

## **Social Cognition: Understanding Ourselves and Others**

### **PSYC13H3**

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### **Course Description**

The study of social behavior has yielded a number of key insights into human nature. One of the most fundamental is that how we make sense of ourselves and the people around us is a complex function of our *perceptions*, *memories*, *beliefs*, and *attitudes*. These social cognitive mechanisms can be both surprisingly accurate and disturbingly biased. Moreover, they shape our actions and environment in ways that often produce self-fulfilling prophecies. This class explores the operation of these social cognitive mechanisms, what functions they serve, and how they lead to behaviors both beneficial and detrimental. In the process, the class will explore ways in which we can avoid the most common pitfalls of perception and judgment, and harness the incredible power of our social minds.

### **Readings**

There is no required textbook for this class. Readings will consist of book chapters, academic and popular-press articles, and excerpts, and will be made available online through Quercus (under Course Documents).

### **Grading**

Midterm Exam (Feb. 10)	25%
Final Exam (Date TBD)	35%
Written assignments	35%
Class participation	5%

Description of grade components:

1. Midterm exam: The midterm will consist of a set of multiple choice questions covering the lecture material and readings from Topics 1-5, and will take place in class on Feb. 10.
2. Final exam: Like the midterm, the final will include multiple choice questions, focused on lecture material and readings from Topics 6-11. However, the final will also include essay-style questions that will require a cumulative knowledge of all of the material from the course, including material from before the midterm. The date is set by the UTSC registrar, will take place sometime during exams period (April 8-25), and will be announced as soon as it is set.
3. Writing assignment: A major goal of this course is to help students develop crucial critical thinking and writing skills. As part of this goal, you will be asked to write a 7-8 page paper on a specific topic in social cognition. This paper will involve a number of intermediate steps, due over the course of the semester, that will ask you to synthesize and integrate existing knowledge, think critically about theory and data, generate hypotheses, express your ideas and arguments coherently, and respond to comments and critiques from others. A brief outline of these steps is included below. More details about each of these specific requirements for the paper will be found on Quercus.
  - a. Assignment quiz and topic selection (4 pts., due Jan. 17)
  - b. Reading scientific articles exercise (6 pts., due Jan. 24)
  - c. Writing skills exercise (6 pts., due Jan. 31)
  - d. Outline and bibliography (9 pts., due Feb. 7)
  - e. First draft (30 pts., due Mar. 6)
  - f. Peer reviews x 2 (5 pts. each review, 10 pts. total, due Mar. 20)
  - g. Final paper (35 pts., due Apr. 3)
4. Class participation: Although this is a lecture-style class, a major goal of the class is to engage you in substantive interaction with me, the TAs, and other students in the class. This interaction will form the basis of your participation grade. Participation can take a number of forms: asking or responding to substantive questions in class, responding during class surveys using TopHat (see TopHat section below), attending and asking questions in office hours, or participating substantively on the Discussion Board (accessed via Quercus). Participation will be graded on a point system, with 10 total points possible.

Documented instances of participation are worth the following:

Asking or responding to questions in class - 1 pt/class

Responding using TopHat - .5 pt/class

Attending office hour sessions - 1 pt/session

Discussion board participation - 1 pt/substantive comment

## **Lectures**

Lectures take place on Mondays from 1-3pm in SW128, and are designed to present major research areas, theories and experiments from the field of social cognition. While there will be some overlap between lectures and the readings, there will not be a 1-to-1 correspondence. Some things may be covered in lecture but will not appear in the reading and vice-versa. I therefore recommend that you make every effort to attend class each week. Attendance and participation during lectures is also a good way to achieve full points for your course participation grade.

Please note: there will be no lectures on Feb. 10 (replaced by an in-class midterm) or Feb. 17 (reading week).

## **Office Hours (SW565, Mondays 5-7pm)**

Office hours are a great way for you to get answers to specific questions you may have, as well as a way for you to receive points for participation. They are also a good forum for hearing answers to questions that other students have, and for learning about things you may not have thought about. When you arrive for office hours, please come inside my office, even if other students are already present. That way I will know you are present, and you can hear the discussion with other students.

## **TopHat**

I will occasionally be polling the class during lectures to add an element of interaction, as well as to provide a way for you to earn participation points. We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if you don't receive this email, you can register at <https://app.tophat.com/e/274896>. Note: our Course Join Code is 274896.

Important: You will only be able to receive participation points from TopHat participation if you register for a paid account. You can participate in polls during classtime even if you do not register for Top Hat, but your participation will only be officially recorded, and participation marks assigned to you, if you purchase a paid subscription. A full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: [www.tophat.com/pricing](http://www.tophat.com/pricing).

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

## **Departmental Policy - Missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Emergency:**

All students citing a documented reason for missed term work must submit their request for accommodations **within three (3) business days** of the deadline for the missed work.

Students must submit **BOTH** of the following:

- (1.) A completed **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), and
- (2.) **Appropriate documentation** to verify your illness or emergency, as described below.

### **Appropriate documentation:**

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to **ILLNESS**:

- Submit the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), along with an **original** copy of the official UTSC Verification of Illness Form ([uoft.me/UTSC-Verification-Of-Illness-Form](http://uoft.me/UTSC-Verification-Of-Illness-Form)) or an **original** copy of the record of visitation to a hospital emergency room. Forms are to be completed in full, clearly indicating the start date, anticipated end date, and severity of illness. The physician's registration number and business stamp are required.
- Note: If an end date of "ongoing" is specified, the medical note will be assumed to cover a period of two weeks. If no end date / an "unknown" end date is specified, the note will be assumed to cover a period of three business days (starting from illness start date.)

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to **ACCESSABILITY REASONS**:

- Meet with your **AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) detailing the accommodations required.

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to **ILLNESS**:

- Submit the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), along with a **hardcopy** of the Self-Declaration of Student Illness Form ([uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-form](http://uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-form)).

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to **ACCESSABILITY REASONS**:

- If your desired accommodation is **within the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (ex. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" and you need 3 days), submit the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>) and attach a copy of your letter. **Specify how many days extension you are requesting** on the request form.

- If your desired accommodation is **outside the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (ex. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” but you need more time than that) you will need to meet with your **AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) detailing the accommodations required.

For missed term tests or assignments in **OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES**:

Submit the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), along with:

- In the case of a **death of a family member or friend**, please provide a copy of a death certificate.
- For U of T varsity-level or professional **athletic commitments**, an email from your coach or varsity administrator should be sent directly to Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) **well in advance** of the missed work, detailing the dates and nature of the commitment.
- For **religious accommodations**, please email ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) **well in advance** of the missed work.
- For circumstances **outside of these guidelines**, please email Keely ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) on or before the date of the test / assignment deadline to describe your circumstances and ask what documentation would be appropriate

Documents covering the following situations are NOT acceptable: medical prescriptions, personal travel, weddings/personal/work commitments.

### **Procedure:**

Submit your (1.) [request form](#) and (2.) [medical/self-declaration](#)/other documents in person **WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS** of the missed term test or assignment.

**Submit to:** Keely Hicks, Room SW420B, Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 4 PM. (Slide forms under door if out of office.)

After submitting your documentation, within approximately one to five business days, you will receive a response from your instructor detailing the accommodations to be made (if any).

**You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily, as accommodations may be time-critical.**

You should continue to work on your assignments to the best of your ability, as extension accommodations may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency.

If an accommodation has been granted but you are unable to meet the conditions of the accommodation (ex. you need a longer extension, or you missed a make-up test), you will need to repeat the missed term work procedure and submit additional forms to request further accommodation. Note that in the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not be provided.

Completion of this form does NOT guarantee that accommodations will be made. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations (if any) will be

made. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request for accommodation.

### **Missed Accommodations**

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting the requirements of your accommodation, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations.

(E.g.) If you miss a make-up midterm, you would need to submit another Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form. If your original medical note / documentation included the date of the make-up midterm, then only the Request form is required. If the date of the make-up midterm fell outside of the dates indicated on your original medical note/other documentation, then a new medical note/other appropriate documentation must also be submitted.

### **Importance of Three Business Day window:**

If you are unable to submit your documents in-person within the three business day window, **you must email Keely ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) within the three business day window** to explain when you will be able to bring your documents in person.

Exceptions to the documentation deadline will only be made under **exceptional circumstances**. Attach scans of your documentation, and be prepared to bring your documents to Keely in-person as soon as you are well. Late documents may not be accepted.

### **NOTE: Assignments due at end of term**

Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, you would need to file a petition with the Registrar's Office (<https://www.utoronto.ca/registrar/term-work>).

### **NOTE: Final Exams**

This policy applies only to missed assignments and term tests. Missed final exams are handled by the Registrar's Office (<http://www.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>).

## **Missed Exams**

*Midterm.* If you are approved to miss the midterm, your final exam score will be reweighted to count for 60% of your course grade. For reasons of fairness, there will be no exceptions to this policy.

*Final.* If you must miss the final exam, then you should contact the Registrar's Office directly, as I am not authorized to make any changes to the final exam date and time.

## **Quercus**

The course's Quercus website is the central location where you will find all important course information, including syllabus, reading materials and information for writing assignments, handouts, announcements, and supplementary information. Quercus is also where the course Discussion Board can be found (important both for your participation grade and for answering questions). Lecture guides and preliminary lecture slides will be available on the Quercus site prior to the start of class. Finalized lecture slides will be posted within 48 hours after class each week.

To access Quercus, log on via <http://q.utoronto.ca/> using your UTORid and password. I strongly recommend regularly checking the "Announcements" section of the course website, since you are solely responsible for making sure that you stay up to date with course announcements and assignments. If you are registered for the course, you should see this class displayed automatically when you log on via the intranet.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor;
- Making up sources or facts;
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing unauthorized aids;
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test;
- Misrepresenting your identity; and
- When you knew or ought to have known you were doing it.

In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades;
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes; and when you knew or ought to have known you were doing so.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from their instructors or from other institutional resources.

Note:

You may see advertisements for services offering grammar help, essay editing and proof-reading. Be very careful. If these services take a draft of your work and significantly change the content and/or language, you may be committing an academic offence (unauthorized assistance) under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*.

It is much better and safer to take your draft to the Writing Centre as early as you can. They will give you guidance you can trust. Students for whom English is not their first language should go to the English Language Development Centre.

If you decide to use these services in spite of this caution, you must keep a draft of your work and any notes you made before you got help and be prepared to give it to your instructor on request.

## **Turnitin**

Normally, students will be required to submit the written portions of the course assignment to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

## **English Language Development Center**

This class assumes a degree of fluency in English, for both writing and comprehension. All students are encouraged to take the Academic English Health Check at the start of the term, and to visit the English Language Development Center for support if needed. The ELDC supports all students in developing better Academic English and the critical thinking skills needed in academic communication. Make use of the personalized support in academic writing skills development and Café sessions to enhance your ability to do better in the various components of this course. Details and sign-up information: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/eld/>



## **Sample Exam Questions and Extra Credit**

I am committed to giving you opportunities to think about the material and demonstrate your engagement with it outside of exams and assignments. I am also committed to incorporating your feedback in order to make this class a challenging but fun and worthwhile experience for students. In service of both these goals, starting in Week 2 I will provide a set of sample exam questions based on the lectures and readings for that week, as well as a short series of questions to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the lecture and the readings. Students who complete these weekly quizzes and evaluations can earn up to a maximum of 1% extra credit, which will be added to their total grade at the end of the semester. The amount of extra credit will depend on a) the percentage of quiz questions answered correctly and b) percentage of evaluations provided (marked simply as completed or not). Feedback will be anonymized before I read it, and I am keenly interested in improving the class, so you should feel free to give honest evaluations. Weekly quizzes and feedback questions can be found under the “Quizzes” section on Quercus.

## **AccessAbility**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm SW302, Science Wing) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations [416-287-7560](tel:416-287-7560) or email [ability@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:ability@utsc.utoronto.ca). The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## **Course Materials, Including Lecture Notes**

Course materials are provided for the exclusive use of enrolled students. Do not share them with others. I do not want to discover that a student has put any of my materials into the public domain, has sold my materials, or has given my materials to a person or company that is using them to earn money. The University will support me in asserting and pursuing my rights, and my copyrights, in such matters.

## Course Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1: Jan 6	Logistics & Introduction: What is Social Cognition?	Hamilton (2005)	
Week 2: Jan 13	Automaticity and control in social cognition	Hofmann (2009) Job (2010)	Topic selection + assignment quiz DUE JAN. 17
Week 3 Jan 20	Judging a person: What do we know and how do we know it?	Reeder (2013) Olivola (2014)	Reading exercise DUE JAN. 24
Week 4 Jan 27	Judging ourselves: What does it mean to "know thyself?"	McConnell (2013) Bushman (1998)	Writing exercise DUE JAN. 31
Week 5 Feb 3	Judging groups: Generalization and individualization	Ranganath (2008) Kurzban (2006)	Outline + Bibliography DUE FEB. 7
Week 6 Feb 10	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	In class	
Week 7 Feb 17	<b>Reading Week</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
Week 8 Feb 24	Values, attitudes, and behavior	Fazio (1997) Rydell (2006) Rudman (2013)	
Week 9 Mar 2	Cognition-emotion interactions	Lerner (2004) Tamir (2008)	First full draft DUE MAR. 6
Week 10 Mar 9	Accuracy and bias in social cognition	Jussim (2015) Sandberg (2015) Back (2010)	
Week 11 Mar 16	Brain and body in social cognition	Saxe (2006) Niedenthal (2005)	Peer reviews DUE MAR. 20
Week 12 Mar 23	Evolutionary and developmental influences on social cognition	Dunham (2008) Martin (2016)	
Week 13 Mar 30	Looking back, looking ahead: Applications, and the future of social cognition	<b>TBA</b>	Final paper DUE APRIL 3