Course Overview:

In this course we will cover the fundamental theories and research conducted in social psychology. We will cover both classic and modern social psychological research. There is no textbook for this class. Instead we will read journal articles and book chapters each week. I will have these available on eCollege. There are no lectures. Instead we will discuss the readings that are assigned each week. The purpose of the readings is to give you an understanding of (1) the beginnings of social psychology, (2) major areas within social psychology, and (3) how social psychological research is conducted. Due to the breadth of the research that has been conducted in social psychology it is impossible to cover every theoretical contribution. Therefore, I have selected what I believe to be key writings in the field.

During the first class we will assign discussion leaders for each paper we will discuss in the class. The discussion leader will be responsible for (1) quickly summarizing the main points of that reading, (2) leading the discussion of that paper, (3) make sure we cover the major issues in the paper, and (4) provide their perspective on that paper. Discussion leaders are not to extensively summarize each paper, because all class members will have done the reading before the class session. Students are expected to post a one-page (single spaced) reaction paper to each week’s readings on the eCollege discussion board prior to class time.

Grading:

Grades will be based on reaction papers and a final research proposal paper. Reaction papers are due by class time for that week (feel free to work ahead). The final research proposal is a serious proposal of research. This paper should not exceed 15 pages (double spaced, times new roman 12-point font, .rtf or .doc or .docx format). In the proposal you will review some relevant literature, state a hypothesis, and then propose a study that directly tests your hypothesis. Please discuss this paper with me before beginning.

Assessment:

Reaction papers: 130 points
Research proposal: 100 points

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability
requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Gee Library, Room 132, Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835, Fax (903) 468-8148, StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Respect:
More generally, if you have any problems or concerns regarding this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Your feedback (both positive and negative) is more than welcome. We should strive to respect and value the diversity that exists in TAMUC classrooms (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, geographic backgrounds, political orientation, sexual orientation). While we may sometimes disagree with each other on topics discussed in class, it’s important that we remember that appreciating diversity in perspectives is an important part of the learning process (and good life skill). If you ever feel that you are not being given the respect you deserve in class, please let me know.

Recording:
Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Cheating:
Warning: If I detect you engaging in academic misconduct you will automatically FAIL this course. Academic misconduct includes disruption of classes, giving or receiving unauthorized aid on examinations, knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work, or otherwise acting dishonestly. This includes both cheating on exams and plagiarism of any written work that you hand in for this course. Information on the academic misconduct policy of Texas A&M-Commerce can be found at http://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/report_custom.asp?clientid=20504

January 14th: Introduction, Syllabus, Expectations
(No readings for this class)

January 21st: MLK Holiday, NO CLASS

January 28th: History of Social Psychology
February 4th: Conformity

February 11th: Social Comparison

February 18th: Attribution

February 25th: Balance Theory and Cognitive Dissonance I
Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson. [Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 11]

March 4th: Cognitive Dissonance II

March 11th: Spring Break: NO CLASS
March 18th: Group Processes: Social Facilitation, Loafing, Minorities

March 25th: Group Psychology I

April 1st: Group Psychology II

April 8th: The BBC Prison Study (NOTE: Read in this order)
April 15th: Culture

April 22nd: Persuasion

April 29th: Stereotypes and Prejudice

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE MAY 3rd (BY 5PM) on eCollege AND email (just to be safe)