

**NOTE: Only the Howard & Hollander book is available at the campus bookstore.**

Blumer, Herbert. 1969. *Symbolic Interactionism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City NY: Anchor Books.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2003. *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling* (20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition). Berkeley: University of California Press. **Note: you may use the original 1983 edition.**

Howard, Judith A., and Jocelyn Hollander. 1997. *Gendered Situations, Gendered Selves: A Gender Lens on Social Psychology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. **NOTE: Do NOT buy the \$72 edition. There are many copies of the paperback edition available at amazon.com for under \$15.**

Irvine, Leslie. 1999. *Codependent Forevermore: The Invention of Self in a Twelve Step Group*. Chicago:

University of Chicago Press.

Mead, George Herbert. 1934. *Mind, Self & Society from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist* (Works of Mead, vol. 1). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **NOTE: also available online at the Mead Project; see link below.**

*Additional required readings are on electronic reserve and on CDs that I will provide the first day of class.*

### ***COURSE REQUIREMENTS***

As mentioned above, you will write four short essays and one research paper. The final paper might require you to read ahead of the class in some area that we will cover later in the semester than will be useful for you. In other words, if you want to incorporate social psychological work on inequalities, which we'll cover at the end of the course, you will need to read that material (and probably more) earlier in the semester. You are required to attend regularly. If you must miss two classes, you should meet with me to withdraw from the course. I expect you to participate in the discussions, which means that you must keep current with the reading. You must submit written work on time; the due dates appear in the course schedule. I will deduct one letter grade for each day that an essay or paper is late, and will not accept them more than two days after the due date. I will make exceptions to this policy if extenuating circumstances arise, such as a serious illness or a death in the family. If you find yourself in such a situation, please notify me as soon as possible so that we can work out alternative arrangements.

### ***Essay guidelines and questions:***

The essays should be two to three double-spaced pages in length, using 12 point font and 1 ¼ margins at the sides. Do not make a cover page for your essay. Simply put your name in the upper right-hand corner. You must staple all pages together. You may print on both sides of the page.

Essay 1, due Jan. 31: Choose one concept from psychological social psychology and apply it to a real-world situation or event. This could come from world or local news, from your teaching or research, or from a social interaction that you are involved in or observed. Describe the situation or event, attaching a news article if relevant, and explain how the concept applies. Make note of what the concept allows you to understand and highlight the concept's shortcomings and pitfalls, if any.

Essay 2, due Mar. 14: Criticism of symbolic interactionism finds fault in its insufficient attention to social structure. Evaluate this claim using the readings in this class. Take a position agreeing or disagreeing and use course materials to support your position.

Essay 3, due Apr. 4: Describe how Goffman's work contributes to the sociology of emotions. Using a real-life emotional experience as an example, discuss what Goffman's contribution to the sociology of emotions allows you to understand. Note any pitfalls in the perspective.

Essay 4, due May 2: Connect the topics of "talk" and "inequalities" using examples from social interaction you participated in or observed.

### ***GRADING***

I will base grades on the quality of your participation in the seminar, the four essays, and the final paper. You can expect to receive comments on your writing as well as the content of your essays.

### ***COURSE SCHEDULE***

*Subject to change. I will announce changes in class and post them online.*

- Week 1: Jan. 17 Introduction to the course
- Week 2: Jan. 24 The State of the field & basic concepts  
Read House, McMahon, Howard (“Social Cognition & Structure”); Aronson & Golden; McKimmie *et al.*; Stephan *et al.*; Watters
- Weeks 3 & 4: Jan. 31 & 7 Mead’s contributions and legacy
- Wk. 3. **Essay due.** Read selected chapters from *Mind, Self, & Society* (Part I, sections 1-3; Part II, sections 1-5, 10 & 11; Part III, sections 1-12; Part IV, sections 1-6), Dodd *et al.*;  
Wk. 4. Joas; Irvine (chapters 6-8 from *If You Tame Me*)\*; Morgan & Schwalbe  
\*Please do not cite these PDF versions, which were created solely for this class. If you refer to this material, please cite from the book.
- Week 5: Feb. 14 Symbolic Interactionism  
Read Blumer, chapters 1-5, 7 & 10; Dingwall, Gusfield, Stryker (“SI” and “Whither SI?”)
- Week 6: Feb. 21 No class; reschedule and continue discussion of SI
- Week 7 & 8; Feb 28 & Mar. 7 The Self, Identity, and Role Theories  
Wk 7: Read Gecas, Turner (NOT JTurner), Derner, Kuhn, Stryker (“Identity Theory,” “Role Conflict,” & “Deviance”); Stryker & Burke  
Wk. 8: Read Howard “Social Psych of Identity,”
- Week 9: Mar. 14 Goffman’s work and legacy  
**Essay due.** Read *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, “Embarrassment,” “Interaction Order;” Cahill
- Week 10: Mar. 21 Sociology of Emotions  
Read Hochschild *The Managed Heart* & “Emotion Rules;” Kemper (both); Thoits
- Week 11: Mar. 28 SPRING BREAK
- Week 12: Apr. 4 Sociology of Emotions  
**Essay due.** Read JTurner; Gottschalk; Irvine (“Reconsidering”); Lois
- Week 13 & 14 Apr. 11 & 18 The role of talk  
Wk. 13: Read Mills; Scott & Lyman; Hewitt & Stokes; Stokes & Hewitt  
Wk. 14: Read Irvine (*Codependent Forevermore*); Hopper; Murphy
- Week 15 & 16 Apr. 25 & May 2 Inequalities  
Wk 15: Read Howard & Hollander *Gendered Situations, Gendered Selves* and “Inequalities”
- Wk 16 **Essay due.** Read Hunt *et al.*; Anderson & Snow; McWilliams & Howard
- Monday May 8 Final papers due

## **Disability Policy**

Students with *documented* disabilities, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, or psychiatric disabilities should see Professor Irvine during the first two weeks of class to discuss possible reasonable accommodations. For more information, consult The Office of Disability Services, Willard 322 (303-492-8671).

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

The University of Colorado at Boulder policies on Discrimination and Harassment (<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html>) Sexual Harassment, and Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

## ***USEFUL WEBSITES***

The Mead Project

[http://spartan.ac.brocku.ca/~lward/Mead/pubs2/mindself/Mead\\_1934\\_toc.html](http://spartan.ac.brocku.ca/~lward/Mead/pubs2/mindself/Mead_1934_toc.html)

Don't miss this one!!

A *most excellent* SI website created by students in the Spring 2003 Modern Theory Seminar. It includes a link to the Society for the Study for Symbolic Interaction (along with many other informative sites).

<http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/SI/si-tableofcontents.htm>

The definitive Psychological Social Psych website, created by Scott Plous at Wesleyan University

[www.socialpsychology.org](http://www.socialpsychology.org)