“The obvious can sometimes be illuminating when perceived in an unhabitual way.”
Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael*

“Reality leaves a lot to the imagination.” John Lennon

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”
Marcel Proust

**Social Psychology**

* Sociology XL 132 / Summer Session 2011 / Royce 150 / W 6:45-10 pm

Instructor: Terri Anderson
Email: [doctorta@gmail.com](mailto:doctorta@gmail.com) (please title your subject heading “re: Soc. 132”)
Office: Haines A58C
Office Phone: (310) 206-5233
Office Hours: MW 3-4 pm

**Course Statement**

How and why do we see the world in the ways we do? How do our perceptions actually come to produce our experiences, just as our experiences come to produce our perceptions? How does the social world shape who we are, who we want to be, and how we create and present ourselves in that social world? And, as meaning is not static, nor is it absolute, how do we engage in reconstructing both ourselves and the social world as a search for and actualization of meaning? We will be considering all of these questions and more as we move, academically and experientially, into a sociological exploration of social psychology.

This course offers a broad survey of various theories and perspectives in social psychology, a field which bridges sociology and psychology and is primarily concerned with how individuals view and interact with one another in everyday life. We will study social psychological research on a wide variety of topics including conformity, obedience, identity, power, status, identity, gender, stereotypes, culture, interpersonal perception and relationships, among others. Our focus is on the way the social context structures interaction, which in turn becomes part of the process by which society as a whole is enacted.

**Because lecture requires your full attention, no wireless devices of any kind can be used in class. Please put away your laptop computer, cell phone, blackberry, iPhone, and any other similar device.**

**Please do not text message in class.**
Course Readings

There are three softcover books and one course reader required for this course, as follows:


Recommended Texts


Texts are available at LuValle’s bookstore (downstairs, underneath the coffeehouse).

The reader is available at Westwood Copies, which is at 1001 Gayley Ave., Suite 104, in Westwood, (310) 208-3233. M-F 8:30 am-8:00 pm, Sat 9:00 am-5:00 pm. Next to and behind the Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf. Easiest entry (and parking) are in the alley behind. Be sure to ask for the Barry Alfonso interview!

* Readings are to be done PRIOR TO the day in which they are to be discussed. It will be assumed that you have done readings for that day’s class.

Experiments

You are required to complete 10 experiments from Roger-Pol Droit’s Astonish Yourself! Experiments in the Philosophy of Everyday Life. Experiment assignments will be specified, scanned, and emailed to you weeks 1-10 as the course goes along. Each one is worth 1 point. Please write a 1-2 page typed response for each experiment. Turn in your experiment write-ups with your journal every Wednesday in class, at the beginning of class. Please staple everything together. Experiments should also be used as fodder for discussion in essays, wherever you find it appropriate.

Journals
You must commit yourself to keeping a weekly journal which addresses the course. One journal is due per week, including both the second and the last days of class. Because the topic of social psychology and the discipline of sociology can generate so many divergent emotional and intellectual reactions for so many people, paying attention to those emotional and intellectual reactions, and to the way in which the reactions affect your learning, attitudes and behavior, can be helpful.

* Every week, type two or more pages about your reactions to the course: what you think, how you feel, and also what you learned about your own attitudes and behavior and about those of others. Inform your response by clearly and explicitly referencing pertinent course readings.

* Do not reiterate what happened in class. Discuss what you learned about yourself and/or others and about sociology as a frame of reference. For some weeks, specific journal topics may be assigned. If not assigned, the exact topic is your choice, but the journal is not a general diary of your life; rather, the journal is for you to address course issues. Journals that are not clearly relevant to the course will not receive credit.

* It is not important that you feel and think in any particular way, only that you do pay attention to what you are feeling and what you are thinking, and that you begin to become an active participant in your own learning process - the emphasis being on participatory education, in contradistinction to the ruling passive-consumer-student mentality. This is your chance to express yourself, in many cases without being given any specific topic - enjoy this freedom, don't run away from it. Write whatever you are thinking and feeling, not what you think your teacher wants to hear.

* Entries must be two or more pages long, typed - normal margins, font size no larger than 12 pt. please, no huge headers or footers, no big spaces between paragraphs. Write at least two FULL pages - partial work gets partial credit.

Journals are to be turned in on the instructor's desk at the beginning of class, before lecture begins. Please do not turn in journals while class is in session. Once lecture starts, your journal is late, and won’t be accepted for credit. Each journal will receive between 0 and 2 points. Your points will be based on how thoughtfully you address course issues and materials, and how well you meet above stated guidelines. Your journal MUST show solid consideration of course readings. Journals can NOT be made up or turned in a day late.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 ESSAYS</td>
<td>30%, 40%</td>
<td>Meetings 7 (8/3), 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3
(7-8 pages each)

EXPERIMENTS 10% weekly (W) (10 total)

JOURNALS (2+ pages each) 20% weekly (W) (10 total)

Total 100%

**Readings should be widely and deeply referenced IN EVERY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT.**

*Your work WILL be graded with respect to how well it integrates course readings.*

Good grammar, spelling, and punctuation count towards your grade. Proofread.

**No emailed assignments, ever.** This includes journals, essays, and any other work you might do for the class. No exceptions. Please remember this.

You may always turn in your work early to Haines 264, the Sociology Department office - but **never to my office**. (office shared = your work lost) The office is only open M-F 8-4:30 pm (closed 12-1 pm).

Any excuses for late or missed work must be accompanied by verified documentation (like a doctor’s note), or **1 point will be taken off for each weekday the assignment is late**.

Assignments that are more than 1 week late will not be accepted at all, and no late papers at all will be accepted after the final meeting of class.

Assignments are due by the beginning of class. If you turn in your assignment after class has begun, **it will count as 1 day late.**

---

**Academic Dishonesty**

"The most effective way to do it, is to do it." - Amelia Earhart

No plagiarism, please. Plagiarism is using the words and/or work of another as your own - that is, without citing the other person as the author of those words. Anything you take off of the internet must be cited. Always do your own work, and reference any words that did not originally come from you. If you are caught doing or turning in plagiarized work, your work will, without exception, be turned in to the office of the Dean of Students. Do not expect the outcome to be positive.

---

**The Course in Short**

Meeting 1 Introduction
Meeting 2 Getting Perspective
Meetings 3-4 Setting the Theoretical Stage: How Society Shapes Understanding
Meeting 5  Post-Production: Maintaining Reality
Meeting 6  Negotiating Meaning
Meeting 7  Producing the Social Self
Meeting 8  Nature vs. Nurture: Hard vs. Soft “Science”
Meeting 9  Producing the Social Identity
Meeting 10 Complications: Contesting Selves and Identities
Meeting 11 Conclusions

How Things Will Probably Go: The Detailed Version
(Plans are subject to change, but the course is very likely to go just as stated below.)

Introduction

“Some things have to be believed to be seen.” Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays

Meeting 1  June 22

Getting Perspective

“How homo sapiens is the species that invents symbols in which to invest passion and authority, then forgets that symbols are inventions.” Joyce Carol Oates

Meeting 2  June 29

Required Reading

Text
1. “Islands of Meaning,” Eviatar Zerubavel
4. “The Perspective of Social Science,” Joel Charon

Reader
Calvin and Hobbes cartoon


Recommended
Po Bronson, What Should I Do with My Life?, Introduction + 1-5
Setting the Theoretical Stage: 
How Society Shapes Understanding

“Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it.” Gustave Flaubert

Meeting 3  
July 6

Required Reading

Text
“Essay: Shared Meaning Is The Basis of Humanness” (Jodi O’Brien)
5. “A Clue to the Nature of Man: The Symbol,” Ernst Cassirer
6. “Yes, Father-Sister,” Oliver Sacks
7. “Final Note on a Case of Extreme Isolation,” Kingsley Davis

Recommended
Po Bronson, What Should I Do with My Life?, 6-10

Meeting 4  
July 13

Required Reading

Text
“Essay: Building and Breaching Reality” (Jodi O’Brien)
30. “Five Features of Reality,” Hugh Mehan and Houston Wood
32. “Self-Fulfilling Prophecies,” Paul Watzlawick

Recommended
Po Bronson, What Should I Do with My Life?, 11-15

Post-Production:
Maintaining Reality

Meeting 5  
July 20

Required Reading

Text
34. “Consuming Terrorism,” David L. Altheide
35. “Common Knowledge and the Law: Do the ‘Haves’ Come Out Ahead?,” Patricia Ewick and Susan S. Sibley
36. “Status Inequality and Close Relationships: An Integrative Typology of Bond-Saving Strategies,” Scott R. Harris

**Reader**


**Recommended**

Po Bronson, *What Should I Do with My Life?*, 16-20

“Amazonian Tribe Lacks Abstract Concept of Time,” Marina Watson Pelaez

Negotiating Meaning

Meeting 6

July 27

Required Reading

Text


38. “Becoming A Marihuana User,” Howard S. Becker

Recommended

Po Bronson, What Should I Do with My Life?, 21-25

Producing the Social Self

“Each person you come to is a different mirror.” Robert Pirsig, Lila

Meeting 7

August 3

Required Reading

Text


“Essay: Who Am I? Developing Character” (Jodi O’Brien)
40. “The Self, the I, and the Me,” George Herbert Mead
42. “A Theory of Genius,” Thomas Scheff
43. “Sissy Boy, Progressive Parents,” Daniel Farr
44. “The Digital Self: Through the Looking Glass of Telecopresent Others,” Shanyang Zhao
45. “Identity Careers of Older Gay Men and Lesbians,” Dana Rosenfeld

Preface, Introduction, Part I (chs. 1-4)

Reader


Recommended

Po Bronson, What Should I Do with My Life?, 26-30

Essay #1 Due

Meeting 8  August 10

Required Reading

Text
Michael Gazzaniga, The Mind’s Past

Reader

Recommended
What Should I Do with My Life? by Po Bronson, 31-35

Producing the Social Identity

Meeting 9  August 17

Required Reading

Text
“Essay: Learning the Script: Socialization” (Jodi O’Brien)
46. “Socialization: The Internalization of Society,” Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann
47. “Reference Groups as Perspectives,” Tamotsu Shibutani
48. “Shades of White,” Pamela Perry
51. “Panhandling Repertoires and Routines for Overcoming the Nonperson Treatment,” Stephen E. Lankenau
52. “Being Middle Eastern American: Identity Negotiation in the Context of the ‘War on Terror’,” Amir Marvasti
54. “Shaping the Selves of Young Salespeople through Emotion Management,” David Schweingruber and Nancy Berns

Robert J. Weber, The Created Self, Part II: Creating A Persona (chs. 5-7)

Online
Wallace Shawn, “Why I Call Myself a Socialist: Is the World Really a Stage?”

**Recommended**
*What Should I Do with My Life?* by Po Bronson, 36-40

---

**Complications:**
**Contesting Selves and Identities**

“We are not the same persons this year as last; nor are those we love. It is a happy chance if we, changing, continue to love a changed person.”
*William Somerset Maugham*

“All isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”
*George Bernard Shaw*

---

**Meeting 10**

**Required Reading**

**Text**
“Essay: Boundaries and Contradictions” (Jodi O’Brien)
57. “Contested Selves in Divorce Proceedings,” Joseph Hopper
Weber, *The Created Self*. Part II: Creating A Persona (chs. 8-11)

**Reader**

**Recommended**
*What Should I Do with My Life?* by Po Bronson, 41-45

---

10
Reconstructing Reality, Reconstructing Self

“The imaginary is that which tends to become real.”
André Breton, *Le Revolver a Cheveux Blancs*

“The reality of life is that your perceptions -- right or wrong -- influence everything else you do.
When you get a proper perspective of your perceptions,
you may be surprised how many other things fall into place.”
Roger Birkman

Meeting 11
August 31

Required Reading

Text
58. “Take Your Good Friday to the Streets,” Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo
Epilogue

Recommended
*What Should I Do with My Life?* by Po Bronson, all

Essay #2 Due

***

“The simplest questions are the most profound.
Where were you born? Where is your home? Where are you going? What are you doing?
Think about these once in a while and watch your answers change.”
Richard Bach

***