

Lecture: Zoom ID# 971 4295 1645 (Links Located on Blackboard)  
Days and Time: Monday & Wednesday; 2:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.

Online portion at <http://blackboard.usc.edu>

### **Instructor Information**

Dr. Clayton L. Stephenson

Assistant Professor (Teaching) Psychology  
[clstephe@usc.edu](mailto:clstephe@usc.edu)

Office Location: Home ☺

Office Hours: By Appointment; Email to Schedule  
I'm more than happy to meet with you one-on-one!

## **Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

Theory and research on cognitive processes in social behavior, to include social inference, cognition and emotion, the Self, social categorization, person memory, and attribution processes.

### **My Course Summary**

Let's face it . . . the last 12 months have been some of the most challenging in recent history. Enough historical events have occurred to last a quarter of a century. Social cognition can help provide insight into the behaviors, cognitions, and emotions that have led up to these events. Social cognition is the study of cognitive processes underlying social behavior, merging approaches from social psychology and cognitive psychology. The course will be divided into four sections: Foundations, Understanding People, Understanding Experience, Understanding Society. Along the way, we will highlight different methods available in the social cognitive scientist's toolbox and explore insights into addressing real-world challenges (e.g., climate change, behavioral health policy, economic inequality, political division, and fake news). This course aims to empower students to become critical consumers of social cognition research. More broadly, it aims to provide students with information about how interdisciplinary science can advance our understanding of the mind, behavior, and society, and how social cognition can offer insight into understanding ourselves and addressing societal challenges.

### **Prerequisites**

PSYC 100 (Introduction to Psychology)

### **Recommended Preparation**

PSYC 355 (Social Psychology)

## **Teaching Objectives**

- 1) Encourage students to apply theory and empirical evidence from social cognition research to help understand real-world issues.
- 2) Facilitate and guide students' efforts in proposing and conducting a study.
- 3) Conduct discussions and steer student led discussions to maximize understanding of research in social cognition.

## **Student Learning Objectives**

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to . . .

- 1) demonstrate comprehension of key findings, principles, and theories in social cognition.
- 2) apply theoretical and experimental findings in social cognition research to real-world problems.
- 3) critically evaluate research in social cognition.
- 4) synthesize information from various sources and interdisciplinary fields on a topic in social cognition.
- 5) create a study on a specialized topic in social cognition through collaboration with your peers.

## **Required Texts**

There is no textbook for this course. Readings will consist primarily of empirical and review articles that will be posted on Blackboard.

Assessment	Focused Learning Objective(s)	Due Date	Percent of Final Grade: Points
Quizzes	1, 2, 3	February 17 <sup>th</sup> , March 8 <sup>th</sup> , March 29 <sup>th</sup> , April 19 <sup>th</sup> , and April 28 <sup>th</sup>	25% (individual grade): 50 points each
Lead Discussion	1, 2, 3, 4	Various Dates	10% (group grade): 50 points each
Reading Questions	1, 2, 3	Sundays and Tuesdays by 9:00 p.m.	5% (individual grade): 10 points each
Participation	1, 2, 3	Continuous	10% (individual or group): 10 points each
Research Proposal	3, 4, 5	March 10 <sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.	15% (individual grade): 100 points
Final Research Paper	3, 4, 5	April 29 <sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.	20% (individual grade): 100 points
Presentation	1, 2, 3, 4	May 10 <sup>th</sup>	15% (individual): 100 points

## **Quizzes**

Five quizzes will be administered throughout the semester to assess mastery of the course material. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions and short answer questions covering lectures, discussions, and readings. Although quizzes will primarily ask about material covered since the last quiz, they may also refer to previous course material when relevant; for example, if we discuss a particular method or theory one week, you may be asked to compare it to a method

or theory learned about earlier in the semester. Quizzes will be available for 24 hours on the scheduled day to complete. **Your lowest score will be dropped.**

### **Lead Discussion**

You will lead the class discussion for two class sessions with a partner. For those days, you and your partner will present new information on the topic from two additional papers that you find on your own (about 15 – 20 minutes). You will be expected to facilitate a discussion of the material for those sessions. We will schedule everyone during the first week of class.

### **Reading Questions**

Beginning in the second week of class, one question and one reflection in response to the readings should be submitted on Blackboard before each class session. Questions can focus on one reading or compare/contrast multiple readings. Questions will receive a grade of 0%, 50%, or 100%. A grade of 100% indicates a response that demonstrates serious engagement with the reading, a 50% represents more superficial or cursory engagement with the reading, and a 0% indicates that no response was submitted. **Your lowest two scores for reading questions will be dropped.**

### **Participation**

There will be opportunities for participation during most class sessions, either through individual/group activities or discussion. Participation will be graded on the extent to which students are critically engaged (e.g., attending thoughtfully to class discussions and activities; listening carefully to others and responds thoughtfully; contributing to discussions and activities; offering an original perspective or asking insightful questions; showing preparation for class). To facilitate grading, brief written notes will be submitted after activities. For instance, at the end of class sessions, you will be asked to write a short reflection on your participation in recent class discussions – points that stood out to you in listening to others, points that remain unclear to you/that you would like us to follow up on, and points you contributed. Alternatively, after group activities, you may be asked to submit written notes from the group. These reflections and notes will contribute to evaluating your participation. All participation will be submitted on Blackboard and are due by the beginning of the following class session. **Your lowest two participation scores will be dropped.**

### **Research Proposal**

We will use part of each class for you to work on a research study with two other people. You will work as a group to develop the ideas, but you will write your proposals individually. As part of the process, you will write a research proposal that adheres to the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the APA Publication Manual. Your proposal will contain a title page, abstract, literature review, method section, and references. It will become the first part of your final paper (see below). **Your research proposal is due March 10<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**

### **Final Paper**

You will write a final research paper after collecting and analyzing your data. The final research paper will contain your research proposal (with the appropriate changes made) along with results and discussion sections. As with the research proposal, you will write your paper individually, but will work as a group in collecting and analyzing data. **Your final paper is due Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**

### **Presentation on Final Paper**

You and your group will present your final paper as you would a conference presentation. Your presentation will be 12 – 15 minutes long. **Presentations will be given on the Final Exam Day, which is May 10<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

### **EXTRA CREDIT: Participate in Research Studies**

Part of gaining an in-depth understanding of psychology is being a participant in a study. You may participate in research studies conducted in the psychology department to earn extra credit. All points will be applied to your Final Paper. However, you **cannot** earn more than 100 points on your Final Paper, and any leftover extra credit points **will not** be applied to any other assignments. You can view and sign up for studies through the SONA system at <https://usc.sona-systems.com/>. You may complete up to 6 points of credit on SONA. Please note that your participation in research is voluntary and you have the right to NOT participate in research studies. If you do not want to participate in studies, then you may complete the alternative, which is writing two five-page papers (3 points each) on two topics, which are also posted on Blackboard. **All credits and/or papers are due by 11:59 p.m. on April 29<sup>th</sup>. No exceptions!**

### **Grading Scheme**

*Please Note: I do NOT curve the grade. Whatever grade you have on Blackboard is your grade in real-time that you earned to that date. I do round up (e.g., 93.45 = 93.5%) for your final grade. Finally, it is NOT appropriate for you to ask to make up an assignment at the end of the semester that was due past what is outlined in the late policy or to ask for extra credit beyond what is described above, so please do NOT ask for either.*

A = 100 - 93.5%; A- = 93.4 - 89.5%; B+ = 89.4 - 86.5%; B = 86.4 - 83.5%; B- = 83.4 - 79.5%; C+ = 79.4 - 76.5%; C = 76.4 - 73.5%; C- = 73.4 - 69.5%; D+ = 69.4 - 66.5%; D = 66.4 - 63.5%; D- = 63.4 - 59.5%; Below 59.5% = F

### **Instructor Student Communication and Blackboard**

Blackboard (Bb) will be used to post announcements, send e-mails, and post all grades and course materials, so it is the student's responsibility to frequently visit the course on Blackboard (website: <http://blackboard.usc.edu>). Bb transactions will follow the below guidelines.

- 1) **Grades**: All grades and points will be posted on Bb one to two weeks after the completion of the exam, assignment, or activity. Grades will not be announced in class, via e-mail, or during office hours.
- 2) **Course Materials**: The syllabus, lab assignments, and supplemental reading material can be viewed and printed from Bb.
- 3) **Announcements**: Class announcements will be posted on Bb, as well as broadcasted in class.
- 4) **Email**: Any email communications from the instructor or TA will be sent via Bb or through the USC's email service. USC requires that all e-mail communication between the instructor and students be sent via an official USC e-mail address. *Any student communication delivered from a non-USC e-mail address will be automatically discarded.*

### **Tentative Schedule of Topics and Assignments**

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS
<b>FOUNDATIONS</b>			
WEEK 1	Monday 01/18/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No Class!</li> <li>➤ MLK Day!</li> </ul>	➤ None
	Wednesday 01/20/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Overview of course</li> </ul>	
WEEK 2	Monday 01/25/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Egocentric Bias</li> <li>➤ Review of Research Methods</li> </ul>	
	Wednesday 01/27/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Naïve Realism</li> <li>➤ Review of Research Methods</li> </ul>	
WEEK 3	Monday 02/01/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Automaticity in Thought</li> </ul>	
	Wednesday 02/03/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Automaticity in Behavior</li> </ul>	
<b>UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE</b>			
WEEK 4	Monday 02/08/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Person Memory</li> </ul>	
	Wednesday 02/10/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Categorization</li> </ul>	
WEEK 5	Monday 02/15/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No Class!</li> <li>➤ President's Day!</li> </ul>	
	Wednesday 02/17/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attribution</li> </ul>	➤ Quiz #1
WEEK 6	Monday 02/22/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Spontaneous Social Inferences</li> </ul>	
	Wednesday 02/24/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Self-Concept &amp; Motivation</li> </ul>	
WEEK 7	Monday 03/01/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mentalizing</li> </ul>	
	Wednesday 03/03/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introspection</li> </ul>	
<b>UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCE</b>			
WEEK 8	Monday 03/08/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Emotion</li> </ul>	➤ Quiz #2
	Wednesday 03/10/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Emotion &amp; Cognition</li> </ul>	➤ Research Proposal
WEEK 9	Monday 03/15/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Judgment</li> </ul>	
	Wednesday 03/17/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Value &amp; Decisions</li> </ul>	

WEEK 10	Monday 03/22/2021	➤ Construal and Affect	
	Wednesday 03/24/2021	➤ Moral Judgements: Emotion and Intuition	
<b>UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY</b>			
WEEK 11	Monday 03/29/2021	➤ Moral Judgments: People, Relationships, & Development	➤ Quiz #3
	Wednesday 03/31/2021	➤ No Class! ➤ Wellness Day!	
WEEK 12	Monday 04/05/2021	➤ Moral Decisions	
	Wednesday 04/07/2021	➤ No Class! ➤ Wellness Day!	
WEEK 13	Monday 04/12/2021	➤ Understanding Self and Other	
	Wednesday 04/14/2021	➤ Social Identity Theory	
WEEK 14	Monday 04/19/2021	➤ Implicit Processes	➤ Quiz #4
	Wednesday 04/21/2021	➤ Prejudice Expression, Justification, and Reduction	
WEEK 15	Monday 04/26/2021	➤ Economic Structures and Social Change	
	Wednesday 04/28/2021	➤ Social Media	➤ Quiz #5 ➤ Final Paper Due 4/29
<b>FINAL EXAM WEEK</b>			
WEEK 16	Monday 5/10/2021	<b>Presentations: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.</b>	

### Zoom Sessions

We are Trojans. We will uphold the academic rigor, open discussion, and have fun regardless if we are online. My expertise is in principles of learning in the classroom and online learning. I will not let being online deprive you of a top-notch learning experience. I ask you, my fellow Trojans, to do the following during our Zoom Sessions:

- 1) Attend as many lives sessions as possible. I promise, you will get more out of it.
- 2) Leave your webcam on whenever possible to help create a sense of community and to help socially connect. We are physically distanced, not socially distanced. Nonverbal communication is still important!
- 3) Please mute your mic when you are not speaking. I will mute you if I must, but I want you to take on the responsibility.
- 4) Ask questions! You may use chat, use the “raise hand” function, or even say, “Excuse me. I have a question.” I promise you; I will not get upset if you verbally interrupt me in a polite way. 😊

For chat, please private message me for personal matters. If you have a question about content, feel free to share with everyone. Having great questions in chat or verbally make this fun! Seriously, I speak from experience.

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are in Appendix A.

### **Statement on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, lazy writing, and cheating are violations of the Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards and may be dealt with by both the instructor and the university. Plagiarism is defined as, "the act of presenting the ideas and writings of another as one's own." Lazy writing is defined as, "using quotes or paragraphs with the proper citation, but are used in a manner that a paper is stitched together and clearly has little or no original writing." Cheating is defined as, "the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means." In instances of academic dishonesty, the instructor will take appropriate action as outlined in the Academic Integrity Review Process (SJACS 14.10). For more information on avoiding plagiarism or lazy writing, see Chapter 1, Section 1.10 in the APA Publication Manual or visit [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug\\_plag.htm](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm).

### **Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me or to the TA as early in the semester as possible. DSP is in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: [http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html); Phone: (213) 740-0776; TDD Only: (213) 740-6948; Fax: (213) 740-8216; email: [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### **Course Notes**

- 1) **Late Assignments:** Assignments turned in late will receive a 5% reduction each day for the first two days turned in late. For the following five days (i.e., after the first two days) the late assignment will result in a 10% reduction for each day it is late. After seven days, an assignment cannot be turned in and will result in a grade of zero. Students who experience medical emergencies that prevent them from attending class on days when class exercises or assignments are scheduled need to contact me as soon as they can to work out a plan to complete missed work. *USC athletes should meet with me as soon as possible regarding their scheduled athletic events that may conflict with course requirements.*

- 2) Email: I typically respond to emails within 24 hours or less. However, I rarely respond to emails between 5:00 p.m. on Fridays to 7:00 a.m. on Mondays (i.e., the weekend). I will do my best to email over the weekend if it is urgent, but please note that I cannot guarantee it.
- 3) Feedback: I will make every attempt to return assignments in a reasonable time by returning them no later than two weeks after the due date.
- 4) Appeal Process: If you find that your answer in an assignment or exam was incorrect, but you think it is correct, you can appeal the decision in writing. The written appeal must have supporting documentation (e.g., reference to a class reading). The appeal cannot be based on your opinion or personal experience, but rather based on the course materials. Appeals must be delivered to the instructor no later than one week after the grade is posted. Appeals will not be accepted via email and no late appeals will be accepted.
- 5) Course Participation: Your best bet at remembering and understanding the material is to complete the required readings BEFORE class. Also, keep in mind that you may need to do *multiple* readings of the readings to gain a full comprehension.
- 6) University Escort Service: If you feel that you would like to be escorted to your vehicle, bus, or campus residence after 5:00 p.m., do not hesitate to call (213) 740-4911.

### **Special Notes**

- 1) This course is more based on applied learning and less on memorization. As in any course, work of a significantly high caliber in each of the components of this course is an A (i.e., exceptional work). It is especially important that you be on time for class, have completed your reading assignments prior to class-time, and that you are prepared for discussion of these materials in class.
- 2) *All assignments in this course are expected to be word-processed and graphs/tables should be computer-generated.*
- 3) **All assignments, except participation, should be completed using APA-style, including the use of a title page.** Assignments are due on predetermined due dates and should be submitted electronically through Bb. Word processing and data management software are available in several computer labs on campus. You should consult your APA Publication Manual for all writing assignments.
- 4) All students are expected to have access to the student computer network. It is your responsibility to ensure that your access is up to date during the semester.
- 5) Tutors are available through the Learning Resource Center (LRC). If you should find that you are not doing as well in this course as you would like, please see your lab instructor or me immediately. *We will help you: It is our job!* You can also arrange short-term or long-term tutoring through the LRC. The Writing Center is also available to tutor students who are having difficulty with writing. For assistance, visit their website at <http://college.usc.edu/writingcenter/> or call (213) 740-3691.

### **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.



### **Statement of Course Content as a Copyright**

It is important to know that all material presented in class, labs, or discussion sent via email or posted on Blackboard is “all rights reserved” by the course instructor. In addition, some of it is copyrighted and distributed by a publishing corporation for in-class use only. ***You may not store, post, or distribute any course materials – on paper or electronically – for use by any student not presently enrolled in this course.*** Out of fairness to all current and future students, please do your part to protect our course content.

### **Syllabus as a Contract**

The purpose of this syllabus is to provide a contract between the instructor and the student. By enrolling in this class, you agree that you have read, understand, and will adhere to the syllabus guidelines and complete the assignments given in the class. I reserve the right to change the schedule of topics and readings and I will give notice to you of such changes well in advance of those changes.