

Dr. Mike Haffey; 205A Ketchum Hall; Office hrs.: Wed.: 10am-2pm; mhaffey@colorado.edu

Social Psychology is an interdisciplinary field of study located midway between sociology and psychology. Generally speaking, sociologists study the economic, cultural and political processes, patterned behaviors and trends, and social structures that shape the world that individuals inhabit, Psychologists, on the other hand, study the process of mental life: memory, cognition, perception, emotion, and reasoning.

Social Psychologists study how interacting individuals “go about doing things” – being roommates, having family dinners, going to the game, offering accounts, waiting in line, negotiating contracts, joining an on-line community, standing-up to bullies, constructing gender, pursuing celebrities, being part of a team, texting and walking , heck, even attending and giving lectures . Language, Identity, and context are all central to these social processes. It is here where we will level our social-psychological gaze, the everyday world of people in interaction, co-constructing meanings within social systems of perceived opportunity and constraint. We will explore this rich interface between the individual and society by highlighting the latter, the social world, via the general sociological perspective of symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic Interactionism is a sociological approach to social psychology and the study of human group life and human interaction. Emerging from the early contributions of George Herbert Mead (Social Philosopher) and Herbert Blumer (sociologist), among others, symbolic interactionism highlights the interactive process of meaning construction. Symbolic Interactionists emphasize the reflexive, situated nature of human experience highlighting the self as a social product, the interpretive frameworks through which groups co-construct the social moment, and the symbolically-communicated, construction of the social order.

The objective of this course is provide you with a broad understanding of the current sociological field of social psychology by becoming well-versed in the concepts, analytical frameworks and applications / research questions at the center of this provocative and vital discipline. Toward that end, I have chosen one (required) well-known and widely-used textbook to guide our discussion this semester. Since this text will serve as a key organizing tool for all of our discussions this semester, please make a commitment to obtaining a copy and staying current with our reading schedule provided on the reverse of this page.

Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology (11th edition). by J. Hewitt David and Goliath by M. Gladwell

Exams and Grading: I expect lively and thoughtful participation by all members of this class. I expect you to read the appropriate material for each class meeting and come ready to talk, share, apply, refine, and/or challenge the topic at hand. I favor frequent and informed participation. I strongly encourage you to make every effort to become a “regular member” of this class. Please bring your book to each class meeting.

Your grade for this course will be based on the following criteria: **class engagement (5%)***; five (5) **exams (15% each / 75% total)**. Exam Dates: 2/4; 2/27; 3/18; 4/15; 5/6; a **“My social Self”** writing assignment,(10 %); and a **“Topics in Social Psychology -Literature Review”** project (10%). The criteria for these assignments and due-dates will be discussed in-class. If you are going to miss an exam, it is vital that you notify me prior to that exam.

***Class Engagement (5%):** Your regular attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities is an essential component of this class. You are expected to engage in civil discourse on issues and readings relevant to each session, as well as help co-facilitate our class discussion. We all have a responsibility to make this interactive topic and class work well. Beyond two absences, your grade for engagement will be reduced by one-half letter grade for each subsequent absence, except in the case of high-holiday observance, family emergency or medical emergency.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide me notification from Disability Services and discuss specific needs with me, preferably during the first two weeks of class. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard Hall, room 322.)

Classroom Behavior Policy: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set re limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities.

Student Honor Code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and nonacademic sanction (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion).

Policy on Discrimination and Harassment: The University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member 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.

Schedule of Readings and Exams

Jan. 14 Course Introduction

Jan. 16 Brief History of Sociology

Jan. 21, 23; Introducing Social Psychology and Symbolic Interactionism (chapter 1)

Jan. 28, 30; Basic Concepts of Symbolic Interactionism (chapter 2)

Feb. 4 - Exam 1

Feb. 6; 11; 13; Identity, Social Settings and the Self (chapter 3)

Feb. 18; 20; 25; Defining Reality and Accounting for Behavior (chapter 4)

Feb. 27 - Exam 2

March 4; 6, 11, 13 David and Goliath

March 18 Exam 3

April 1 3, 8, 10 Understanding and Constructing the Social Order (chapter 5)

April 15 Exam 4

April 17, 22, 24, 29, May 1 Applications of the symbolic Interactionist Perspective (chapter 6)

May 6 Final Exam 5 (4:30pm -7pm)