

Social, Personality and Affective (SPA) Psychology
Advanced Social Psychology
PSY 540
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-3.15PM

<https://sfsu.zoom.us/j/88962276880?pwd=MGN1VTJGY1JmT1dESk5CN0tSUS9Idz09>

Meeting ID: 889 6227 6880
Passcode: 323331

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Course Overview

Social, Personality, and Affective (SPA) psychology is the scientific study of the way people think about, feel, and behave in social situations. It involves understanding how people influence, and are influenced by the others around them, and how our personality and emotions influence our actions. A primary goal of this course is to immerse you in the perspectives, research methods, and empirical findings of social-personality-affective psychology. SPA psychology consists of several core topics.

In this course we will focus on the Social 'S' part of the SPA umbrella. Within the social aspect we shall focus on the predictable irrationalities in human decision making, as well as on the human capacity for rationality and unconscious thinking.

Why SPA?

Understanding Basic Psychological & Scientific Principles. SPA Psychology relies on the scientific method. Psychology graduates say (typically with perspective) that research methods and ability to interpret statistical results are the biggest contributors to their career success, regardless of whether they pursued a career in psychology or elsewhere.

Critical thinking. A great deal of psychological content, and the methods taught and used by psychologists, focus on how to think critically. Critical thinking is considered to be essential to being an educated person, and is often a general education requirement in colleges. Psychology courses develop the critical thinking skills that are important in business, law, and other professions.

More Effective in the Workplace. A knowledge of human behavior is one of the 'selling points' for psychology students when it comes to gaining employment, and a knowledge of basic SPA psychology makes you a more effective supervisor/manager.

Understanding of Yourself, Relationships and Well-Being. Although studying psychology doesn't necessarily make you psychologically healthier (any more than studying medicine makes you physically healthy), SPA psychology students do have this knowledge at their fingertips and should be more aware of the fact that good interpersonal and family relationships require attention and work. Psych majors should, at least, know where to go when they need counseling or psychotherapy.

Improves Employability. SPA psychology provides excellent grounding for careers in law, social services, education, business, and many other occupations – including becoming a psychology researcher. Savvy employers (and savvy job applicants) know that an understanding of human behavior is essential to success in the workplace, and this needs to be emphasized as an important, and employable, competency.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Understand how humans make value-based decisions in reality and demonstrate that this process is not the rational ideal often put forward by economists.
2. Understand (and be amazed) by the idea that a large portion of human decision making is *Incognito*
3. Apply an understanding of behavioral decision making in your personal and work-related interactions.
4. Think critically about decision making and affective concepts, with a broader appreciation of how these issues can be framed and studied
5. Understand more fully how data analysis plans relate to how psychological issues are studied and interpreted
6. *Develop the ability to critically read and analyze research papers (great preparation for graduate school)*
7. Get foundational training for social/personality/affective programs in social psychology.

Course Organization & Office Hours

The class will meet from 2.00 PM to 3.15 PM on MW on Zoom

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Office Hours

My office hours will be as follows:

Monday: 11.30 – 1.30 pm, on Zoom

<https://sfsu.zoom.us/j/84958682844?pwd=aWFobzRySzJlYWVQWmpiaTB6WGVDdz09>

The passcode should not be needed if you click on this link, but for your reference, here it is: 603241

Please prepare specific questions before an in-person meeting. I will also be happy to answer questions via email or by appointment. If you need an appointment please send me an email at suri@sfsu.edu.

Academic Policies

Policy on Cheating

All campus rules for plagiarism, cheating, and incomplete grades will be strictly enforced. Definitions and consequences may be found in the SFSU Bulletin. Please familiarize yourself with these policies as you are expected to abide by them.

Deadlines

Familiarize yourselves with the *deadlines* for withdrawing from class without a "W" and withdrawing for a serious and compelling reason. ("Serious and compelling" is not your call. The Bulletin explains that you must receive approval from the instructor, department chair, and school dean.)

Please familiarize yourself with the dates for the following key milestones

1. Spring semester starts (Jan 25, 2021)
2. Instructor DROP deadline
3. Grading option deadline
4. Spring break
5. *Last Class* (May 12, 2021)

Learning Adjustments

Please contact Dr. Suri right away (first week of class) if you have a documented difference in learning ability or if you have some other special needs that may require adjustments for you to learn/understand the material. Students with disabilities should work with Disability Programs and Resource Center (415-338-2472) and the instructor to arrange appropriate support. Visit this office on the web at <http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc/>. The DPRC is located in the SSB-110.

Policy on Missed Exams: A student who misses an exam and who has not rescheduled the exam in advance will forfeit the exam and receive a zero. Rescheduling a final exam is not possible. The final paper may not be submitted late.

Class Requirements and Activities

Texts

Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions (2008), by Dan Ariely.

Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain (2012), by David Eagleman

Plenty of copies of both books are available on Amazon. I have placed a pdf of *Predictably Irrational* on iLearn. Nevertheless, I encourage you to buy the copy. Some editions of the book have chapters in different orders. Please follow the chapters described in the syllabus.

Attendance

Attendance is required. This is a seminar course in which discussions, questions and debates play a key role in your learning. Therefore, you must plan on attending all class sessions. Poor attendance over the semester will impact your class participation grade.

Class Design

In the first part of the class, we will discuss chapters of *Predictably Irrational*. On average we will cover two chapters/week. I will lead the discussion. In the second part of the class we will discuss *Incognito*. We will cover an average of one chapter every week. A team of 2-3 students will be assigned to lead the discussion on each chapter on the Monday of the week, and we will discuss the same chapter on the Wednesday of that week.

Response Papers

Every week, you are required to submit a two-page (single spaced, 12 point) response paper for the readings covered that week. Your papers should succinctly summarize your evaluation of the issues presented in the readings, and can include comments (or questions) about the reading. Please use your response papers to contribute to discussions in class. Response paper grades will range from 0 - 4 (4 = full credit). Any late assignment will get a maximum of 3 points. Response papers must be submitted on iLearn.

Tests

There will be two tests. The first on 3/15 and the second during finals week. The first test will cover materials related to *Predictably Irrational* and the second will cover materials related to *Incognito*. Re-scheduling Test 1 requires 2 weeks advance notice and a written explanation and supporting materials. Test 2 may not be rescheduled.

Grading

Item	Weight (%)
Response Papers X 14 (weekly)	30
Class Participation	15
Test 1 on <i>Predictably Irrational</i> (3/15) In Class	20
Class Presentation on <i>Incognito</i>	15
Test 2 on <i>Incognito</i> (Finals Week) Take Home	20

Grading will happen on a (generous) curve.

Note: ***Response papers must be submitted via iLearn assignments every week. Emailed submission will not be accepted.*** They should cover the chapters/discussion that will be discussed that week. The first response papers are due on Monday, February 1. This response paper must provide your response papers for Chapter 2 and 3 of *Predictably Irrational*. The response papers will typically be ~2 pages (single spaced, 12 point). They will be graded for depth and clarity.

For the first half of the semester, we will cover one chapter of *Predictably Irrational* in every class period.

For the second half of the semester, we will work on *Incognito*. Each chapter of Class Presentation on *Incognito* will be presented by 2-3 students. The response paper for the Monday will consist of a response to the chapter and on the Wednesday of that week you will propose an experiment based on the chapter.

Power-points for *Incognito* are required and must be submitted to me 24 hours before your presentation.

Class Schedule

Week	Date	Area	Topic	Response Papers	Presenter
1	1/25	Discussion	Syllabus & Introductions		Suri
	1/27	PI	Chapter 1 – Relativity		Suri
2	2/1	PI	Chapter 2 – Fallacy of Supply & Demand	PI#2 (1 page) PI#3 (1 page)	Suri
	2/3	PI	Chapter 3 – Cost of Zero		Suri
3	2/8	PI	Chapter 4 – Cost of Social Norms	PI#4 (1 page) PI#5 (1 page)	Suri
	2/10	PI	Chapter 5 – Arousal		Suri
4	2/15	PI	Chapter 6 – Procrastination	PI#6 (1 page) PI#7 (1 page)	Suri
	2/17	PI	Chapter 7 – Price of ownership		Suri
5	2/22	PI	Chapter 8 – Keeping doors open	PI#8 (1 page) PI#9 (1 page)	Suri
	2/24	PI	Chapter 9 – Expectations		Suri
6	3/1	PI	Chapter 10 – Power of Price	PI#10 (1 page) PI#11 (1 page)	Suri
	3/3	PI	Chapter 11 – Character 1		Suri
7	3/8	PI	Chapter 12 – Character 2	PI#12 (1 page)	Suri
	3/10	Discussion	C1-C12 Review		Suri
8	3/15		Test 1 – short answer questions (in class)	ARM Paper (Optional)	N/A
	3/17	Discussion	ARM Paper (Extra Credit Opportunity)		Suri
9	3/22	No class	Spring break		
	3/24	No class	Spring break		
10	3/29	INCOGNITO	Chapter 1 – There is someone in my head and it's not me	Incognito#1 (1 page) Experiment on Chap 1 (1 page)	Student Group
	3/31	INCOGNITO	Chapter 1 – Discussion		Suri
11	4/5	INCOGNITO	Chapter 2 – The Testimony of the Senses	Incognito#2 (1 page) Experiment on Chap 2 (1 page)	Student Group
	4/7	INCOGNITO	Chapter 2 – Discussion		Suri
12	4/12	INCOGNITO	Chapter 3 – Mind: The Gap	Incognito#3 (1 page)	Student Group

				Experiment on Chap 3 (1 page)	
	4/14	INCOGNITO	Chapter 3 – Discussion		Suri
13	4/19	INCOGNITO	Chapter 4 – The Kinds of Thoughts that are Thinkable	Incognito#4 (1 page) Experiment on Chap 4 (1 page)	Student Group
	4/21	INCOGNITO	Chapter 4 – Discussion		Suri
14	4/26	INCOGNITO	Chapter 5 – The Brain is a Team of Rivals	Incognito#5 (1 page) Experiment on Chap 5 (1 page)	Student Group
	4/28	INCOGNITO	Chapter 5 – Discussion		Suri
15	5/3	INCOGNITO	Chapter 6 – Why Blameworthiness is the Wrong Question	Incognito#6 (1 page) Experiment on Chap 6 (1 page)	Student Group
	5/5	INCOGNITO	Chapter 6 – Discussion		Suri
15	5/10	INCOGNITO	Chapter 7 – Life After the Monarchy	Incognito#7 (1 page)	Student Group
	5/12		Test 2 Review & Parting Thoughts		Suri
	Finals Week		(Take Home) Test 2		