

PSYCHOLOGY OF PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION
SOP 4704 2C17 (20818)
MWF 12.50-1.40
PSYCHOLOGY BUILDING 129

Instructor: Kate Ratliff

Office Hours: Sign up for an [appointment](#) (Psych 222)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the social psychology of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. In other words, we will examine beliefs about members of social groups (stereotypes), evaluations of group members (prejudice), and behaviors toward members of social groups based on their group membership (discrimination). Also, we will study how these issues shape the experiences of social group members, especially when they are members of low-status and/or minority groups. Rather than relying on anecdotal evidence or cultural or lay beliefs to address these issues, we will examine theories of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination through empirical research findings.

COURSE GOALS

1. Students will develop an in-depth and integrative understanding of how approaching stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination from a social-psychological perspective improves our understanding of intergroup relations and human behavior.
2. The course will highlight the value of thinking about politically sensitive issues from a scientific perspective. The purpose of this class is to engage thinking about stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, not to proselytize others to a particular worldview.
3. This course will help students identify and understand how psychological processes affect human behavior between members of different groups in the real world. In other words, the application of findings and theories should help students “make sense” of why people do the things they do. These insights should help students better understand the events they see in the news, with their friends, in their families, and within their communities.

COURSE MATERIALS

Whitley & Kite. *The psychology of prejudice and discrimination*. 3rd Edition. Additional materials will be posted on the course Canvas site as they are needed.

LET'S TALK

I am happy to answer your questions. You may stop by my office any time the door is open. You may also send me an email. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response to your email. Include "SOP 4704" in the subject line. If you email me with a question that requires an elaborate answer, don't be surprised if I ask you to come to my office or to give me a call. Please check the syllabus before emailing with questions about course policy. If you'd like to meet in person, you can choose a time at this website: kateratliff.youcanbook.me.

COURSE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Because much of the work for the class will take place during in-class discussions, you are strongly encouraged to attend class. The material that we cover in class will not be redundant with what is in the course readings, and will be on the exams. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes and other information that you missed from a classmate – I will not provide them to you. To encourage regular attendance, I will add one extra credit point to your final grade if you miss three or fewer class meetings.

Meaningful, in-depth discussion is critical to this seminar and students are expected to be engaged and to participate fully. Please keep in mind that sensitivity is important. Science tolerates and critically evaluates all points of view when they are advanced with sensitivity for those who do not share them. Do not assume that your classmates share your religion, political beliefs, cultural backgrounds, economic, ethnic, or sexual orientations. If you don't want to be exposed to ideas that challenge your beliefs, this is not the class for you.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Exams 1, 2, and 3 (each worth 20% of your final grade; 60 points each)

There will be three exams. Each exam will be comprised of multiple-choice and short-answer questions based on assigned readings, and class lectures, films, and discussions. More information will be provided in class.

Makeup exams will be offered only in case of extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical emergency, death in the family) at the instructor's discretion. If you have an unexpected emergency and miss an exam, you must contact me within 24 hours of the original exam time and provide written documentation that explains your absence.

Final Paper (20% of your final grade; 60 points)

Your application paper will be approximately four pages in length and will require you to analyze real-world situations involving prejudice and stereotyping. Papers should be submitted through the Canvas online system before 11.59pm on Friday, April 26. Papers submitted late will be penalized by 25% on the first day and 10% each day thereafter. You will submit papers through the course Canvas website. Plan accordingly by working on your papers ahead of time. More information will be provided in class and on the course website.

Intermittent Assignments (20% of your final grade; 60 points; individual assignments are worth varying points)

I will assign “low stakes” tasks (e.g., take a survey, read/find a news article, write a one-paragraph response) to be completed either: (a) in class (infrequently), or (b) outside of class (frequently) and turned in at the next class meeting. These will generally be submitted through the course Canvas site and may not be made up if you miss class on the day that they are assigned or if you don’t know about them because you were absent on the day they were announced.

COURSE GRADES

Your final grade will be calculated based on your three exam grades (180 points total), your paper grade (60 points), and your intermittent assignment grades (60 points). Your final course grade will reflect how many total points (out of 300) you accumulate:

A	279 or more	A-	270-278		
B+	261-269	B	249-260	B-	240-248
C+	231-239	C	219-230	C-	210-218
D+	201-209	D	189-200	D-	180-188
F	179 or less				

The grade book on the course website may present your grade to you as a percentage, but that percentage is not relevant for this course. We are using a points system. Please note that these cutoffs are real and non-negotiable. Grades are not rounded; for example, to get an A, you must earn 279 points; 278 points will get you an A-. I will not raise your grade simply because you want it and I will not give extra credit at the end of the semester. You have one week after you receive a grade to dispute that grade; after that, the grade stands as it is.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office; they will provide documentation to the student, who will provide documentation to the instructor. I am happy to help however I can.

CHEATING AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: *I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.*

COMPUTER POLICY

Empirical evidence suggests that laptops in the classroom are a detriment to student success (Fried, 2008). I encourage you to put your devices aside during class and to take notes by hand. If you choose to ignore this advice, know that taking notes is the only allowed use for your laptop during class. Checking email and browsing the Internet are not acceptable and I will ask you to stop if I see it.

SEEKING HELP ON CAMPUS

Mental Health and Stress

Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with academic performance. The source of symptoms might be related to your course work; if so, please speak with me. However, problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or others personal struggles can also contribute to decreased academic performance. The University of Florida provides cost-free mental health services through the Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC). Please seek help if you feel you need it.

Food, Shelter, and Other Material Needs

Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the [Field and Fork Food Pantry](#) or the [Dean of Students Office](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable doing so. This will allow me to provide you with any resources possible.