

## PSY326: Social Cognition Winter 2023

### Contact Info

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<b>Office Hours:</b> Mon & Wed after 2pm By appointment (email me)	<b>Office Hours:</b> By appointment (email)

### Course Info

<b>Classes Meet:</b> Mondays, 10am-1pm	<b>Room:</b> RW 143 (Ramsay Wright)
<b>Course Website:</b> <a href="https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/298595">https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/298595</a>	
<b>Reading(s):</b> There is no textbook for this course. We will focus on empirical journal articles. All readings and other assigned material will be made available to you on Quercus.	

### Course Overview & Goals

Social cognition is the study of how people make sense of other people and themselves. We will cover how basic cognitive functions (e.g., attention

allocation, memory) are used to understand the social world, other people, and the self. We will explore how we attend to and remember information about others, how moral and personality judgments are made, the consequences of these processes, and how and when these consequences change over time.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

1. To increase your understanding of the core concepts in social cognition
2. To enhance your ability to think critically about research and psychological theory in social cognition
3. To apply social cognitive principles to “real world” situations
4. To develop your ability to converse thoughtfully with your peers about psychological science

### **Prerequisites**

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites, you will be removed. No waivers will be granted.

## **Course Structure & Requirements**

### **Course Webpage: Quercus**

This course will use the University’s learning management system, Quercus, to post course information including readings, assignments, grades, and important announcements. You will also be submitting assignments and participating in online assessments on Quercus. I will rely on this resource heavily throughout the semester so make sure you check it regularly and/or your email is set up correctly.

### **Preparation (Readings)**

You will be required to read assigned material weekly *before* we meet for class. Readings will consist of empirical journal articles, as well as chapters or sections of texts, and potentially other media like podcasts or videos. Reading empirical research will help you develop a skill you can apply in the future for academic purposes and to help you critically evaluate research and arguments in general.

Lectures and in-class activities will typically draw from and expand on material in the readings. You are expected to complete all assigned readings even if

they aren't directly discussed in lecture. Over the semester, you will be tested equally on lecture and assigned journal article materials.

I may occasionally provide additional readings (or videos or podcasts) when I lecture on a given topic. This additional material will be added on a rolling basis as we work through the semester in the Supplemental Material module on Quercus. Although material from these readings will not directly be tested, expanding your understanding on topics from the course will help you understand the material more deeply.

### **Engagement and Participation**

Your active engagement with the course material by participating in discussions and activities, taking notes, and thinking deeply about the questions that are posed helps us build a positive learning environment and enhances your understanding of the course concepts. There will also be several opportunities to participate outside the classroom such as discussion boards and journals. Your participation and engagement will be evaluated for effort (i.e., reading material before class, contributing to discussions) and quality (i.e., insightfulness, respectfulness).

Although attendance does not directly contribute to your grade, you will miss out on important lectures and class discussions and activities if you do not attend regularly. Please let me know if you will be unable to participate in class discussions for any reason. Your level of engagement will be apparent more directly in assignments such as Discussion Facilitation but will also be reflected in the quality of your work. More engagement means deeper thinking into the course content.

### **Lectures**

Almost every class meeting will involve some time for lecture. Lectures will review and synthesize material from the readings and other assigned material. I will also present material that is *not* covered in the readings and expand on important points. Lecture slides will be provided in PDF format before each class period. These slides are meant to support your learning and do not contain the level of detail that is required to excel in this class. Thus, keep in mind that reading the slides is not a substitute for attending class. If you are going to miss a class, you are responsible for borrowing notes from a classmate or scheduling office hours to review missed material.

Lectures will not be recorded. You may not independently record any part of the lectures unless you receive explicit permission from the instructor. If you

are given permission to record any part of a lecture, the recordings cannot be distributed to anyone (including other students in the course) or posted online. Remember that the recording is only for the use of studying for the course (see *Use of Course Material* policy below).

### **Discussion Groups (10%)**

To keep you engaged with the material and to give you a chance to discuss the implications of the material we are covering, you will participate in small group discussions frequently in this course. Groups will vary throughout the semester. For each discussion, you will complete a discussion guide with your group. These guides will comprise 7% of your final grade. You will also facilitate one discussion during the semester (3% of final grade). More details on these will be posted on Quercus and reviewed in class. There will also be chances for larger group discussions as a class and out-of-class discussions on Quercus; however, participation in these does not directly contribute to your grade.

### **Reflection Paper Assignments (15%)**

You will complete 2 reflection paper assignments, each of which is worth 7.5% of your final grade. For these papers, I will present you a prompt relevant to what we've been discussing in class so far. You will submit a formal 2-3 page (excluding references), APA formatted paper that thoughtfully responds to the prompt by citing material covered in the course and integrating key ideas from the course. Although no additional research is required to complete these assignments, you are free to include as many additional references as you would like. More details on these assignments will be posted on Quercus and reviewed during class. Each reflection paper is due by **11:59pm EST** on their due date (see *Course Schedule* below).

### **Science Communication Essay and Project (35%)**

To help you gain practice in dissecting empirical journal articles, dive deeper into one topic of interest, and become comfortable integrating and communicating scientific findings to a general audience, you will complete a multi-part Science Communication project. This project contains 4 parts (see below). You will use peer-reviewed research to explain a social issue using social cognition. Importantly, this project will be aimed toward a nonscientific, nonexpert audience so you will need to be able to anticipate the reader's need for information while also limiting scientific language and jargon. More details on this assignment will be posted on Quercus and covered in class.

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<b>Part 1</b>	<u>Assignment Plan (3%)</u>	Feb. 6

	A brief description (1 page) of your paper topic including the social issue and how social cognition will be applied, an annotated list of at least 6 references you plan to include, and a general explanation of your plan for the Science Communication Project (0.5-1 page).	
<b>Part 2</b>	<u>Essay (20%)</u> A formal paper (no longer than 6 pages excluding references) where you review your social issue from a social cognition perspective. In addition to describing your social issue, you will need to successfully apply social cognitive principles <i>and</i> target your paper to a nonexpert audience.	March 17
<b>Part 3</b>	<u>Science Communication Project (10%)</u> You will create an infographic, video, social media post, website, or other presentation to be used as a real-world device to communicate the science you have learned to the general public.	April 2
<b>Part 4</b>	<u>Project Expo (2%)</u> You will present (1%) and comment/reflect (1%) on one of the presentations of your classmates. Keep in mind that if an extension is granted for the final project you will not be able to present at the Project Expo.	April 3

### Midterm & Final Assessments (40%)

Both assessments will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and/or short essay questions. These questions will ask you to think critically about course themes, synthesize course content, and/or apply what you've learned to real-world situations. Both assessments will be online. You will be allowed to refer to your book and notes for these assessments, however, you are not allowed to take the assessments with other classmates nor consult outside resources (e.g., Google, Wikipedia). All writing must be in your own words. See *Course Policies* below for more on academic integrity.

You will have two days to complete these assessments. See *Course Schedule* for dates. For the midterm, this will allow you to use scheduled class time to complete the assessment, but does not require you to. We will leave some time

for review prior to each assessment using a Q&A format. This means that you will need to come prepared with questions to aid your studying.

## Grading/Marking Scheme

Your final grade in this course will be calculated based on the breakdown below:

	Weight (%)
Discussion Groups & In-Class Activities	10%
Reflection Assignments	15%
Science Communication Project	35%
Midterm Assessment	20%
Final Assessment	20%

Note: Any grades posted in the Quercus gradebook are posted for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, included any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved by me at the end of the course.

## Course Policies

### Late Assignments

Late assignments (those turned in after the due date without prior discussion with me) will incur a 5% penalty for each day it is late up to 25% (5 days after the due date). Late work will not be accepted more than 5 days after the due date unless you have formal accommodations or prior arrangements have been made.

I am generally flexible to grant extensions if they are requested at least 2 days prior to the due date of the assignment. Any requests for extensions that are not made 2 days before on the actual due date may not be granted. If you anticipate turning in an assignment late, please contact Dr. Sanchez via email *before* the due date to request a maximum 48-hour extension. I will not grant extensions longer than these unless you have formal accommodations. Extensions will not be granted for Assessments.

## **Missed Assessments**

Makeup assessments will not be issued except in cases of extenuating circumstances with appropriate documentation. If you miss the midterm assessment, you must submit documentation that demonstrates your inability to complete that assessment (i.e., the ACORN illness self-declaration tool) and let me know within 7 days of the missed midterm's due date. In these cases, the weight of the midterm assessment will be added to the final assessment. If you miss the final assessment, you must get in touch with the College Registrar to work out an extension plan.

## **Course Communication and Email Policy**

Some questions are best answered in person or in an online meeting and some are best answered via email. If you have a complex question (i.e., you want to further discuss an idea from the course), I am happy to meet with you to discuss it. Having face-to-face discussions, whether in person or online, about complex questions or issues is generally more effective. If you have a short/simple question, email might be the most efficient way to ask it. If you don't know, send an email with your question to either me or the TA and we'll let you know if a meeting would be better.

When communicating via email please adhere to the following:

- Students can expect an email response within 48 hours not including weekends (do not email the day of the due date with a question about the assignment, we might not see your email in time to send a helpful reply).
- Please consult the course syllabus, schedule, other handouts, and announcements on Quercus *before* submitting inquiries by email.
- In the subject line indicate the course code and the topic of your email (e.g., PSY322 essay question).
- Begin your emails by greeting the person you are writing to (e.g., "Hello Professor Sanchez", "Dear Prof. Sanchez,")
- Emails should come from your utoronto email account to communicate with the professor and TA (otherwise they may get marked as spam).
- All communications (verbal, email) should be respectful in language and tone and constructive in nature. This includes communications with me, the TA, and your fellow students.

## **Regrade Requests**

If you think an assignment has been incorrectly marked or if you believe you should have received more points on a specific assignment or question, you can request a regrade 24 hours after the feedback is returned. Please email

me with a short paragraph *identifying the distinct element of the assignment of concern and with clear reasoning for why the work deserves a regrade*. I will only consider regrade requests submitted to me within 2 weeks of getting the grade. Importantly, submitting a regrade request does not guarantee a grade change. Keep in mind that regrading your assignment may result in a lower grade.

### **Specific Medical Circumstances**

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, please email me to let me know and complete the ACORN self-declaration of illness tool as soon as possible.

### **Religious Accommodation**

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling assessments or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you cannot complete a component of the course or meet a course deadline due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

### **Accommodation for Personal Reasons**

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical or non-religious reasons. If you have concerns about your ability to complete an assignment, please reach out to me. You do not need to tell me any details about your situation that you are not comfortable sharing, but I need to know about the issue to appropriately accommodate you. It may also be a good idea to speak with an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can support you in requesting extensions or accommodations, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with many situations and concerns.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

All students, faculty, and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty with writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a



degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism (i.e., representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another course) very seriously. All writing assignments will be submitted to the University's plagiarism detection tool. If you have any questions about this policy, the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>).

### **Use of Course Material**

Keep in mind that lectures and lecture materials are the intellectual property of the instructor, and the slides and related materials should be respected thus. Students are free to use all lecture slides and lecture material for their own use. Students are, however, not permitted to share lecture slides or materials with others not enrolled in this course without my approval. Uploading course materials to the Internet or shared server is expressly prohibited. Specifically, I do not want to discover that a student has put any of my materials into the public domain, has sold my materials, or has given my materials to a person or company that is using them to earn money. The University will support instructors in asserting and pursuing their rights, and their copyrights, in such matters.

### **Instructor Policy Statement**

I intend to treat you with respect, to have empathy for your struggles (in and outside of this course), to assess your progress in a reasonable and thoughtful manner, and to offer you constructive feedback. I am available to discuss any concerns you have. I strongly encourage you to ask questions in class, book a visit with me during office hours, and/or email me to discuss any concerns or questions. With all issues, I encourage you to contact me as early as possible so we can work together on a solution. You may email me at any time, and I will do my best to respond within 2 business days. Emails received on the weekends or holidays may need extra time. I will also do my best to refrain from sending out course announcements or emails on the weekends or on holidays. I value work-life balance and believe in rest!

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## **Student Resources and Support**

**Accessibility Services (AS)**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS)(<http://accessibility.utoronto.ca>) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will then assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engaged with each other, and respect one another's differences. Cultivating such an environment is important in all courses, and especially so when discussing topics like intergroup relations, stigma, and discrimination. As your instructor, I aim to create a classroom environment that supports the learning and growth of all students. Neither I nor the University of Toronto condones discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

### **Mental Health & Well-Being**

As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries, and so forth. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. There are many helpful resources available through Student Life

([www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed)) and Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>).

An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. There are many resources available to you here at the University. Feel free to visit the Academic Success Centre

(<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/about-us>) for more information on navigating through the university experience.

### **Writing**

As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with several resources to help them

achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>.

### **English Language Resources**

For anyone who would like to advance their understanding and command of English, there are many supports available at UofT:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell/resources-for-students>

## Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change and adjustments. Students will be advised of all updates promptly on Quercus.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Assignment Due
1	1/9	Introduction to Social Cognition	Syllabus	
2	1/16	Attention, Encoding, Memory	Bargh et al., (2012)	
3	1/23	The "Self" in Social Cognition Discussion Groups 1	Brewer (1991) McConnell (2010) pgs. 3-10 only	
4	1/30	Affect, Behaviour, and Social Cognition Discussion Groups 2	Isbell et al (2013)	Reflection Paper #1
5	2/6	Heuristics, Accuracy, & Efficiency in Social Inference Review Session for Midterm	Alter & Oppenheimer (2008) Jussim et al (2015)	Assignment Plan
6	2/13	<b>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT</b> Available at 9:00am EST Sunday, Feb 12 Due at 11:59pm EST Tuesday, Feb 14		
7	2/20	<b>READING WEEK</b>		
8	2/27	Attitudes: Formation and Change Discussion Groups 3	Schwarz (2007) pgs. 638-648 Rydell et al (2006)	
9	3/6	Attribution Processes Discussion Groups 4	Plaks (2017) pgs. 265-274	Reflection Paper #2
10	3/13	Implicit Theories & Impression Formation Discussion Groups 5	Podcast TBD	Science Communication Essay due March 17 <sup>th</sup>
11	3/20	Stereotyping & Prejudice	Bodenhausen et al (2012) Correll et al (2002)	
12	3/27	Relationships & Attraction	Luo & Zhang (2009)	

		Review Session for Final		
13	4/3	Project Expo		Science Communication Project due April 2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>FINAL ASSESSMENT</b> TBD				

All assignments are due at 11:59pm EST on their scheduled due date unless otherwise stated.