

**Social and Developmental Foundations of Human Behavior, 1.15.2025 [Note subject to change]**

**18:820:506 Spring 2025**

**Instructor:** Jamie Walkup, Ph.D

Time/Place: Tuesday mornings, 8:45-11:30. Room A317.

**Contact Info:** walkup@gsapp.rutgers.edu or 212-518-3091 (call or text).

Office hour: Monday 6-7 pm A209 or by appointment

**Course Assistant:** Liezl Bosch [lb897@gsapp.rutgers.edu](mailto:lb897@gsapp.rutgers.edu) 609-933-7531

**Course Description.** We will review selected theory and research in the areas of social and developmental psychology. The course format will be a mix of lectures to contextualize weekly readings, presentations, and discussions based on the reading.

**Course Objectives:**

*Content-Related:* Develop familiarity with major theories and current research in social and developmental psychology. Increase your awareness of the contribution of larger social, economic, and political factors to the definition of topic areas, as well as the contribution of journal practices, professional demands and standards, and funding to development of research areas. Master a wide range of key concepts in social and developmental psychology, and associated disciplines. Consider intersections between social and developmental processes, and how these processes are conditioned by broader contextual factors. Describe common themes in past and present social psychology research. Understand how social psychology research in conformity, discrimination, and intergroup processes informs our understanding of individuals' development and later life functioning. Appreciate how diversity plays a role in social and developmental understanding of individuals.

*Skills.* Learn how to read, interpret, and critically evaluate research in social and developmental psychology. Learn how to summarize data and theory economically, identify essential points, and communicate them effectively. Learn how to structure arguments for and against claims and assertions. Apply theory and research to concrete examples of human behavior you have observed in yourself or others. Learn how to frame arguments for propositions, understand counter-arguments, and identify relevant data to decide between positions.

**Readings and course materials.**

Readings will be made available through the canvas site for the course. Supplemental readings on the Canvas site may be provided to facilitate further exploration of a topic. Some of our classes will reference other online materials and videos.

Needless to say, assignment of a reading or other learning material does not imply endorsement of the content or conclusions – indeed endorsement of everything would be impossible, given that readings may contradict one another. Moreover, an important learning goal is to evaluate claims analytically, in terms of their argument and evidence, rather than just accept them.

**Attendance Policy.** Attendance is required, except in exceptional circumstances. If you are unable to attend you should notify me in advance. If you miss class due to observance of a religious holiday, notify me by email in advance and arrange to get material/assignments in advance. One excused absence is allowed due to extenuating circumstances, but any further absences will require a plan for remediation. Four absences will be considered sufficient grounds to consider whether you must repeat the class.

**Atmosphere.** Any graduate course in psychology may sometimes touch on subject matter that is difficult to discuss. As individuals, you may sometimes need to anticipate that a module contains upsetting topics (e.g., discussions of racism would be incomplete if they avoided reference to historical acts of great evil). You may need to attend to your own preparation and draw on support when needed. As a class, we need to cultivate an atmosphere of mutual support, civility, and professionalism, with due concern that discussions promote learning and understanding of course material and that any criticisms be aimed at ideas not persons. All class participation is expected to be consistent with this atmosphere.

***Going online for any reason unrelated to class during class lecture or discussion should be avoided. Violations of this guideline can reduce your participation grade.***

**Work Pairs and Groups.** Much learning in graduate school comes from other graduate students. To facilitate discussion and learning, you will be asked to work together in pairs and groups for some assignments.

**Late submission of assignments.** It is an important professional competency to complete work in a timely way and meet deadlines. But life can get complicated when unexpected or untoward events turn up uninvited. Permission to turn in work past a stated deadline should be *requested in advance*, in writing, and the request ***must*** include a proposed new deadline. The new deadline cannot ordinarily be changed, and if you fail to meet it without a further extension being granted, it is possible that the work may not be accepted.

**Canvas.** Updates on class plans will sometimes be posted for various reasons ***and it is your responsibility to check the Canvas site announcements to keep up with any new developments.*** When information has been posted on the site, or sent to an email address linked to the site, “I didn’t know” is not a valid excuse.

**Course Feedback:** I’d like to approach this as a joint undertaking, with a shared goal of effective learning, increased mastery, and intellectual satisfaction. I will have some structured

opportunities for this, and will arrange for you to do. While not all suggestions can be implemented, I want to work together to make this work. It's also fine to approach Liezl, who can offer a sympathetic ear, make suggestions, and convey to me feedback you'd like to go through her.

## Requirements

**Grade.** Your grade will be based on class participation, which includes work as pairs and as groups (10%), your individual article summaries for readings (10%), "stop and think" contributions (25%), quizzes (10%), and individual presentations to class, followed by a paper (45%).

*Participation (10%).* You should contribute actively to discussions, responding to questions and comments of others, yet without dominating or making it hard for others to speak. Timeliness in responding to instructor requests, messages, and notices will be counted in this grade. Worth 10%. (Ignoring a query from the instructor or Liezl is particularly frowned upon. Even if you can't answer right away, send an acknowledgement of receipt.)

*Article summary (10%).* Individual students will be asked to take responsibility to provide summaries of assigned readings in class to summarize for the online discussion board. The summary should generally aim to be about 1-2 pages (about 400 words) but may need to be more for longer readings. The goal is a concise overview of the key points of the paper, any implications for clinical practice, 3-5 points to remember, and 3 questions to engage with the reading/topic ideas. These questions should not just be a free association. Try to make questions interesting. Please post your online paper summary on canvas no less than two full days (48 hours) before class time (i.e. 8:45 am Sunday). Late submissions subject to grade reduction.

Occasionally, if there is time, you may be asked to report briefly on the article summary in class. You should report the content of the article but where appropriate it is fine to characterize it, rather than walk through details. Provide 'bottom line' or summary conclusions and think of at least one illustrative example of a situation, event, etc. that communicates the relevance of the content.

*"Stop and think" class exercises/discussions (25%).* In advance of class, you will be assigned topics/questions for discussions. Most, but not all, topics/questions may relate readings, lecture, or the topic more generally. Some will be more informal, asking you to reflect with others on your observations about yourself, your family and friends, values, what is happening in the world. You should submit 48 hours prior to class time. Length can vary, from 1-3 pages (double spaced). In class, you may talk about the experiences in pairs or groups. (We'll see which works best.) Then we will talk as a class about what you learned or think noteworthy. (Note:

You are *never* being asked to share personal or private information you would prefer to keep to yourself. The key element is to provide a personal perspective. If you feel an assignment impinges on personal information, you can arrange with me to use a fictional character or story.)

*Occasional quizzes, discussion board assignments and reflections (10%).* There will be a few multiple choice quizzes. If class participation is good, there will be few. If it appears students are not doing the reading, more quizzes will be given. These are “low stakes” assessments, allowing you to try twice to get correct answers. In one case, the quiz will be a group activity that will allow you to discuss with peers the correct answers.)

*Class Presentation/Paper (45%).* You will be provided with options related to presentation topics. Your preferences will be taken into account to the extent possible. You will research the topic, decide how to structure an interesting, discussion-worthy presentation, and select short readings for the class, which will be posted on Canvas *at least 5 days prior to the presentation.* You should meet with the instructor or teaching aide. You should provide a draft of your presentation to the instructor and teaching aide *at least 7 days before the presentation.*

Researching, and deciding how to structure, the presentation topic are important elements of the assignment. To assist in your presentation, you can if you wish illustrate themes or points or use in the exposition carefully chosen cultural artifacts, such as movie or TV scenes, fiction, poetry, photography, public events, common rituals or practices, etc. (Sticking just to the psychological literature is fine of course.) Criticism of readings or the topic itself is an OK approach too, so long as well supported by evidence or argument.

Any class readings for your class presentation ordinarily should ideally be posted in canvas as soon as you have selected them and at least 5 days in advance of the class. Your actual presentation should include a powerpoint (not in pdf form), which should be sent in final draft form to the instructor and Teaching Aide *at least 7 days prior to the class.* The filename should include your last name, the topic, and the date of presentation.

(If you wish, then with the instructor’s permission, you can opt to submit a paper on a topic other than your presentation topic. In that case, the presentation will be worth 25% and the paper 20%).

**Extra Credit Policy:** As a matter of policy, extra credit assignments cannot be provided to individual students but may be offered to the entire class as an option.

### **Writing Assistance:**

Shawn Taylor, Ed. D. | Director, Assessment and Writing Coaching Learning Centers Office:  
Academic Building (West) | Rm. 1125 P: 848.932.1662 | [sktaylor@rutgers.edu](mailto:sktaylor@rutgers.edu) | [rlc.rutgers.edu](http://rlc.rutgers.edu)

**Disability Statement:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, the campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodation, spelling out work adjustments. The letter will not include, and I will not ask you about, the disorder or impairment that may be associated with the accommodation. Please share the letter as soon as you have it and we will discuss the accommodations needed as early in your courses as possible. (Occasionally, students entitled to an accommodation delay requesting it until the end of term, which can sometimes mean their work during the early part of the term suffers, unnecessarily. This is not advised.) To begin this process, you should complete the Registration form (<https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>)

If you have an accommodation, please email me, attaching the Letter of Accommodation. We will work together to find solutions that effectively level the playing field for you.

**Statement on Academic Integrity:** Please review the University's academic integrity policy, which can be found at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

You are responsible for conducting yourself in accordance with its dictates.

Use of AI, chatgpt, etc. Any and all use must be explicitly acknowledged. If you draw on an AI system, you must submit to the instructor a copy of any text consulted, and the search terms used. If your presentation is judged to depend too extensively on an AI summary, with insufficient contribution by you, the grade may be affected and/or it may be returned for revision.

The Rutgers course on academic integrity can be found here: <https://rutgers.instructure.com/enroll/L9PJ CJ>

**Names, pronouns, emails:** I am supplied with a class rosters based on registration, which is usually your legal name. If you use another name, just let me know and I'm glad to use it. Let me know what the appropriate pronoun for you is. Although you must use the university assigned emails, you can set it up to forward to another address of your choosing. Any official information will be sent to the email on record with the university.

**Respect and Diversity.** As professionals, you will serve a diverse population. GSAPP has a responsibility to provide the training needed for you to do so. As a diverse group of individuals, you will bring your own experiences, values, and viewpoints to the training process. Engaging with this diversity can provide exactly what motivated many of you to become psychologists in

the first place – a chance to reach across divisions to understand more deeply the many ways a person can make sense of life.

This engagement is not without its challenges. These can best be met by cultivating an open mind, respect for others, and a shared commitment to learning and mutual respect.