

Current Readings in Social Psychology (PSY 64600-001) Syllabus - Fall 2010

General Seminar Information:

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Office hours: Mondays 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., and by appointment.

Seminar hours: Mondays 10:30am to 1:20pm in PSYC, Rm. 3187

Suggested Readings:

Bem, D. (2004). Writing the empirical journal article. *The compleat academic: A career guide* (pp. 185-219). Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association.

Kerr, N. L. (1998). HARKing (Hypothesizing After the Results are Known). *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2, 196-217.

Mayo, C., & LaFrance, M. (1977). *Evaluating research in social psychology: A guide for the consumer*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole. [Chapters 1 and 5]

Presentations will be from 2010 (or late 2009) issues of the following empirical journals in social psychology:

- *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology (JESP)*
- *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP)*
- *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin (PSPB)*
- *Social and Personality Psychological Science (SPPS)*
- *Psychological Science (PS; social articles only)*

Seminar Plan and Philosophy:

This course has been designed to help us all to keep reasonably up-to-date in our knowledge and understanding of current research findings in social psychology. We will focus our attention on this year's (2009-2010) issues of the most cited and authoritative general empirical journals in our field: *JPSP*, *JESP*, *PSPB*, *SPPS*, and *Psych Science (social articles only)*. Each week, we will discuss two recent articles. Thus, by the end of the semester, we will all have in-depth exposure to a host of articles that we would otherwise have likely missed or not read until years from now. Through readings, discussions and presentations, this seminar will examine a diverse assortment of social psychological topics and approaches to experimental research.

Role models. Students who are more advanced in their graduate careers will benefit from becoming increasingly conversant regarding the latest empirical advances in the field, and will serve as role models for our beginning students. Students who are early in their graduate careers will benefit from exposure to current trends and methods in the field and the evaluative and presentational skills and knowledge of the more advanced students.

Critiquing. Our purpose is not to trash published articles. Critiquing is not necessarily being negatively critical. Through our presentations and discussions, we should determine (a) what is valuable from each article, as well as (b) how the experiments could be improved upon, and (c) what new studies might emerge as a result of this article. I hope that this last point – generating new hypotheses – will be an activity shared by everyone

in class.

Active participation. Please keep in mind that the value of this seminar will be a function of the quality of individual contributions to each meeting. I've provided a basic structure for our meetings, but beyond that, the seminar will succeed on the strengths of all of our efforts. We're all responsible for the quality of this seminar experience. Accordingly, please do actively participate in all our meetings.

Typical Seminar Format:

- I. Presentation of article – 25 minutes by PowerPoint.
- II. Questions and discussion of first article – 60 minutes

Seminar Evaluation:

Seminar grades will be based on the following three weighted components:

(I) Article Presentations (30 points):

Each student will present one empirical article from (late) 2004 - 2005 issues of *JPSP*, *JESP*, or *PSPB* at some point during the semester. Each presentation should include a detailed description of (a) the reason for conducting the research (how the authors see their research as contributing to the literature), (b) theories and hypotheses described in the article, (c) methods, (d) results, and (e) the broader relevance of the research. Article presentations should not exceed 30 minutes. *Please email the complete reference of the article you select to the entire social area (faculty and students) at least 3 days in advance of the class meeting in which it is to be discussed.* Article presenters are to prepare a handout or PowerPoint presentation, and distribute a printed version of it (3 slides per page) to each person in attendance that will be used to help direct our group discussion. Note that we will spend a bit of time during class on Aug 23 discussing Mayo and LaFrance's chapters on evaluating social psychology research, and on discussing Daryl Bem's (2004) and Norb Kerr's (1998) opposing positions on presenting research. Specific dates for article presentations will be determined during our first seminar meeting.

(II) Questions and Discussion (40 points):

Each week, all seminar participants are expected to actively participate in discussion. Although only one student will be responsible for presenting material in any given class, all students are expected to make contributions to our discussion each week. Note that in terms of weight, this component matters most in determining your final seminar grade.

(III) Attendance (30 points):

Obviously, missing class will make it difficult for you to raise questions or participate in discussion (above component), so please try to make every class. To help entice you to attend, every missed class (i.e., without a really, really good excuse) will result in a decrease in 2 points awarded for this component (e.g., 2 unexcused absences = minus 4 points = 26 out of 30 points).

Summary of Seminar Grade Components:

Grade Scale:

Article Presentations	30 points = 30%	100-90% =	A
Questions and Discussion	40 points = 40%	89-80% =	B
Attendance	30 points = 30%	79-70% =	C
	100%		

Choosing dates to present and articles. I'd like the senior students to present early in the semester and the newer students to present at the end. We learn a lot from our peers, especially those who have been through the ropes a bit longer than we have, and I think it would be particularly valuable for the newer students to watch and listen to our more senior students present first.

We want to encourage breadth of knowledge; so one approach is to have you pick an article outside your particular research domain. On the other hand, we want you to gain the most from this experience, and in that sense, it might be more beneficial for you to pick out an article that feeds into your own research interests. Understanding these two goals, I'll leave it to you as to which article you should choose.

Course Schedule for 64600-001 (Current Readings)

Mondays in PSYC 3187 from 10:30am-1:20pm

<i>Date</i>	<i>Presenters</i>	
August 23	Course Overview; <i>Reading, Understanding, & Critiquing Research</i>	
August 30	<i>Tim (1)</i>	<i>Megan (1)</i>
September 6	<i>No class – Labor Day</i>	
September 13	<i>Nicole (1)</i>	<i>Tim (2)</i>
September 20	<i>Nicole (2)</i>	<i>Megan (2)</i>
September 27	<i>Dongning (1)</i>	<i>Kaleigh (1)</i>
October 4	<i>Nicole (3)</i>	<i>Tim (3)</i>
October 11	<i>No class – October Break</i>	
October 18	<i>No class - VU</i>	
October 25	<i>Megan (3)</i>	<i>Kaleigh (2)</i>
November 1	<i>Dongning (2)</i>	<i>Kaleigh (3)</i>
November 8	<i>Nicole (4)</i>	<i>Megan (4)</i>
November 15	<i>Tim (4)</i>	<i>Dongning (3)</i>
November 22	<i>Kaleigh (4)</i>	<i>Dongning (4)</i>
November 29	<i>Article to review: Discuss how to do a review</i>	
December 6	<i>Review due today at 4pm</i>	