

Sociology 2730  
Social Interaction  
Dr. James W. Balkwell  
balkwell@uga.edu  
Fall Semester, 2008



# **Sociology 2730**

## **Social Interaction**

### **Fall Semester 2008**

(To print this syllabus, [click here.](#))

---

#### **I. Course Description**

This course is about social psychology, traditionally an area of both sociology and psychology. Social psychology seeks to understand the behavior and cognitive processes that occur when people are in groups, where the thoughts, feelings, and actions of each person affect, and are affected by, the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others. The term “social interaction” refers to this implied interdependence and mutual influence. We will consider the principles of social psychology and apply these to selected sociological phenomena.

## **Some Important Information:**

Textbook	.....	<i>Social Psychology</i> (6th ed.), by DeLamater & Myers
Class Meets	.....	Tu-Th, 3:30p - 4:45p
Classroom	.....	Room 311 Baldwin Hall
Instructor's Office	.....	Room 119-D Baldwin Hall
Office Hours	.....	Tu-Th, 5:00p - 6:00p, after class, or by appointment

## **II. Objectives**

As an academic discipline, social psychology's most fundamental objective is to understand the links between the individual and society. That includes the study of the relations of individuals to one another, to groups, to collectivities, and to social institutions. It also includes the study of intra-individual (e.g., mental) processes insofar as these influence or are influenced by culture, subcultures, or external social structures. In keeping with this, my objective in this course is to help *you* to better understand the link between the individual and society, and the various aspects of this link just described. I hope to challenge you to think more critically about the processes that partially shape our interactions with others and thus our lives.

## **III. Class Format**

I plan to lecture on class days. Because we probably will have 30 to 40 students in this class after the drop/add period is over, there are limits on how this course can be organized and conducted. Discussion sometimes is useful, particularly if it helps to show the relevance of important social psychological ideas; however, this is a survey course, and a large amount of discussion would require compromises that I would prefer not to make. Historically, the introductory social psychology course has included material from ten to twelve research areas, which I believe are important areas for us to cover if the course is to have the value I want it to have. Teaching is subject to fads and fashions, just as almost anything else is; today the pendulum has swung in the direction of more discussion and less lecture, which requires drastically cutting the amount of material. There are pros and cons to the various possible class formats, but my preference *in a survey course* is to cover a greater breadth of material, and to include class discussion only when it fits in naturally (as it does from time to time).

## IV. Another Disclaimer

My teaching focuses on the concepts, hypotheses, and theories set forth by the best scholars in social psychology (especially sociological social psychology), with particular emphasis on the evidence supporting (or failing to support) those theoretical ideas. By its nature, social psychology includes some materials that are politically and ideologically charged (e.g., racial discrimination, same-sex marriage, gender inequality, factors that shape social and political attitudes, and others). That makes it very important to understand that the questions social psychologists ask are social scientific questions, not political or religious ones. Our goals are to understand social interaction processes, together with the antecedents and consequences of such processes. The pursuit of these goals could be led by an instructor of *any* religious or political persuasion and it would make no difference, because we ask different kinds of questions and seek different kinds of answers than do the more “values-driven” areas of inquiry.

Any university is a “marketplace of ideas” and I consider that to be one of the distinctive strengths of universities. Inevitably, though, class members raise questions or offer opinions indicating a point of view on some ideologically charged subject. When this happens, it is important that we all treat those with whom we may disagree with courtesy and tolerance. That is the only way this class can work properly.

## V. Exams, Grading, Attendance, and Extra Credit

There will be two regular tests (September 18 and October 28) and a final exam (Tuesday, December 16, 3:30 PM). The two regular tests and the final exam all will be of the same length, will cover roughly the same amount of material, and will count the same toward your final grade; however, the final exam will take place during our scheduled final exam period. I do *not* give early exams, nor do I give late exams unless there is a very good reason. In any corporation, law office, or other workplace, people are expected to abide by a schedule. In dealing with the administrative and scheduling aspects of a course, I use the “workplace model,” which gives all of us a reasonable basis for planning ahead and does not burden the Sociology Department staff with a lot of special requests and the extra work those require.

### **Summary of Important Dates:**

- Test 1 — Thursday, September 18

- Test 2 — Tuesday, October 28
- Final Exam — Tuesday, December 16 (3:30 PM)

Attendance also may figure into your grade. Attendance each class day is expected and you may earn a bonus of up to 2% for perfect or nearly perfect attendance. *Being in attendance means arriving on time (or very close to it) and staying in class the entire period.* Zero to two days missed (out of 27 class days when attendance will be taken) will give you a 2% bonus; three or four days missed reduces this to 1%; and more than four days missed (i.e., > 15% absenteeism) eliminates any bonus. Please note that a bonus is *not* an entitlement. Many students will miss a day or two for religious holidays, unanticipated illnesses, or family emergencies. These are part of life and are *not* excused absences calling for exceptions to my policy; the leeway in the policy is analogous to that of most employment settings, and it takes account of “necessary absences.” Again, the classical workplace model is that a person gets paid their usual wage or salary if they are present (or within the leeway permitted); they forgo their usual wage or salary if they are absent (or exceed that leeway).

Except for the possible attendance bonus just described, *there is no extra credit in this course.* In a course at this level, every student should be asked to do the same work and should be graded by the same standards.

The Board of Regents and UGA University Council adopted a plus/minus grading system, the Fall Semester 2006 being the first time (during a regular academic year) that this system was employed. The particular variant of this system that they adopted includes *no* A+ and *no* gradations of D’s and F’s. The meanings of the 10 approved grades for purposes of calculating GPA’s have been specified by the Board of Regents. How percentage scores should translate into the 10 possible grades was left up to the professor of each course. My intention is to use the following translations, but I reserve the right to fine-tune them if unanticipated circumstances this semester makes that seem desirable.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Meaning for GPA</b>	<b>Percentage Score</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>Score <math>\geq</math> 93 •</b>
<b>A–</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>90 <math>\leq</math> Score <math>&lt;</math> 93 •</b>

<b>B+</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>86 • ≤ Score &lt; 90</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>83 • ≤ Score &lt; 86 •</b>
<b>B–</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>80 ≤ Score &lt; 83 •</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>76 • ≤ Score &lt; 80</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>73 • ≤ Score &lt; 76 •</b>
<b>C–</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>70 ≤ Score &lt; 73 •</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>60 ≤ Score &lt; 70</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>Score &lt; 60</b>

## VI. Class Meetings and Assignments

With limited exceptions, our class will meet every Tuesday and Thursday throughout the Fall Semester. Our exact schedule of class days is described below. (If you are reading this on the Internet, regular class days are colored gray, test days are colored red, and non-meeting days are colored light blue.) If special circumstances arise and the UGA Administration cancels and/or reschedules meeting days, we will of course abide by such directives. Still, the schedule below is at least 99% definite; you should note departures from the Tu-Th routine and put them on your calendar.

### Sociology 2730 Class Days • Fall Semester 2008

<b>Week</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>01</b>	<b>Aug 18</b>	<b>Aug 19</b>	<b>Aug 20</b>	<b>Aug 21</b>	<b>Aug 22</b>
<b>02</b>	<b>Aug 25</b>	<b>Aug 27</b>	<b>Aug 28</b>	<b>Aug 29</b>	<b>Aug 30</b>
<b>03</b>	<b>Sep 01</b>	<b>Sep 02</b>	<b>Sep 03</b>	<b>Sep 04</b>	<b>Sep 05</b>
<b>04</b>	<b>Sep 08</b>	<b>Sep 09</b>	<b>Sep 10</b>	<b>Sep 11</b>	<b>Sep 12</b>
<b>05</b>	<b>Sep 15</b>	<b>Sep 16</b>	<b>Sep 17</b>	<b>&lt; Sep 18 &gt;</b>	<b>Sep 19</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>Sep 22</b>	<b>Sep 23</b>	<b>Sep 24</b>	<b>Sep 25</b>	<b>Sep 26</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>Sep 29</b>	<b>Sep 30</b>	<b>Oct 01</b>	<b>Oct 02</b>	<b>Oct 03</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>Oct 06</b>	<b>Oct 07</b>	<b>Oct 08</b>	<b>Oct 09</b>	<b>Oct 10</b>
<b>09</b>	<b>Oct 13</b>	<b>Oct 14</b>	<b>Oct 15</b>	<b>Oct 16</b>	<b>Oct 17</b>

10	Oct 20	Oct 21	Oct 22	Oct 23	Oct 24
11	Oct 27	< Oct 28 >	Oct 29	Oct 30	Oct 31
12	Nov 03	Nov 04	Nov 05	Nov 06	Nov 07
13	Nov 10	Nov 11	Nov 12	Nov 13	Nov 14
14	Nov 17	Nov 18	Nov 19	Nov 20	Nov 21
15	Nov 24	Nov 25	Nov 26	Nov 27	Nov 28
16	Dec 01	Dec 02	Dec 03	Dec 04	Dec 05
Finals	Dec 08	Dec 09	Dec 10	Dec 11	Dec 12
(cont.)	Dec 15	< Dec 16 >	Dec 17	Dec 18	Dec 19

**Note.**— Our final exam is at 3:30 PM on Tuesday, Dec 16.

I tentatively plan for us to cover the following topics this semester; however, this list is an initial plan that may be altered, depending on the uncertainties of the semester. It is important to refer to the WebCT Assignments Page regularly to see exactly what material we will be covering and, when the times come, what material you are expected to have studied for each test.

- Theoretical Perspectives
- Research Methods
- Socialization
- Self and Identity
- Deviant Behavior and Social Reaction
- Social Perception and Cognition
- Attitude Acquisition and Change
- Social Influence and Persuasion
- Self Presentation and Impression Management
- Aggression and Violence
- Interpersonal Attraction and Relationships

There will be specific reading assignments from the DeLamater and Myers textbook for each topic we cover. These assignments will be given on the WebCT Assignments Page, which also will review some of the points presented in my related lectures.

## VII. WebCT Component

The University of Georgia uses a very simple system in which each member of the university community (faculty, staff, and students) has a single **user name** and a single **password** for e-mail, WebCT, and certain other purposes. If you do not regularly use your account, you must begin

using it to effectively participate in this course. (My SPAM filter screens out e-mail coming from Yahoo.com and other “high risk” sources, so if you contact me from a non-UGA account, you must *not* assume that I will receive your message.) I expect you to log into the Sociology 2730 course materials regularly throughout the semester to make sure that you are aware of the assignments, announcements, and other items relevant to our class.

## **VIII. Academic Honesty**

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. In this course, cheating would include using unauthorized notes and/or electronic devices on tests, and/or causing attendance records to be false. Please read *A Culture of Honesty: Policies and Procedures on Academic Honesty*. If you do not already have this booklet, you should download it from the Vice President for Instruction’s web site and read Sections 5, 6, and 7. Violations will result in failing this course.

## **IX. Sociology Human Rights Statement**

All students should know that the Department of Sociology has a Human Rights Committee for the resolution of student grievances. *Any student registered for a sociology class at the University of Georgia who feels that he or she has not been treated in a fair or professional manner by an instructor is advised to follow these steps:*

- A. The student should discuss her or his concern with the instructor of the course. Only in extenuating circumstances is this not the appropriate first step.
- B. If discussion with the instructor does not resolve the grievance, the student then should discuss her or his concern with the Head of the Department of Sociology.
- C. If discussion with the Department Head not resolve the grievance to the student’s satisfaction, he or she then may request activation of the Human Rights Committee. This is done by sending a request in writing to: Chair, Human Rights Committee, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia, Campus.

When requested to do so, the Human Rights Committee has the responsibility to investigate all charges in accordance with procedures on file in the Department of Sociology Main Office, copies of which are available to

students. The committee will make recommendations in writing to the Department Head, with copies going to the student and instructor involved. The Department Head will review the recommendations and make a decision in writing, with copies distributed to the student and instructor. Any further appeal must be made to the Dean of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, and should be accompanied by copies of all previous materials.

Grievances involving a grade, whether during the semester or after the semester is over, are subject to policies of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences and the University of Georgia. These are available on UGA web pages and from the appropriate offices in New College and Old College (campus buildings just north of the Main Library).

---

**Revised: August 19, 2008**