



PSYC 3399

Psychology of Power, Oppression, and Privilege

Instructor: Dr. Chu Kim-Prieto (TCNJ)

Course Description

Psychology of Power, Oppression, and Privilege is designed to be a specialized course for the Social Specialization within the Psychology major. This course provides an in-depth coverage of psychology topics, including stereotyping, prejudice and privilege, discrimination and advantage, intergroup relations, attributions, social influence, personal self-esteem and collective self-esteem. In addition, this course provides further opportunities for students to develop their writing, speaking, and presentation skills.

TCNJ Course Prerequisite: Psychology 101. (Prerequisite may be waived if the student is conversant in social sciences through other coursework. In such circumstances, the student is advised to contact the faculty member for additional guidance.)

This course fulfills the following learning outcomes:

- Written Communication (1)
- Oral Communication (2)
- Critical Analysis and Reasoning (5)
- Respect for Diversity (9)
- Preparation to Participate in Civic Life (11)
- Psychological Knowledge (12)
- Applying Psychology (13)

Course Objectives

1. Identify both individual and institutional forms of disadvantage and privilege
2. Identify the psychological consequences of being a member of an oppressed or privileged group
3. Explore examples of personal and group outcomes based on gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation and other socially constructed categories to investigate the causes and consequences of oppression and privilege
4. Gain a better understanding of stereotypes and how stereotypes affect behavior
5. Explore and evaluate psychological theories of prejudice and privilege
6. Understand and appreciate group identities as essential for self-concept and self-esteem
7. Explore how, when, and why people resist or rebel when their group is disadvantaged
8. Explore our own contributions to the perpetuation of prejudice, discrimination, and privilege
9. Practice techniques for interrupting prejudice and privilege, resolving intergroup conflicts, appreciating human diversity, and adopting a nonviolent lifestyle
10. Develop a safe classroom environment work together to explore our own privilege and disadvantage, develop empathy for others, and identify ideas for personal involvement in social change and social justice issues



Learning Objectives for Life: Why are you in this class? Well, the simple answer is that this course fulfills a course requirement for your major or minor in psychology, or perhaps a liberal learning credit. However, I hope that you will also realize that this course will provide you with fundamental “life skills” that you will use over and over again in your other courses, in graduate school, and in the “real world.” Honing these skills now, however painful that process might be, will benefit you for the rest of your life.

Not only are we ourselves complex individuals made up of multiple social selves, we live in a diverse society. Every day, we encounter and interact with people who are similar and different from us. While this complexity makes our interactions with others interesting and educational, it can also lead to erroneous assumptions and miscommunications. By learning about ways in which power and privilege are related to intentional and unintentional discrimination and oppression, we can better understand how these factors impact our own lives and the lives of those around us.

In addition, we learn in this course to talk about difficult issues and learn from others’ experiences without disparagement or judgment. These are learning experiences that we benefit from practice throughout our lifetime.

Teaching Philosophy: Psychological research tells us that the best way to learn is by understanding and doing, compared to rote memorization. Therefore, experiential learning is a large component of this course. This means that while I expect you to learn from my lectures, I also expect that the bulk of the learning will come from self-reflection and thinking about other fellow students have said. We all bring different life experiences to the classroom, along with varying social identities and ideas about power, oppression and privilege. I hope that through tolerance and acceptance, as well as critical analysis, we can learn by learning from each other.

In this course, we will learn about, and discuss extensively, topics and issues that many of us have strong feelings and beliefs about. You might find that you strongly disagree with some of the ideas and beliefs that our colleagues hold as true and dear to them. I hope that we will have many interesting, informative, and thoughtful discussions about these topics so that we can all experience personal growth as contributing members of our society. In order to do so, I have laid out some ground rules. I also welcome suggestion from you about other rules that will help create an open space where open and honest dialogue can take place.

1. **Active Participation:** I hope you will be prepared to contribute to the active learning of all of the members of the class. In order to do so, you should come to each class having read and thought about the readings and activities assigned for that day. In addition, you should come to class on time, stay for the whole class, and do not disrupt other students’ efforts to learn. Turn off your cell phone and other sources of potential distraction. If due to an unavoidable conflict you have to leave early, let me know in advance, and sit near the door so that you may leave unobtrusively.
2. **Active Listening:** A crucial aspect of your contribution as an active learner in this class is active listening. Active listening occurs when you listen with an open mind to the contributions of other members of the class. This means that you give your full attention to the speaker, are respectful of their contributions, and most important, think deeply about what was said. After these three steps, you are encouraged to comment and respond to what was said through active participation. It is this two-step process of active listening and active participation that will enhance your active learning in this course.

3. **Inclusiveness:** Everyone has important ideas and experiences to contribute. Each and every student brings with them their own experience of, and understandings about, the society around them. However, not everyone is equally comfortable speaking about those ideas and experiences. As psychologists, we know that some are more introverted than others, and that individual differences also exist in the tendency to disclose. In addition, many of the topics that we will be discussing in class are controversial and painful, and not usually spoken of and discussed openly and frankly. Being cognizant of these individual differences and social norms, I will work towards creating a classroom atmosphere that is non-threatening and inclusive. I will also expect all the students to do their part to ensure that our classroom atmosphere is non-threatening and inclusive. Please be respectful in your listening and dare to stretch yourself in your participation.

4. **Confidentiality:** While I hope that you will want to talk about the materials that you are learning in this course and continue the dialogues and thoughts that were begun during class discussions outside of class with your classmates and others in your life, please respect the confidentiality of the individuals in the class. All personal comments that were shared by members of the class should be kept confidential. Violations of confidentiality jeopardizes the creation of an inclusive and non-threatening atmosphere hampers our efforts to foster active participating and listening for all of us.

Class Schedule and Sequence of Instruction

This course is scheduled for 4 hours per week.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Brown, R. (2010). *Prejudice: Its social psychology*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ferber, A., Jimenez, C., Herrera, A.O., & Samuels, D. (Eds.). (2009). *The matrix reader*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Helms, J. E. (2008). *Race is a nice thing to have. A guide to being a White person or understanding the White persons in your life*. Hanover, MA: Microtraining Associates.

Johnson, A. G. (2006). *Privilege, power, and difference*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Rothenberg, P. S. (2012). *White privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism*. New York: Worth Publishers.

Tatum, B.D. (1997). *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books.

Plus additional readings throughout the semester. These will be handed out in class or made available through Canvas. At least 6 of these additional readings will be empirical research articles from a peer-reviewed journal in psychology.



Grading

A - Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

B - Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

C - Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

D - Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

P - Achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better (achievement required for a P is at the discretion of the instructor but may be no lower than equivalent to a C-.)

NP - Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (see also I).

I (Incomplete) - Assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Requires a written agreement between instructor and student.

Grading Scale (Based on points)

95 – 100 A	77 – 79 C+	59 – Lower	F
90 – 94 A-	74 – 76 C		
87 – 89 B+	70 – 73 C-		
84 – 86 B	67 – 69 D+		
80 – 83 B-	60 – 66 D		

Exams

Reflection Papers (10 points each, total of 30 points): The purpose of the reflection papers is to encourage you to make connections between class discussions, course materials, and real life. I also hope to provide a safe place for you to reflect on your learning, and a way for us to communicate individually through written reflection. While more specific guidelines will be distributed in class or through Canvas, each of the reflection papers will require you to pull together classroom materials and the classroom discussions to make a connection between what we are learning in the classroom to our lives and the society around us. Length of the papers will vary depending on the assignment.

Class Discussions (40 points): This course is discussion based. Not only are students expected to actively participate in class discussions, they are responsible for leading multiple discussions throughout the semester. In addition, students are expected to prepare for class discussion by critically reading the assigned articles and texts and by writing their thoughts in reaction papers. Thus, their contributions to class discussions should be thoughtful and reflective, not simply off-the-cuff. Please refer to the grading rubric posted on Canvas.



Article Oral Presentation and Discussion (10 points): Students present and lead a discussion on an empirical research article from a peer-reviewed journal. The journal article should present empirical research evidence regarding one of the topics discussed in class. Students will choose from a provided list. Students may elect a different article from those provided but must receive prior approval to do so. This is a group project. All other assignments and projects are to be completed individually.

Interrupting Prejudice and Privilege Project (20 points): Students will create a project that will address issues of power, oppression, and privilege.

Additional guidance and information will be distributed through Canvas. Please note that the project should be completed in time for adequate reflection and discussion of the project in the analysis paper. The analysis paper is due at the beginning of your regularly scheduled Final Exam time.

Interrupting Prejudice and Privilege Project Analysis Paper (50 points): This is a cumulative project in which the student combines the project and writes a thoughtful analysis of the project, addressing issues of power, oppression, and privilege in the context of the readings and class discussions. Additional guidelines will be provided through Canvas. This final paper will be due at the beginning of your regularly scheduled Final Exam time.

Exams (each worth 40 points): Two exams will be administered. The exams will be in various formats (e.g., multiple choice, short answer, essay), and are not intended to be cumulative. However, because the material that is covered later in the semester builds upon material learned in the beginning of the semester, you should make sure that you are knowledgeable about all aspects of the course. Make-up exams will be given only for legitimate reasons supported with documentation (e.g., documented illness, etc.). The make-up exam will be given out at the next make-up exam time held by the department.

Other Regulations and Policies

Guidelines for assignments: All written assignments must adhere to APA style guidelines. For the purpose of this course, that means that all written assignments must be typed in 12 point font using Times New Roman font, double spaced with 1 inch margins. All pages must be stapled together at the top left corner of the page. Assignments that do not adhere to the above guidelines will receive an automatic 10% deduction in grade.

Paper copy of assignments are due at the beginning of the scheduled class meeting time unless otherwise noted on Canvas. Assignments that are not ready to be submitted at the beginning of class will be considered late, with late penalties applied (see below).

Lateness: A full grade will be deducted for each day (or a portion thereof – yes this means that if an assignment is 5 minutes late, it is LATE) that an assignment is late (this includes weekends and days in which I am not in my office to accept your paper), unless you have documentation for a legitimate excuse. A full grade for assignments graded as A, B, C, etc., means that a B assignment will be a C. A full grade for assignments graded on a point (20, 19, etc.) or a percentage system (100%, 90%, etc.) means that a full 10 percent of the grade will be deducted for each day that an assignment is late. This penalty applies to all assignments that are late without documentation for a legitimate excuse. Assignments that are more than 3 days late will not be accepted without documentation for a legitimate cause.



Class attendance: You are expected to attend each and every class. You are also expected to come to class having completed the readings and assignments so that you can contribute fully to the class discussions and activities. Class time will be used to elaborate and explain some of the readings, but I will not repeat all the readings. I hope you will be prepared to contribute to the active learning of all of the members of the class! In order to do so, you should come to class on time, stay for the whole class, and do not disrupt other students' efforts to learn. Turn off all electronic devices, such as cell phones, computers, and other sources of potential distraction. For students who may have difficulty with tuning out potential sources of distraction, I will be glad to help you out by keeping track of your electronic devices for the duration of the class.

If due to an unavoidable conflict you have to leave early, let me know in advance and sit near the door so that you may leave unobtrusively.

Scholastic Dishonesty

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a university academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "NP" for the course and may face additional sanctions from the Study Center.