COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description: In this course we will cover the fundamental theories and research conducted related to group processes within psychology. We will cover both classic and modern psychological research. There is no textbook for this class. Instead we will read journal articles and book chapters each class. I will have these available on eCollege. We will discuss the readings that are assigned each class. The purpose of the readings is to give you an understanding of (1) early research in group processes, (2) modern research in group processes, and (3) how research is conducted. Due to the breadth of the research that has been conducted in these areas within 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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grading:

1. Exams: There will be four exams covering the readings. Each exam will consist of 40 multiple choice questions, and are worth 40 points each.
   - Test 1 is Friday, February 13
   - Test 2 is Wednesday, March 11
   - Test 3 is Wednesday, April 15
   - Test 4 is Friday, May 8

2. Reaction papers. Students will complete 36 quarter-page (single space) reaction papers (one for each class reading). The purpose of the reaction paper is to apply the concepts in a given article to your own life (e.g., past experience, expectations, ideas of how the concepts can be
applied in other areas of life, research ideas). There is no specific requirement for these papers except to show that you have thought about the concepts presented in the class readings. The reaction papers should be written in a word document (to catch spelling and grammar errors). The text should then be copied and pasted into the discussion section of eCollege. You can write more than a quarter page, however you will be docked points if your reaction paper is less than 1/4 page. The reaction papers are due at the time each class begins. In other words, you need to post the reaction paper prior to the start of class for that day’s reading. **Within each paper please write one multiple-choice question on that topic.** I highly recommend that you work ahead (e.g., post reactions a couple days in advance of when they are due) to avoid a last minute rush to post your reaction. Late reaction papers will be accepted, however points will be docked. Each paper is worth 10 points (360 total points).

3. **Research Participation:** A goal of this class is to help you familiarize yourself with research methods. One manner to obtain this goal is to have you participate in research studies. Participating in research studies contributes to students and faculty at A&M-Commerce, your understanding of how research is conducted, and human knowledge in general. All students in this class will be required to participate in the psychology department’s participant pool or complete alternative assignments (see me for more information on alternative assignments).

Students must complete a total of 6 experiment credits. However, if students complete their first 4 experiment credits without any “no-shows” you will receive 2 free punctual participant credits. In other words, if you show up to your experiments on time you will only need to complete 4 experiment credits. When you first sign into the experiment system (SONA) you will be asked to take a prescreen. The prescreen takes about 20 minutes to complete. If you complete the prescreen in the first two weeks of the semester you will receive ½ free experiment credit.

If you fail to complete this portion of the class your grade will be lowered by one full grade. In effect, if you have an ‘A’ in the class but fail to complete your research participation (either through participating in research studies, alternative assignments, or a mixture of both) your final grade in the class will be a ‘B.’ More information about participating in research is given at the end of this syllabus.

**Assessment:**
Tests: 160 points
Reaction Papers: 360 points
A = 468-520
B = 416-467
C = 364-415
D = 312-363
F = 311 and below

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**
You will need access to a computer with internet to access eCollege.

**COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

**Interaction with Instructor:**
Please feel welcome to contact me in person during office hours, before or after class, online through University email or schedule an appointment to meet with me. All email should receive a response within 48 hours. If you have not received a response then assume your email did not go through and please try again to make contact. All email should include student’s last name, first name, course name and brief description of the reason for contact.

**COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

**Attendance:** Class attendance will be taken. Class attendance will be used in determining grades for students who are on the borderline between two course grades. I start class on time. **IF YOU ARE MORE THAN 10 MINUTES LATE IT WILL COUNT AS AN ABSENCE.** The general class policy is that NO MAKEUP EXAMS will be offered. However, in extremely unusual circumstances, some arrangements may be possible for making up exams. If you have a problem on exam day that prevents you from showing up, contact me IMMEDIATELY (email or phone). **THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR NOT GETTING IN TOUCH RIGHT AWAY ABOUT YOUR ABSENCE!** Out of fairness to students who take exams as scheduled, any makeup exams will face an automatic grade reduction.

**Student Behavior:**
My expectations in this area should be very simple to fulfill. (1) Electronic devices should be turned off or put on vibrate when in class. (2) Immaturity will NOT be tolerated! If a student’s behavior is disrupting the class, he/she will be asked to leave. (3) Respect: Given the nature of this course, we may discuss issues that some of you may find embarrassing, uncomfortable, and/or even “inappropriate.” To remain in this class, you must be respectful of others and maintain a mature and professional manner at all times. Failure to do so will result in your expulsion from the course. (4) The Student’s Guidebook addresses the issues of academic cheating and plagiarism. These are a breach of conduct, and students are subject to disciplinary actions. It’s simple. Do NOT cheat (to cheat is to act dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an advantage) or plagiarize (to plagiarize is to take the work or idea of someone else and pass it off as one’s own)! (5) Do NOT talk during class unless you are participating in class discussion.

**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.

**University Closing Due to Inclement Weather:**
University closing information will be posted on the web at http://web.tamuc.edu. Information will be forwarded to radio station KETR (88.9 FM); Dallas-area television stations KDFW (Channel 4), KXAS (Channel 5), and WFAA (Channel 8); and, Tyler/Longview-area television station KLTV (Channel 7).

**Changes to Class:**
Minor changes may be made to this schedule; modifications will be announced in class. Students that do not attend class are responsible for the alterations made to the syllabus.

**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

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Q:** What is the best way to study for the test?
**A:** Print out and read over the articles (they are in the doc sharing section of eCollege). The questions on the test will be based on the questions students post in the reaction papers. Thus, it is a good idea to study those questions.

**Q:** I forgot to post my reaction paper can I still post it?
**A:** Yes, I will take late papers. However, I will take a couple points off for being late. The one exception to this is that all work in the class must be completed by 11:59PM of the Friday before finals week. I will not accept any late work after that time.

**Q:** Why where points taken off my reaction paper?
**A:** In eCollege there is a way to see any comments I may give. If points are taken off the paper I will put a comment. The two most common reasons for deducting points are (1) the paper is too short (i.e., less than ¼ page single-spaced) and (2) the response is missing the multiple-choice question.

**Q:** Do I need to understand the statistics in the articles?
**A:** No, the purpose of the articles is to expose you to actual research and theory. I do not expect you to understand everything in the article (however, you may have to google some of the terms to gain a fuller understanding of the article).

**COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

**WEEK 1**

Wednesday, January 21
Introductions, Syllabus

Friday, January 23

WEEK 2

Monday, January 26

Wednesday, January 28

Friday, January 30

WEEK 3

Monday, February 2

Wednesday, February 4

Friday, February 6

WEEK 4

Monday, February 9

Wednesday, February 11

Friday, February 13
TEST 1 (Covers papers 1 to 9)

WEEK 5

Monday, February 16
Wednesday, February 18  

Friday, February 20  
NO CLASS

**WEEK 6**

Monday, February 23  

Wednesday, February 25  

Friday, February 27  

**WEEK 7**

Monday, March 2  

Wednesday, March 4  

Friday, March 6  

**WEEK 8**

Monday, March 9  

Wednesday, March 11  
**TEST 2 (Covers papers 10 to 18)**
WEEK 9: SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 16: SPRING BREAK
Wednesday, March 18: SPRING BREAK
Friday, March 20: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10

Monday, March 23
NO CLASS

Wednesday, March 25

Friday, March 27

WEEK 11

Monday, March 30

Wednesday, April 1

Friday, April 3

WEEK 12

Monday, April 6

Wednesday, April 8
**Paper 25:** Sloter, E. B., Duffy, C. W., & Gardner, W. L. (2014). Balancing the need to be “me” with the need to be “we”: Applying optimal distinctiveness theory to the understanding of multiple motives within romantic relationships. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 52,* 71-81.

Friday, April 10

**WEEK 13**

Monday, April 13

Wednesday, April 15
TEST 3 (Covers papers 19 to 27)

Friday, April 17

**WEEK 14**

Monday, April 20

Wednesday, April 22

Friday, April 24

**WEEK 15**

Monday, April 27

Wednesday, April 29

Friday, May 1

**WEEK 16**

Monday, May 4

Wednesday, May 6  

Friday, May 8  
**TEST 2 (Covers papers 28 to 36)**

**ALL WORK FOR CLASS (INCLUDING RESEARCH REQUIREMENT) MUST BE COMPLETED BY FRIDAY MAY 8TH BY 11:59PM. NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE.**
Students’ Guide to Research Participation
Department of Psychology, Counseling, & Special Education
Texas A&M University-Commerce

• **What is Research Participation?**
Exposure to research is essential to your gaining a better understanding of the scientific study of psychology. It is how we add new knowledge in psychology. Being involved in research is a good way to experience first-hand and learn about the scientific enterprise. We believe there are two key ways to experience research activity at this level: 1) read about related scientific investigations; 2) experience research as a volunteer participant; or some combination of both. The class in which you received this handout requires you to fulfill 6 research credits through one or both of these activities.

• **What if I am not yet 18 years old?**
In order to participate in research you must be at least 18 years old. If you are not yet 18 years old, please see your instructor, and ask him/her about alternative ways of earning research credit.

• **In what type of research studies will I participate?**
All studies you will participate in have been reviewed and approved by the Texas A&M University-Commerce Institutional Review Board (IRB) and by the Department of Psychology, Counseling, & Special Education. Studies vary widely. Many involve completing questionnaires or carrying out tasks on the computer. Some are even fun, and you’ll learn something from all of them.

• **What are my rights as a research participant?**
Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from any study at any time. Your data will be kept confidential. If you have any further questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB head, Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith (irb@tamuc.edu). More information about your rights will be provided to you prior to each study for which you sign up.

• **How will my research participation credit be calculated?**
You will receive 1 credit for each hour of research participation. Studies lasting 15 minutes or less are worth 0.25 credit. For example, a 15 min. study = 0.25 research credits; 30 min. = 0.5 credits; 45 min. = 0.75 credits; 60min = 1 credit; 1½ hours = 1.5 credits… etc.

• **How many research credits may I complete?**
You are encouraged to participate in as much research as you wish, but at a minimum you must complete 6 research credits (by participating in research, or alternative assignments, or a mixture of both). However, if you show up on time to all the studies you sign up for you will receive 2 free research credits. In other words, if you show up to all your studies on time you only need to complete 4 research credits.

• **What if I cannot go to a study I signed up for?**
If for whatever reason you cannot attend a study that you have signed up for you need to cancel your appointment before the start of the study. There are 2 ways to cancel an appointment. First, if you cancel 24 hours before a study you can do this online through the Experiment Management System (EMS) website. Second, if it is the same day of the study you can call or email the experimenter – their contact information will be available in the EMS.
• **What if I sign up for a study but forget to go?**
If you fail to show up for a study (without canceling prior to the start of the study) you will receive an email alerting you that you were listed as a “no show” for that study. Additionally on the EMS website you will see a “failure to appear” message in your list of studies completed. If this occurs you are no longer eligible to receive the 2 free credits that participants who are on time to all of their studies receive, and you will have to complete the full 6 credits.

• **What will happen if I fail to participate in studies or do the alternative assignments?**
If you fail to complete your research requirement for the class, there is likely a severe penalty, such as losing a full letter grade (e.g., having a final grade of C rather than B). Your instructor can inform you of what exactly this penalty is.

• **What if I do not wish to participate in research studies?**
If you do not wish to participate in research studies, you may utilize the alternative assignment option. You must consult your instructor for information about this option.

• **What is the difference between an online study and a laboratory study?**
There are two types of studies that are conducted through the EMS system. You can sign up for both online studies and laboratory studies through the EMS system, however you are only allowed to complete 50% experiment credits through online studies (the system will not allow you sign up for more than 50% credits of online studies). A laboratory study requires that you attend the experiment at a specific time and place (e.g., Henderson 202 at 12:30pm on October 7th).

• **How do I find and sign up for research participation opportunities?**
Throughout the semester, researchers in the Psychology Department will post their research studies in the Experiment Management System (EMS) online. It is up to you to check the EMS regularly to find and sign up for research studies that fit into your schedule. Detailed instructions for how to use the EMS are listed in the following pages of this handout.

• **If I decide to participate in research, what are my responsibilities?**
You are responsible for...
1. Registering with the Experiment Management System (at [http://tamu-commerce.sona-systems.com/](http://tamu-commerce.sona-systems.com/)). You can keep your login information if you already have an account.
2. Scheduling appointments for research participation.
3. Writing down important information about the studies for which you sign up (e.g., name of study/time/location of your experiment, name and contact information of the experimenter).
4. Showing up on time, at the correct location for your scheduled research appointments (you must cancel online, or email/phone the experimenter before the start time of the study if you cannot attend).
5. Keep track of how many credits you need to complete (you can do this on the EMS website). Everyone is required to do 6 credits, however if you are on time for all of your appointments you only need to complete 4 credits.
How do I use the Experiment Management System (EMS)?

(Create a new participant account unless you already have one and your login information works. If you do not remember your login information click on the “lost your password?” on the front page of the EMS website and follow the directions on the site, and if that does not work email curt.carlson@tamu.edu. A list of courses will be presented, from which you must select the courses you are taking this semester for which you will receive credit for participation. If your course is not listed, see the instructor for that course. Then you will see the prescreening prompt. Even if you did it in another semester, please do it again, as it likely has changed (and you will receive 1/2 credit if done within first 2 weeks of semester).

A. How to create a participant account on the EMS

1. Go to http://tamu-commerce.sona-systems.com/
   a. Click on New Participant “request an account here” link on the left of the screen.
   b. This takes you to a screen on which you must enter your name, a unique User ID, your University ID number, and primary email address (reminders of studies you sign up for will be sent to that email address). You will also need to highlight the course(s) in which you are enrolled, and for which you will be earning credits. If more than one, highlight all that will be involving you in research participation. However, each study in which you participate will only provide you credit for ONE course. In other words, there is no “double-dipping” allowed. BE CAREFUL TO SELECT THE CORRECT COURSE AND SECTION # – IF YOU CHOOSE THE WRONG ONE, YOUR INSTRUCTOR WILL NOT BE INFORMED OF YOUR CREDITS! After you submit your information, you will be emailed your login information. (After you have received your login information, I recommend that you login into EMS and go to your “Profile” and change your password to something that you can remember.)

If you encounter any problems with creating your account (e.g., login information not sent to you), contact the EMS administrator, curt.carlson@tamu.edu with your full name and a detailed description of the problem.

2. When you first log into the EMS at the beginning of the semester you will be asked to take a prescreen survey. This is a short survey that researchers will use to decide if you meet the specified requirements for some studies (e.g., as a researcher I may only allow participants who are female. If you do not complete the prescreen you will not be eligible to participate in this study). In other words, if you do not complete the prescreen you will have fewer studies that you are
eligible to participate in. **IF YOU COMPLETE THE PRESCREEN IN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER YOU WILL GET 0.5 CREDIT.** Take it even if you have done it before – it has probably changed, and you will still earn the 0.5 credit.

3. You are now ready to use the EMS to sign-up for research studies.

**B. Sign-up for studies—login to the EMS with your User ID and password that was emailed to you after creating your account**

1. Click **Study Sign-Up**. A list of all available studies for which you qualify will appear. You can sign-up by clicking on either the study name or **Timeslots Available**, and you will go to a new screen showing more information about the study, with a link to **View Time Slots for This Study**.

2. Click the **Sign-Up** button to schedule your time. You should then write down or print out the study information (name of study, place, time, name and contact information of experimenter, etc.) that appears in the final window. You will also receive an email reminder the day before the study time you have selected.

**C. Canceling a Sign-Up (MUST be done if you know you will not show up)**

1. If you need to cancel a timeslot you have signed up for, you can do this from the **My Schedule and Credits** page. Choose the **My Schedule and Credits** option from top toolbar.

2. You will see listed all of the studies for which you have signed up, as well as those you have completed (see the Tracking Your Progress section below for more information).

3. Studies for which you have signed up that you are allowed to cancel will have a **Cancel** button next to them. If you cannot attend the study session you signed up for, you need to cancel it, either within the EMS system or by contacting the researcher directly prior to the start of the study. Keep in mind that there is a time limit before the study is to occur, when it is too late to cancel online. This restriction is listed at the bottom of the page (it can be 24 hours before your timeslot, or much less, such as just 2-4 hours). If you cannot cancel online please email or call the researcher to cancel. **IF YOU DO NOT CANCEL ONLINE, BY EMAIL, OR OVER THE PHONE BEFORE THE START OF THE STUDY YOU WILL BE COUNTED AS A “NO SHOW.”** If you are counted as a “no show” for any studies you are not eligible for the 2 free punctual participant credits.

4. If you cancel the first part of a two-part study, the second part will also be cancelled. If you cancel the second part of a two-part study, the first part will not be cancelled, but you will need to ask the researcher to sign you up for the second part again, if you would like to participate in it at a later date. However, this is up to the researcher.
D. Tracking Your Progress

1. You may track your progress at any time by choosing the **My Schedule and Credits** option from the top toolbar.

2. When you view this page, you will see at the top a list of the number of credits you are required to earn, and how many you have earned so far. Below that, if you have signed up for any studies, those are listed as well. In the list of studies, you will see information about your credit status. If you have a no show for a study you will see that the status for that study is “failure to appear.”

Note: Your login session will expire after a certain period of inactivity, usually 20-60 minutes. This is done for security purposes. If this happens, you can always log in again. When you are finished using the system, it is better to explicitly log out, to prevent any problems that may arise if someone uses your computer before the session expires. This is especially important if you are using a public computer lab.

E. Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Immediately after I login, as soon as I click on any menu option, I am taken back to the login page and I see a message that my authentication has expired. What does this mean?**

Your web browser is not properly configured to accept cookies. You should turn on cookies in your web browser, use a different web browser (for example, try Firefox if you are currently using Internet Explorer), or try a different computer. Detailed instructions can be found if you go to the site and enter the URL “cookie_help.asp” in place of “default.asp” in the address bar of the browser, when you are on the front page of the site.

2. **I participated in a study, but I have yet to receive credit. How do I receive credit?**

The researcher must grant you credit. This is usually done within a few days after your participation. If it has been several days and you still have not received credit, contact the researcher (his or her contact information will be listed when you click on the study name within the system).

3. **How do I change the email address where email notifications from the system are sent?**

You can change the email address where notifications are sent by going to **My Profile** and editing the email address you see there.

4. **I forgot where and when a study is that I signed up for. What do I do?**
Check your e-mail for the **EMS reminder**, or logon to EMS and check your appointments.

5. *Should I keep some sort of record of my participation and credits earned?*

The system will keep track of the credits you earn and your instructor will have access at the end of the semester to a report of credits earned by students enrolled in the class (and if any students have “no shows”). It is a good idea, however, to occasionally print a personal copy of your credits earned and hold on to that printout as a back up to the system.

6. *I showed up for a study on time, and no one was there! What do I do?*

First refer to your information about that study session, to make sure you are in the right place at the right time. If you are, then wait at least 10 minutes for the researcher. If they are still not there at that point, you can leave and must send them an email within 24 hours, stating that you were present at the correct place and time for the study (refer to the study name). It is up to the researcher to try to reschedule with you.