1) General Overview:

This course will survey classic and contemporary conceptualizations of the attitude construct with a focus on understanding the question, *What is an attitude?* In doing so, we will examine the cognitive processes that underlie attitude formation and expression and the practical and theoretical issues that have presented themselves as the field has attempted to measure this construct.

2) Course Website:

The syllabus and all course materials are available on both the course’s canvas site and my personal website: [http://psych.colorado.edu/~chlo0473/teaching.html](http://psych.colorado.edu/~chlo0473/teaching.html).

3) Class Meetings:

(As always), every student is expected to have read the assigned articles and come to class ready to discuss each. Conversations will center on the larger theoretical issues presented by each set of readings (i.e., what is an attitude, is there an “implicit attitude”, what does an IAT measure, etc.) as well as the positive and negative aspects of individual articles that are covered. Students are encouraged to use the class sessions to actively explore those aspects of the topics and articles that they don’t understand.

The goal is to actively increase our understanding of these issues by focusing our collective resources on a particular topic/set of readings. Every one of us should have a more accurate understanding of the human condition by the end of the five weeks.

4) Weekly Assignments – *POSTED TO CANVAS “DISCUSSIONS” BY 6:00PM THE DAY BEFORE CLASS*:

Each Tuesday by 6pm, students should post a set of three questions that they would like to raise for the in-class discussion. I will create a new canvas discussion topic for each week. Post your discussion questions in response to that topic. *At least two of these questions should cover issues that connect two (or more) of the course’s readings.* Remember, these should be questions that make the group think and comment, things you would bring up if you were the course instructor. The presence of a faculty member should not be a requirement for these readings and questions to generate a fruitful and interesting multiple-hour conversation.

*Everyone should read through the posted questions before class.*
5) Final Paper – **DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON WEDNESDAY, 12/18:**

For the final paper, you will write a three-page paper in which you define the attitude construct, answer the question *What is an Attitude?* (~2 pages), and then compare your theoretical perspective to another popular model (~1 page). In your response be sure to touch on explicit vs. implicit measures of attitudes and what the correlations (or lack thereof) between these measures means for the question at hand. Some other potential issues to consider as you develop your theoretical perspective come from the introduction to the Social Cognition special issue on this topic (see full link below):

> From Gawronski (2007): *Questions that are subjects of these controversies are: Is there only one attitude or can people have multiple attitudes toward the same object? Is there something like a “real” attitude that can be contrasted with other sorts of evaluations? What exactly is the difference between “automatic” and “controlled” evaluations? In which particular sense of the “four horsemen of automaticity” (Bargh, 1994) can attitudes be called “automatic”? Can attitudes be unconscious? How exactly are attitudes represented in memory? Are attitudes generally constructed on the spot or do attitudes reflect stable, trait–like dispositions? How do personal evaluations differ from mere knowledge about the evaluations endorsed by others? What happens to the old attitude when attitudes change? What is the nature of attitudinal ambivalence?*

After answering the question of *What is an Attitude?* in your first two pages, please read one of the seven theoretical perspectives presented in *Social Cognition, 25, Special Issue: What is an Attitude?* (or any other instructor approved attitude theory). Discuss this perspective, highlighting the ways in which it differs from your own and any key strengths and weaknesses. For the differences, discuss why you prefer either your own approach or the model’s.

6) Grades:

Final course grades will be based in equal parts upon weekly assignment completion, in-class discussion participation, and final paper performance. *Your section grade will be docked ½ a letter grade for every day your final paper is late.*

7) Weekly Readings:

**Week 1 – 11/06: Overview & History**

Week 2 – 11/13: Formation


Week 3 – 11/20: Function


11/25 – Thanksgiving Break

Week 4 – 12/04: Measurement


Week 5 – 12/11: Change


(pp. 1-17 only)