

SOC 344 – SOCIAL COGNITION

<http://faculty.washington.edu/kitts/soc344.html>

Professor James A. Kitts

Office Hours: Thurs 4:00-5:30; Fri 4:00-5:30, Savery 121G

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CLASS MEETINGS:

Mon, Wed 12:30-2:50 pm

Smith Hall 311

Social cognition is a fruitful combination of cognitive and social psychology, exploring the ways that people make sense of their social worlds. In this class, we will study cognitive processes – such as perception, memory, and judgment – while looking at important sociological problems. How do social stereotypes, collective identities, and urban legends evolve and proliferate? How do organizations learn and use knowledge? How do social outcomes – from presidential elections to traffic jams – depend on our beliefs, and on our beliefs about others’ beliefs? Studying theories of cognition will help us understand social behavior and social institutions.

REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete course readings *before* the assigned date. Due to the importance of discussions, oral presentations, and peer feedback, class participation will be essential. Our activities outside of class will often require use of computers and access to the Internet. These facilities are available in university libraries for all students. All assignments must be typed and double-spaced.

READINGS

- Zerubavel, Eviatar. 1997. *Social Mindscales: Invitation to Cognitive Sociology*
- Kunda, Ziva. 1999. *Social Cognition: Making Sense of People*
- Gilovich, Thomas. 1993. *How We Know What Isn't So: The Fallibility of Human Reason in Everyday Life*
- Plus selected research articles.

Readings marked with “*” on the syllabus are available on Electronic Reserve. You may download reserve articles from the link on our course web page, and you may legally print a personal copy for class use. *All electronic reserves require the Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is included with most web browsers (and is also available free of charge at www.adobe.com).* Problems with downloading or printing these articles will not excuse you from the readings.

GROUND RULES

- Exam dates are not flexible. There will be no “make-ups” for exams or papers.
- Early papers will be accepted. Late papers will be severely penalized.
- There is no “curve,” so grades will not be competitive and I encourage group study.
- Grades are never negotiable, but I do accept *substantial* projects for “extra credit.”
- Make frequent backups of your files. Lost papers and failed disks do not earn extensions.

GRADES

| Final Grade Breakdown | | 0-100 Scale | Letter Grade | 4.0 Scale |
|----------------------------------|-----|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| First Midterm | 20% | 93+ | A | 3.9 - 4.0 |
| Second Midterm | 25% | 90-92 | A- | 3.5 - 3.8 |
| | | 88-89 | B+ | 3.2 - 3.4 |
| Final Exam (<i>Cumulative</i>) | 30% | 83-87 | B | 2.9 - 3.1 |
| | | 80-82 | B- | 2.5 - 2.8 |
| | | 78-79 | C+ | 2.2 - 2.4 |
| Final Paper (5-7 pgs) | 15% | 73-77 | C | 1.9 - 2.1 |
| | | 70-72 | C- | 1.5 - 1.8 |
| Class Participation | 10% | 68-69 | D+ | 1.2 - 1.4 |
| | | 63-67 | D | 0.9 - 1.1 |
| | | 60-62 | D- | 0.7 - 0.8 |
| | | <60 | E | 0 |

“Class participation” includes constructive involvement in discussions and activities, and *will also include numerous written exercises* that look a lot like “pop quizzes.” While those exercises will not be individually graded, they will be assembled into a portfolio that represents your level of preparedness for class. This portfolio will be a major part of your class participation grade. If you miss a class meeting or fail to read the assignment, you can submit a *typed* rewrite of the exercise for your portfolio. See our web page for details on exercises and rewrites.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.

You *may* study for exams together, and I encourage you to do so.

You *may* share drafts of your papers with your peers, and I encourage you to give each other feedback. However, as with all academic courses, you may *not* copy (or paraphrase) text from any other source without citation and/or quotation, as appropriate. You also may not speak with anyone else or consult any written materials during an exam. Cheating and plagiarism have severe disciplinary consequences.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I will gladly provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, with the recommendation of Disabled Student Services (488 Schmitz Hall, 206-543-8924). Please show me the letter from DSS indicating accommodations that you may need for this class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: All readings are required. However, some readings provide the core material, while others provide elaborations, illustrations, or applications of that material. You should concentrate most of your energies on the *core* readings (indicated by the symbol ◆ below), while using the *supplementary* readings (indicated by ❖) to enhance your understanding. Do not be concerned if you can't figure out some of the technical aspects (such as methodological or theoretical details that we do not discuss in class) of the supplementary readings.

WEEK ONE – INTRODUCTION

Monday, January 5

Bring all three books to class today and come prepared for an active first meeting. If possible, you should preview the readings assigned for Wednesday before attending this class.

Wednesday, January 7

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 1: pp. 1-11
- ◆ Zerubavel Chapter 1: pp. 1-22

WEEK TWO – CONCEPTS & SOCIAL CATEGORIES

Monday, January 12

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 2: pp. 15-41
- ◆ Zerubavel Chapter 2: pp. 23-34

Wednesday, January 14

- ◆ Zerubavel Chapters 4: pp. 53-67

Also, the class will split into three groups {A, B, C}. Each group will prepare an informal oral presentation on one article below, and skim the others.

- ❖A❖ Robbins, Thomas and Dick Anthony. 1982. "Deprogramming, Brainwashing, and the Medicalization of Deviant Religious Groups." *Social Problems* 29 (3): 283-297.*
- ❖B❖ Conrad, Peter. 1975. "The Discovery of Hyperkinesis: Notes on the Medicalization of Deviant Behavior." *Social Problems* 23:12-21.*
- ❖C❖ Reinerman, Craig. 1997. "The Social Construction of Drug Scares." In Rubington, Earl and Martin S. Weinberg. *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon. 77-86.*

WEEK THREE – BOUNDED RATIONALITY: USING HEURISTICS

Monday, January 19

NO CLASS MEETING: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY HOLIDAY

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 3: pp. 53-72
- ◆ Gilovich Chapter 2: pp 9-28.

Wednesday, January 21

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 3: pp. 89-104
- ◆ Gilovich Chapter 3: pp 29-48.

WEEK FOUR – INDIVIDUALS & SOCIAL INFERENCE

Monday, January 26

MIDTERM EXAM #1

Wednesday, January 28

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 4: pp. 111-134
- ◆ Gilovich Chapter 4: pp 49-72.

WEEK FIVE – MEMORY; “HOT” COGNITION

Monday, February 2

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 5: pp. 161-187, 194-207

Wednesday, February 4

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 6: pp. 211-233
- ◆ Gilovich Chapter 5: pp 75-87

WEEK SIX – AUTOMATIC PROCESSES; SOCIAL STEREOTYPES

Monday, February 9

◆ Kunda Chapter 7: pp. 265-289, 294-303

❖ From: Gilbert, Daniel T. 1989. “Thinking Lightly about Others: Automatic Components of the Social Inference Process.” Pp. 189-211 in *Unintended Thought*, edited by J. A. Bargh and J. S. Uleman. New York: Guilford.

All Students *skim* pages **192-204** and *read closely* pages **205-208** in Gilbert. In six groups (A, B, C, D, E, F), students will prepare *very brief* and *informal* presentations on the following experiments:

❖**A**❖ “Sexual Fantasies” Experiment (pp. 194-6)

❖**B**❖ “Preoccupied Listener” Experiment (pp. 196-7)

❖**C**❖ “Don’t Look Now” Experiment (pp. 197-9)

❖**D**❖ “Mr. Smile and Mr. Sneer” Experiment (pp. 199-201)

❖**E**❖ “Hungry Chameleons” Experiment (pp. 202-3)

❖**F**❖ “Silly Faces” Experiment (pp. 203-5)

Wednesday, February 11

◆ Kunda Chapter 8: pp. 313-357

WEEK SEVEN – MIDTERM 2

Monday, February 16

NO CLASS MEETING: PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY

Wednesday, February 18

MIDTERM EXAM #2

WEEK EIGHT – SOCIAL INTERACTION, COMMUNICATION, & INFERENCE

Monday, February 23

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 9: pp. 395-426
- ◆ Gilovich Chapter 7: pp 112-122

Wednesday, February 25

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 9: pp. 426-443
- ◆ Gilovich Chapter 6: pp 88-111
- ❖ Gilovich, Thomas and Kenneth Savitsky. 1999. “The Spotlight Effect and the Illusion of Transparency: Egocentric Assessments of How We Are Seen by Others.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 8: 165-168.*

Thursday, February 26

PAPER PROPOSAL DUE (Submit Electronically by 10:00am)

WEEK NINE – STEREOTYPES & SOCIETY; CULTURE

Monday, March 1

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 8: pp. 369-393
- ❖ Aronson, Joshua, Lustina, Michael J., Good, Catherine, Keough, Kelli, Steele, Claude M. and Joseph Brown. 1999. “When White Men Can’t Do Math: Necessary and Sufficient Factors in Stereotype Threat.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 35: 29-46.

Wednesday, March 3

- ◆ Kunda Chapter 11: pp. 515-558

WEEK TEN – SOCIOLOGICAL COGNITION & ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Monday, March 8

- ◆ Zerubavel Chapters 5, 6, & 8: pp. 68-99, 111-113

Wednesday, March 10

- ◆ Levitt, Barbara and James G. March. 1988. “Organizational Learning.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 14: 319-340.*

Friday, March 12

FINAL PAPER DUE (Submit Electronically by 5pm)

FINAL EXAM 8:30-10:20AM on THURSDAY, MARCH 18
(Check: <https://www.washington.edu/students/reg/W2004exam.html> for updates)
No make-ups or alternate exam dates.