SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE | PSYCH-UA 300.1.007
FALL 2015 | Monday 2:00-3:50 pm | Meyer 465

Instructor: Dr. David Amodio
E-mail: david.amodio@nyu.edu
Phone: 212.998.3875
Office: Room 437, 6 Washington Place
Office Hours: By appointment
Twitter: @david_m_amodio

Instructor: Dr. Jay J. Van Bavel
E-mail: jay.vanbavel@nyu.edu
Phone: 212.992.9627
Office: Room 452, 6 Washington Place
Office Hours: By appointment
Twitter: @jayvanbavel

Course Website: available on NYU Classes (via your NYU Home account)

Readings
You are responsible for the assigned readings each week (not the additional readings). Most of them will be available on the course website. All articles will be posted on the course web site. However, you are encouraged to buy a copy of the Harmon-Jones and Beer text ($44 on Amazon.com).


Course Description

This course provides an overview of topics in the emerging field of Social Neuroscience. We will focus on how theories and methods of neuroscience may be used to address classic questions of social psychology from new and informative angles. The goal of this course is to give you a broad background in social neuroscience research and methods so that you may (a) be a critical consumer of this literature, (b) broaden the way you think about connections between the mind, brain, and behavior in the context of the social world, and (c) most importantly, apply these ideas to inform your own ideas and future research in psychology.

Course format and grades

Class assignments are designed to develop your ability to think critically and creatively, moderate discussion, present ideas and write—fundamental skills for a career in
psychology or related fields. Your assigned work should be theory-driven, clear, and concise. **Late assignments will be deducted 5% for every day they are late.** Please contact us at least a week before the due date if you require an extension due to an anticipated conflict or delay.

**Course requirements**

1. **Readings:** All students are expected to read each of the assigned readings. Additional readings are required for the presenters, but optional (though recommended) for everyone else. Required readings should always be completed **before** the class for which they are assigned.

2. **Class participation (10%):** Classes will include discussions of the readings, and the success of the course depends on everyone’s full engagement. Participation will be graded.

3. **Class presentations (10%):** Each student will give a short (~15 min) presentation of one of the designated readings. Presentations should provide a clear and concise description of the purpose of the study, its method and results, and a critical analysis of its contributions and limitations. Powerpoint/Keynote slides may be used for the presentations. Presenters will then lead the class in further discussion of the paper, along with the instructor.

4. **Pop Quizzes (10%):** There will be 3-5 unannounced quizzes, each with one basic, straightforward question pertaining to the required readings for that day. If you have read the day’s assignments, the answer should be obvious.

5. **Exams (70%):** The course includes two non-cumulative exams. Each exam will cover the readings, lectures, and content of class discussions for the period it covers. Exams will include a set of short answer items and essay questions.

Some of the material covered on exams will be from your assigned readings, and other material will come from lectures (not in your reading). So attending lectures regularly is important in order to do well in the course. Although lecture slides for each week’s lectures will be posted on the class website, these are for review purposes only and **will not substitute for regular attendance at class sessions** in terms of preparation for exams.

Make-up exams will be scheduled only in the event of a documented emergency (e.g., serious illness, death in the family). Excused absences for University sponsored events (field trips, athletic trips) and medical / personal emergencies **must be documented.** In such cases, you must contact Professor Jay Van Bavel and the TA, by phone or email **prior** to the exam. Penalties will be imposed for late papers. Students who are unable to complete the required work on time are advised to drop the course.
Social media bonus marks (up to 2%): This is your one-and-only opportunity to bolster your grade. To be fair, every student has the opportunity to earn bonus marks. To take advantage of this opportunity, email us all of your extra credit activities in a single email by 11:59pm on the last day of class (Dec 15th). No late work will be accepted for bonus marks. If you are concerned about your mark, please complete all of these activities.

Wikipedia (1%): Compose (or substantively edit) a wiki entry directly related to the course. Email us a screen capture of the entry before and after your edits.

Twitter (1%): Compose and post one tweet about a recently published research article related to the content we have covered in class. Your tweet must communicate the core point of the paper and provide a link to the article. To get your grade you must email us a copy of your tweet.

Grading
Grades will be based on the points you earn. A curve will not be used in this course.
- Exams (35 points each): 70%
- Class presentation: 10%
- Class participation: 10%
- Pop Quizzes: 10%

Grade brackets:
- A: 93-100
- A-: 90-92
- B+: 87-89
- B: 83-86
- B-: 80-82
- C+: 77-79
- C: 73-76
- C-: 70-72
- D+: 67-69
- D: 60-66
- F: <60

If you have questions or concerns about your grades you should meet with one of the professors to discuss them. We will not debate grading concerns during or immediately after class (unless we made an obvious error).

To have your assignment or exam re-graded you need to submit a brief one-page typed description of your concerns and why you deserve a better mark. You must submit this request within one week of receiving your grade on an assignment (e.g., don’t wait until you receive your final grade in the course to ask us to re-grade your mid-term from two months ago). Please bear in mind that you must have a substantive argument for why you deserve a better grade. It is not convincing to argue that you “worked hard”. At a top
university like NYU, almost everyone is working hard. As such, hard work is necessary, but not sufficient for a top grade. Also note that we will re-grade the entire assignment and your grade on any part can go up or down.

we use this policy for two reasons: (1) This policy keeps it fair for students who don’t ask for a new grade, and (2) most students only want to select certain questions to be re-graded, but there are often other questions where a grade was generous. This policy usually means that only students who truly deserve a better grade will usually ask to be re-graded. This policy only applies if you want us to re-grade your assignment or exam. We will be happy to meet with you to discuss your exam and why you received any grade.

**Topic and Assignment Schedule**

**Calendar At a Glance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 7</td>
<td>No class (Labor Day)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 14</td>
<td>Welcome and Overview (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>Perceiving People + fMRI methods (J)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 28</td>
<td>Thinking about the Self and Others (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Attitudes &amp; Evaluation + EMG methods (J)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 13*</td>
<td>Emotion + EEG Methods (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 19</td>
<td>Social Attachment &amp; Exclusion (J)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 26</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nov 2</td>
<td>Goals &amp; Self-Regulation (D)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov 9</td>
<td>Group Processes (J) + Hormone Methods</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 16</td>
<td>Prejudice &amp; Stereotyping (D)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 23</td>
<td>Morality &amp; Politics (J)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 30</td>
<td>Neuroeconomics (J) + TMS and tDCS Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Controversies &amp; Future Directions (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 14</td>
<td><strong>Exam 2</strong></td>
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**Course readings**

**September 14: History and Overview of Topics and Methods in Social Neuroscience**

Chapter 1 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: Overview of Social Neuroscience Methods

Additional reading:


September 21: Perceiving People + fMRI methods

Chapter 14 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: fMRI Methods


For presentations:


September 28: Thinking about the Self and Others


For presentations:


**October 5: Attitudes & Evaluation + EMG methods**

Chapter 5 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: EMG Methods


For presentations:


**October 13: Emotion + EEG Methods**

Chapter 9 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: EEG Methods


For presentations:


**October 19: Social Attachment & Exclusion + Sex Hormone Methods**


For presentations:


**October 26: Midterm Exam**

**November 2: Goals & Self-Regulation**


For presentations:


**November 9: Group Processes + Hormone Methods**

Chapter 4 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: Sex Hormone Methods


*For presentations:*


**November 16: Prejudice & Stereotyping**


*For presentations:*


**November 23: Morality and politics**


*For presentations:*


**November 30: Neuroeconomics + TMS Methods**

Chapter 11 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: TMS Methods


*For presentations:*


**December 7: Controversies and Future Directions**


**Course website**

Log in and you should see this course. If you don’t, please let us know. Readings, grades, assignments and handouts will be posted online. There is also a discussion board for questions. If you have a question you can email us, or post it online. If several people email a similar question we will post it on the website. Please treat the website as a collective resource to ask questions of common interest and share ideas with one another. If you have a dispute or concern with another member of the class, please email us directly and do not try to deal with it on the course website.

**Academic Conduct**

All work must be your own. NYU uses *Turnitin*, which can automatically detect plagiarism. If you cheat, you will be caught. Cheating or plagiarism will be reported through official university channels, and the consequences will be severe. If you are unwise enough to plagiarize, the minimum punishment is usually failure in the course. If the case of plagiarism or cheating is especially blatant, you may be expelled from the university. The assignments are designed for what you can do based on what we are covering in this class and the skills you have already learned.