



PSYC13H3: Social Cognition: Understanding Ourselves and Others



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In-person class time (SW128): Th 3-5PM

Meet the Professor: Th 12-1PM

Virtual Office hours: M 12-1PM

TAs:

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Office hours by appointment

Course Description and Goals

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.

This course has several objectives for your development:

1. Familiarize you with key concepts and hypotheses in social cognition regarding the role of automaticity and control in human social behavior
2. Familiarize you with key aspects of theory and research on the ways we come to know and make judgments about ourselves and others.
3. Introduce you to the many ways in which “thinking makes it so,” that is, how our perceptions, thoughts, memories, and emotions can influence and be influenced by cognitive interpretation.
4. Introduce you to arguments about the ways in which social cognitive processes arise to serve biological and cognitive purposes.
5. Help you to develop the capacity to consume and critique empirical research in psychology.
6. Encourage you to apply empirical findings to your own life.
7. Help you to develop writing skills, including grammar, prose, and structure.

Readings

There is no required textbook for this class. In order to build your capacity to read critically and to understand empirical research, readings will consist of primary sources, including book chapters, academic and popular-press articles, and excerpts. All readings will be made available online through Quercus.

Grading

Participation	10%
"Test-yourself" quizzes (best 10 of 11)	10%
Final Exam (Cumulative)	35%
Writing Assignment	45%

Description of grading components:

1. **Class participation:** This class is presented via a mix of asynchronous pre-recorded content and in-class content. A major goal of the class is to engage you in substantive interaction with me, the TAs, and other students in the class, because this is one of the primary ways to help you develop critical thinking capacity, and the ability to apply the knowledge you obtain beyond the specific circumstances in which it is presented. Participation can take one of four forms: participating during in-person class discussion time, attending virtual office hours, participating substantively on the Discussion Board (accessed via Quercus), and attending Meet-the-Prof sessions (see more details on this below). Participation will be graded on a point system, with 10 total points possible.

Documented instances of participation are worth the following:

Participating in in-person class discussion - 1 pt/session

Participating in course discussion boards - 1 pt/substantive comment

Participating in virtual office hours – 1 pt/meeting

Participating in virtual get-to-know-you meetings – 2 pts (max of once)

2. **Weekly "test-yourself" quizzes:** Starting in Week 2, you will be asked to complete weekly quizzes allowing you to assess your understanding of lecture and reading materials for that week. Quizzes are designed to help you to learn, not to stress you out. Therefore, quizzes are open-book, open-note, and will allow up to three attempts, with feedback on correct answers given after every attempt. Each attempt will consist of a different set of questions, but ones designed to test similar concepts and knowledge. I will also keep only the best 10 of the 11 weeks of quizzes. Thus, I expect every student who consistently attempts these quizzes to achieve between 80-100% on average for this component of the grade.

3. **Final exam:** The final exam will test cumulative knowledge acquired over the course of the semester. It will consist of multiple choice questions similar in format to those found in the weekly “test-yourself” quizzes. The exam will be administered in person. The date is set by the UTSC registrar, will take place sometime during exams period (Dec. 8-20), and will be announced as soon as it is set.

4. **Writing Assignment:** A major goal of this course is to help students develop crucial critical thinking and writing skills that can serve you well as you transition beyond the University. As part of this goal, you will be asked to write a 5-6 page paper in which you will be asked to perform research and apply social cognitive research to develop proposed policies/approach to solve a topical issue or challenge. The assignment 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 ideas, 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 can be found on Quercus.
 - a. Assignment quiz (5 pts., due Sep. 16)
 - b. Reading scientific articles exercise (10 pts., due Sep. 23)
 - c. Writing skills exercise (10 pts., due Sep. 30)
 - d. Two-page initial analysis (20 pts., due Oct. 17)
 - e. Three- to four-page intermediate analysis and revision (25 pts., due Nov. 7)
 - f. Five- to six-page final analysis and revision (30 pts., due Dec. 5)

Prerecorded On-Line Content

This class adopts a “flipped-classroom” model of learning, in which the factual/informational content is presented “outside” of class time, and in a manner that students can engage with it on their own schedule, while the “live” classroom time is devoted to more active learning and engagement with the material and instruction designed to facilitate your engagement with writing. I have chosen this method of instruction because I would like for this class to allow for flexibility, given the uncertainties around in-person instruction, the likelihood that many will at some point need to self-isolate for COVID or other reasons, and the demands of student life. This means that the primary content/information that will be tested in both test-yourself quizzes and the final exam at the end of the semester will be delivered via a series of pre-recorded videos designed to present major research areas, theories and experiments from the field of social cognition. New videos will be posted at the beginning of each week, and will remain available throughout the course once posted. 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 the recorded lectures but will not appear in the reading and vice-versa.

Please note: there will be no lecture videos posted for reading week.

In-Person Content (Thursdays 3-5PM, SW128)

Although the factual/informational component of this course will be delivered online, I consider the in-person class time to be just as if not more essential to success in the class. One way to think of this is that the on-line content teaches to the test-yourself quizzes and the final exam (constituting 45% of your grade), while in-person class time is more specifically designed to help you with the writing assignment (also constituting 45% of your grade), In-person content is also designed to help you to apply the knowledge that you have gained in the class to real-world issues. In-person instruction involves much more active thinking, discussion, critical thought, skill-building, and student-centered feedback. Thus, I will be delivering weekly in-person instruction which will consist of 3 kinds of activities. In the first part of the class, we will engage in a question-and-answer period, during which you can ask any questions you may have about the lecture videos, including both clarification and critical thought questions. In the second part of the class, I will lead an informal discussion of additional materials that extend the material covered in the lecture videos, with an eye towards applications, current controversies, and open questions that will serve as a basis for conversations. Finally, in the last part of class, I will lead "writing skills" tutorial exercises and practicums designed to help you practice and improve your writing skills, with an eye to helping you complete the writing assignment for the course. This in-class component is just as essential to success in the course, and I expect all students to take advantage of it.

NOTE: Because this will be the first time I have used a combination of both pre-recorded and in-person content since the University resumed in-person instruction, I will reserve the right to alter the mode of delivery for factual content from prerecorded online videos to in-person lectures if I feel based on conversation and feedback from students that the combined mode of delivery is resulting in a poorer experience for students.

Meet-and-greets (Alternating In-person and Online – Thursdays 12-1PM)

Because I am committed to getting to know you, starting in Week 2, I will be hosting weekly "Meet the Professor" sessions. These will be small, one-hour gatherings of no more than 10 students, with no agenda other than for me to get a chance to know you, for you to get to know some of your classmates, and for us to discuss anything that interests us about the class or beyond. Sessions will be held from 12-1PM on Thursdays, and student will sign up in advance. I will hold 6 in-person meetings, and 4 online meetings to accommodate student schedules. An incentive to come to one of the in-person sessions is that I will provide free snacks/beverages for all in-person attendees! While these sessions are not mandatory, you are strongly encouraged to sign up for one, and will receive 2 automatic participation points if you attend one. Please note that due to space constraints, students can sign up for a maximum of

one Meet-the-Professor session, and will not receive participation points beyond the maximum of 2 for this activity.

Virtual Drop-In Hours (Mondays 12-1PM)

In addition to the Meet and Greet and in-person Q&A sessions, I am committed to giving you the chance to ask more specific or personal questions about course content, or to discuss specific issues with me related to the course or life more generally. I will be holding virtual office hours on Mondays from 12-1PM in my personal Zoom room (<https://utoronto.zoom.us/my/cendrihutcherson> (Passcode: 278481).

Missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Other Emergency

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedures outlined below.

Note:

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: travel for leisure, weddings, personal commitments, work commitments, human error.
- [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService.
- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, accommodations are only possible via the Registrar's Office [petition process](#).

The email address to submit missed term work accommodation requests in PSYC13 is:
c.hutcherson@utoronto.ca

ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY accommodations:

For missed work due to ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY, complete the following process:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Declare your absence on [ACORN](#) (Profile & Settings > Absence Declaration)
3. Email **both** of the following items to the course email **within 2 business days** of the missed work:
 - a. the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#)
 - *AND***
 - b. a screenshot of your Self-Declared Absence on ACORN

Note:

- *If you are unable to submit your request within 2 business days, you must still email your instructor within the 2 business day window to explain the nature of the delay. Exceptions to the 2 business day deadline will only be made under exceptional circumstances.*

- *If your absence is declared on ACORN, we do not require any additional supporting documentation (e.g. medical notes) to support your missed term work accommodation request.*

ACADEMIC CONFLICT accommodations:

For missed term work due to an ACADEMIC CONFLICT (e.g. two midterms at the same time):

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Take screenshots of your course Quercus pages that demonstrate the conflict.
3. Email the form and screenshots to the course email **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier. Requests sent after the activity deadline may not be accommodated.

Note:

- *Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered conflicts. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.*
- *Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered conflicts. Only overlapping activities are conflicts.*
- *Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.*

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT accommodations:

For missed term work due to a RELIGIOUS CONFLICT:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Email the form to the course email **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier. Requests sent after the activity deadline may not be accommodated.

ACCESSABILITY SERVICES accommodations:

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

- **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email the course email detailing accommodations required.

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

- If your desired accommodation is **within the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" and you need 3 days):
 1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
 2. Email the form ***AND*** your **Accommodation Letter** to the course email specifying how many days extension you are requesting.
- If your desired accommodation is **outside the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" but you need more time than that):

1. **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email the course email detailing the accommodations required.

Accommodation Procedure:

After submitting your documentation, you will receive a response from your instructor or TA. This form does not guarantee that you will be accommodated. 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. **You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily**, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, **do not wait for the instructor's response to resume work on your assignment**. Extensions may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. Complete your assignment as soon as you're able, and email it to your instructor.

For an **anticipated absence** (e.g. a scheduled surgery or an illness with a prolonged recovery period), if you would like to request accommodations in advance, submit a [Verification of Illness Form](#) completed by your doctor AND the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) to the course email. Absences can be declared up to 14 days into the future on ACORN.

Missed Accommodations

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting its requirements, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations. **Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation**. E.g. If you are given an extension but are still sick and need more time, or if you miss a make-up term test, you must submit *another* [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) and declare your extended absence on ACORN. *Note: In the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not necessarily be provided.

Missed Final Exam

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.

Disability-Related Accommodations

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 Office (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability/>) as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm AA142, Arts and Administration Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please contact 416-287-7560 (tel/TTY) or email ability.utsc@utoronto.ca for more information.

The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

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 lecture videos will also be posted here 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.

The University's Plagiarism Detection Tool

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

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.uts.utoronto.ca/eld/>

Extra Credit

I am committed to incorporating your feedback in order to make this class a fun and worthwhile experience for students. In service of both these goals, starting in Week 2 I will provide a short series of questions to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the online lecture content, readings, and in-person skill-building exercises, as well as other feedback on the course to date. Students who complete these weekly quizzes and evaluations can earn up to a maximum of .5% extra credit, which will be added to their total grade at the end of the semester. The amount of extra credit will depend on the 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 feedback surveys can be found under the “Quizzes” section on Quercus.

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.

Masks in the Classroom

While the mask mandate has been paused as of 1 July 2022, the use of medical masks continues to be strongly encouraged at U of T Scarborough in indoor settings where physical distancing is not possible. We ask everyone to respect each other’s decisions, comfort levels, and health needs. Masks are available at all building entrances at U of T Scarborough and in all classrooms.

Overview of Course Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1: Sep 5-9	Logistics & Introduction: What is Social Cognition?	Hamilton (2005) – pgs. 1-8	
Week 2: Sep 12-16	Dual Systems: Automaticity in social cognition and behavior	Hamilton pgs. 8-12 Hofmann (2009)	Assignment quiz DUE Sep. 16
Week 3 Sep 19-23	Dual Systems: Controlled processes in social cognition and behavior	Job (2010) Xie (2020)	Reading exercise DUE Sep. 23
Week 4 Sep 26-30	Values, attitudes, and behavior	Rudman (2013)	Writing exercise DUE Sep. 30
Week 5 Oct 3-7	Cognition-emotion interactions	Lerner (2004)	
Week 6 Oct 10-14	Reading Week	NO CLASS	
Week 7 Oct 17-21	Judging a person: What do we know and how do we know it?	Hamilton 12-13, 15-18 Olivola (2014)	First Analysis Draft (2 pgs.) DUE Mon. OCT. 17
Week 8 Oct 24-28	Judging ourselves: What does it mean to “know thyself?”	McConnell (2013)	
Week 9 Oct. 31- Nov. 4	Judging groups: Generalization and individualization	Hamilton 13-15 Kurzban (2001) Ranganath (2008)	
Week 10 Nov 7-11	Accuracy and bias in social judgment	Hamilton 18-21 Jussim (2015) Sandberg (2015)	Second Analysis Draft (3-4 pgs.) DUE Mon. NOV. 7
Week 11 Nov 14-18	Brain and body in social cognition	Hamilton 24-26 Varnum (2016)	
Week 12 Nov 21-25	Evolutionary and developmental influences on social cognition	Dunham (2008)	
Week 13 Nov 28- Dec 2	Looking back, looking ahead: Applications, and the future of social cognition	TBA	Final Analysis Draft (max 6 pgs.) DUE Monday Dec 5
FINAL EXAM PERIOD (DEC. 8-20)			

