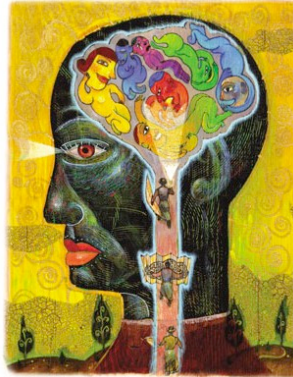


University of Toronto in Scarborough

Faculty of Life Sciences  
Department of Psychology  
PSY D15



*Current topics in Social Psychology*  
Winter 2010

Instructor: Dr. Gabriela Ilie  
Office: Room S418  
Office Hours: 11 pm - 12 pm  
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Class Time: Mondays 9 am - 11 am  
Room: HW308

**Course Description:**

An intensive examination of selected issues and research approaches in the scientific study of Forgiveness in Social Psychology. This course is designed to help you gain in depth knowledge on one central current topic in social psychology: Forgiveness and the social cognitive processes associated with the act of forgiveness. The course will cover a broad range of themes such as philosophical background, research on forgiveness, approaches to forgiveness – current themes in the understanding and applications of forgiveness and its implications, definitions of forgiveness, forgiveness and affect, individual differences in forgiveness, forgiveness in social relationships.

The first lectures respond to the question: What is forgiveness? Why is forgiveness important? They position the topic by providing historical information, discuss major theories on the nature of forgiveness, and discuss the implications of forgiveness at the individual and group level. The last lectures examine key issues in contemporary theory and research which have to do with the relationship between forgiveness and affect. Throughout the course we will aim at connecting and putting together knowledge gained from different areas of the course in order to appreciate how all perspectives of viewing forgiveness can contribute to our understanding of human behaviour.

The knowledge you will gain in this course will help you think critically about the techniques (both methodological but also theoretical) used to examine forgiveness processes, and the implications drawn from them. In this course ***you will have to express your thoughts*** about this and the material presented ***in both written and verbal form***. The following is a website that will be helpful to you as you decide whether this is or not a course for you:

<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/%7Etlswweb/instruction/taxonomy.htm>.

Important note: It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the prerequisite requirements for this course as listed in the Scarborough course calendar. Your registration ***may be cancelled if you are lacking the appropriate prerequisites***.

### **Course Evaluation:**

The final mark in this course will be based on:

- 1) One 18-20 page double-spaced paper (45% of your COURSE MARK) [MAJOR PAPER]. This paper will be on the topic chosen by you in class from the list of possible topics provided. The paper is due in the last day of class, **no exceptions will be made**. Papers will not be accepted by electronic submission. **Late papers will not be accepted. No exceptions will be made. Papers should meet the required length to avoid disappointment in length penalties. Referencing should meet APA style formatting (5<sup>th</sup> edition).**
- 2) Between 1 hour - 1 hour and 15 minutes in-class group presentation (15% of your COURSE MARK). The group should be made of 4 students. You will be responsible for presenting information on the topic that you chose for your paper. Your presentation should describe the topic, its relevance to social psychology, research conducted in the journal articles researched and should promote discussions at the end of the presentation.
- 3) Eight critical review papers each worth 3% on the assigned readings.

One 2-page max double-spaced critical review paper on each of the weekly in-class students presentations topics ( $3\% \times 8 = 24\%$ ) .

4) Three additional 2 page max double spaced critical review papers on lectures 2, 3 and 4 materials, lecture presentation & class discussion (9% of your COURSE MARK - [3% each]).

5) Class participation - 7% of your COURSE MARK (attendance to all classes only secures 2% of your total 7% for participation; the other 5% must come from your actual engagement in the class discussions)

**COURSE OUTLINE (readings posted on the intranet):**

Date	Week	Lecture
January 4	1	Introduction to Forgiveness as a Social Psychology Topic and its role in human behaviour, and social and applied psychology <i>TOPICS FOR MAJOR PAPER and PRESENTATION DATE SELECTION</i>
January 11	2	Defining Forgiveness. Types of forgiveness – individual & group level  Readings Posted on the Intranet
January 18	3	Forgiveness - historical information,  Major theories on the nature of forgiveness.  Implications for forgiveness at the individual and group level.  Readings Posted on the Intranet – DUE: Critical review paper on last week’s materials
January 25	4	Contemporary theory and research in Forgiveness.  Forgiveness and affect.  Readings Posted on the Intranet DUE: Critical review paper on last week’s materials
February 1		Presentations (GROUP 1) DUE: Critical review paper on last week’s materials
February 9	5	Presentations (GROUP 2)
<i>February 15</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>FAMILY DAY – University Closed &amp; Reading Weeks</i>
February 22	7	Presentations (GROUP 3)
March 1	8	Presentations (GROUP 4)
March 8	9	Presentations (GROUP 5)
March 15	10	Presentations (GROUP 6)
March 22	11	Presentations (GROUP 7)

March 22	11	Presentations (GROUP 7)
March 29	12	Presentations (GROUP 8) <i>MAJOR PAPER DUE</i>

\*There is NO final exam during the April exam period for this course

TOPICS: forgiveness & law; forgiveness and relationships (children, parents, intimate relationships, friendships); forgiveness and prejudice, forgiveness and discrimination; forgiveness and obedience; forgiveness and conformity; forgiveness & death; forgiveness & self; forgiveness & compliance; forgiveness & judgment.

### Course style:

This is a seminar undergraduate style course. That means you all get to read the same materials for the lectures but may or may not get to read the same materials for the major paper depending on your choice of topic. Each student will become the member of one group and members of a group will pick the same paper topic. Students must research the topic they selected and choose one paper each for their presentation. Groups are expected to be made of 4 – max 5 students. Hence each class presentation will consist of 4- 5 papers. Students are to submit the PDF files of their readings to the Professor 2 weeks before their presentation. The readings, as submitted by the students will be placed on the intranet for all class students. When presenting their topic, students must present their own interpretative narrative of the readings in class while the rest of us listen, write down issues or questions worth discussing after the presenters have introduced their interpretation of the issues presented in the readings. The purpose of the presentations is to facilitate class discussion, and get you talk about the readings. In this process you will experience a sense of what it is like to engage in deep scientific talk with some breadth. So, what constitutes a good presentation? One that stimulates thought, that presents materials relevant to the readings, that is logical and has depth, that encourages class members to share their views and ideas on the subject and that is able to point the crux of the arguments in the readings in a clear, accurate and precise articulated verbal form. A good presentation is one that for example, is able to identify the assumptions underneath the theory presented and present an alternative view based on a different set of assumptions. Relevant mini-video clips are allowed during these presentations (if you think they may be useful to you and may help you stimulate relevant class discussions).

### **What will help you be successful in this class?**

1. Be an Enthusiastic Informed Presenter:
  - a. Remember everybody will have to read the materials not to mention that they too will have to lead one discussion during the course. So, from experience I know that you will have lots of support. As a

presenter you are encouraged to look for the essential, critical issues in the papers, and raise them in class. Remember 15% of your course mark is based on this experience.

2. Be a Thoughtful Writer. If you have taken PSYC82; Courses in reasoning and logic/ or scientific writing; Other D level or graduate courses; Courses in Social Psychology and/or Cross-Cultural Psychology or Emotion – The knowledge you gained in these courses will be helpful along the way.
  - a. Problems writing or presenting? This site may be useful to you:  
<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/%7Etlsweb/>
  - b. Your class hand-out-papers should be **a description of in-depth** analysis about one aspect of the paper. The word in-depth here is crucial. Tell me something I don't know! If it is a research paper you may **want to describe how you would follow-up on the research, or things you think the author missed or would be helpful to further analyze (remember to explain yourself; don't just state things: explain why that should be so, what is your rationale).** **Depth, clarity and relevance are very important standards of writing this assignment.** These papers must be 1 ½ - 2 pages long (double spaced). No shorter, no longer.
  - c. Start writing on your final paper as soon as the third week of class. Then add a little bit to it each week. Leave yourself ample time for revisions towards the end weeks of the course.
  - d. Be open minded and strive to learn something from each class. Allow yourself to grow with the course. Allow yourself to be an active participant in deep Scientific Talks and be prepared to make mistakes, sometimes. You will learn that deep scientific thought is hard work. Have the courage to experience it and learn from it. The skills you will learn are applicable to all aspects of your life.

**Term paper (45% of your course mark) - Due on March 29, 2010 in class.**

### **General Instructions:**

This is a long essay between 18 to 20 pages double spaced on any of the provided topics. Your job is to select one topic, find relevant sources (at least 10 papers – min. 8 - on your topic of interest). Be careful plagiarism can result in a failing paper, failure in the course, and further academic penalties. Please be aware of plagiarism and access UTSC's website on the issue. Your paper will be scrutinized closely and issues of plagiarism will be dealt with according to the University of Toronto's policies and regulations WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

- This assignment involves selecting between 8 to 10 research articles relevant to your topic. Your task will be to compare and contrast the research reviewed and write-up a meaningful and logic interpretative narrative (review) of this particular literature. In this process you may want to point out limitations or benefits to the particular line of investigation reviewed, point out advantages or disadvantages to the research reviewed and suggest alternative points of view and ways of conceptualizing the questions assessed.
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- The articles must be from *scientific journals* (APA psychology journals).
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- The paper must be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins, and **must follow the APA style** and must have appropriate sections (e.g., abstract, introduction, body, conclusion or discussion section).
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- Your paper will be graded for both content (were the essays well written, well integrated, how well did they follow the standards and elements of thought, were your arguments logical, did they relate to the theory(ies) you selected from the course material, psychological/scientific interpretation, depth of the critical analysis of the evaluation and form (spelling, grammar, punctuation, presentation).
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- A good paper will present, in addition to a well thought out methodological or theoretical argument, methodological or theoretical suggestions for future research. Be sure to review in your write-up the research that has been done on the aspect of the topic you selected, to emphasize the methodological/theoretical aspect that interests you and explain why this aspect is interesting to you. Please be sure to point out and discuss the IMPLICATIONS of the results in the articles you review (at least those that you think carry most weight and have been most adequately conducted).
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- The paper is due on **March 29<sup>th</sup> in class**. The paper should be between: 18 or 20 pages in length, double-spaced without counting the abstract, title page, and references. Late papers WILL NOT be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE. **Be sure to make or save a copy of your paper (either on paper or on computer disk) as a backup before you submit it to me.**