

**PSYCHOLOGY 5606 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY PROSEMINAR:
THE ART AND SCIENCE EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
Fall 2006 (1st 5 Weeks)**

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http://psych.colorado.edu/~vanboven/teaching/p5606_methods/psyc5606_methods.html

Description

This course is a brief introduction to some topics in experimental social psychology. We will discuss methodological, practical, ethical, and theoretical issues regarding social psychology experiments. The goals of this course are (a) to better understand (and avoid) some of the methodological challenges that impede scientific progress in social psychology, and (b) to contemplate how to adopt a purposeful stance toward the art of experimental social psychology.

Grading

Participation and Discussion Leader (50%)

All students are expected to read and discuss the readings. In addition, to facilitate class discussion, students will take turns leading discussions. The discussion should point up important/controversial issues, unresolved questions, and so on. Further, discussion leaders will select an article published in *JPSP*, *JESP*, or *PSPB* (the three preeminent journals in social psychology) in the last five years to illustrate that week's topics.

Final Paper (50%)

The final paper is a methodological critique of a published article in *JPSP*, *JESP*, or *PSPB*. The objective of this assignment is to encourage you to think about how the methodological issues identified in this course are relevant to and present problems in contemporary social psychological research. The critiqued article should include one or more experiments and should have been published within the past five years. You should also try to find an article relevant to your research interests. You might also find a locally relevant article published by either the Judd (*JPSP*) or Park (*JESP*) editorial teams. Your paper should be not more than 10 double spaced pages.

In addition, to encourage your thinking about how scientific articles are structured, include a detailed outline of the article that makes clear its conceptual structure. To aid your thinking about how scientific articles are written in psychology, please see the chapters by Bem and Sternberg.

Final papers are due Friday 6 October.

Schedule

Session 1, 30 August: Course introduction and background readings

Smith, E. R. (2000). Research design. In H. T. Reis, & C. M. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology* (pp. 17-39). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Brewer, M. B. (1998). Experimentation in social psychology. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 99-142). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Please read these background readings before class.

Session 2, 06 September: External validity: Student samples and ethnic homogeneity

Mook, D. G. (1983). In defense of external invalidity. *American Psychologist*, 38, 379-387.

Sears, D. O. (1986). College sophomores in the laboratory: Influences of a narrow database on social psychology's view of human nature. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 515-530.

Sue, S. (1999). Science, ethnicity, and bias: Where have we gone wrong? *American Psychologist*, 54, 1070-1077.

Background reading: For those of you interested in culture, Norenzayan and Heine discuss the topic extensively.

Norenzayan, A., & Heine, S. J. (in press). Psychological universals: What are they and how can we know? *Psychological Bulletin*.

Session 3, 13 September: Self-fulfilling studies: Demand characteristics and experimenter bias

Orne, M. T. (1962). On the social psychology of the psychological experiment: With particular reference to demand characteristics and their implications. *American Psychologist*, 17, 776-783.

Rosenthal, R. (2002). Covert communication in classrooms, clinics, courtrooms, and cubicles. *American Psychologist*, 57, 839-849.

Schwarz, N. (1994). Judgment in a social context: Biases, shortcomings, and the logic of conversation. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 26, pp. 123-162). New York: Academic Press.

Session 4, 20 September: Stimuli and simplicity

Wells, G. L., & Windschitl, P. D. (1999). Stimulus sampling and social psychological experimentation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 1115-1125.

Higgins, E. T. (1992). Increasingly complex but less interesting articles: Scientific progress or regulatory problem? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 489-492.

Wegner, D. M. (1992). The premature demise of the solo experiment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 504-508.

Webster, G. W. (2006). The demise of the increasingly protracted journal article? Publication trends in APA journals, 1986-2004. Unpublished manuscript, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Session 5, 27 September: Deception and ethics

Baumrind, D. (1964). Some thoughts on ethics of research: After reading Milgram's "Behavioral study of obedience." *American Psychologist*, 19, 421-432.

Milgram, S. (1964). Issues in the study of obedience: A reply to Baumrind. *American Psychologist*, 19, 841-852.

Rosenthal, R. (1994). Science and ethics in conducting, analyzing, and reporting psychological research. *Psychological Science*, 5, 127-134.

Sears, D. O. (1994). On separating church and lab. *Psychological Science*, 5, 237-239.

Background readings on writing

Bem, D. J. (2004). Writing the empirical journal article. In J. M. Darley, M. P. Zanna, & H. L. Rodiger, III (Eds.), *Compleat academic: A career guide* (2nd ed., pp. 185-219). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Sternberg, R. J. (1993). *The psychologist's companion: A guide to scientific writing for students and researchers* (3rd Ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4 (pp. 56-66), 5 (pp. 67-84), and 11 (pp. 174-180).