SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE | PSYCH-GA.3381.001
FALL 2014 | Monday 2-4pm | Meyer 771

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**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Twitter:** @david_m_amodio

**Instructor:** Dr. Jay J. Van Bavel  
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**Phone:** 212.992.9627  
**Office:** Room 752, 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 journal articles will be posted on the course website. However, you should buy a copy of the Harmon-Jones and Beer text ($44 on Amazon.com).

**Additional Reading:**  

**Course Description**

This course provides an overview of topics in the field of Social Neuroscience. The goal of this course is to give you a broad background in social neuroscience 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 program of research. Each week will include an in-depth discussion of a different topic within the field, in addition to readings on key methods and current controversies.

**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 your research career. 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.

**Participation (10%)**: Each student is expected to read the assigned articles each week and participate in discussion of those readings during the class meeting. Students are graded on their ability to understand and integrate the material. We are especially interested in your ability to add to the dialogue, such as by building on a discussion, thinking critically about the materials, or challenging an expressed view. In addition to critical perspectives on the
course material, we are looking for evidence that you understand the historical and contemporary value of the discussed work in the broader literature. You will also be graded on your contribution to your classmates (e.g., during their presentations).

**Hot Topic! presentation and blog post (10%).** Each week, one student will present a recent empirical article on the week’s topic (verbally, without slides). It should be a very recent paper, published within the past year (ideally within the past few months). This is an opportunity to share some of the very latest advances in the field on that topic. You will also write a one-page description of the (<300 words—please provide word count), turned in by midnight prior to the day of class. You will then have the opportunity to post a copy of your description as a blog post on the NYU Social Neuroscience web site (posting papers is not required and students invited to post their paper will have the option decline this opportunity or post their paper anonymously).

**Leading discussion (10%):** Each student will serve as a discussion leader for one class meeting (there will occasionally be two leaders on a given week). Discussion leaders will be responsible for facilitating discussion of the assigned readings. Discussion leaders will prepare and distribute a list of 3-4 discussion questions to the class at least 24 hours before the class meeting. The questions can focus on articles or themes that connect the articles. Also, for each article, the discussion leader will list two positive features and two negative features, to be shared during the class discussion and designed to generate further discussion of a paper’s contributions. Discussion topic assignments will be determined during the first class. Note: Discussion leaders cannot also be the Hot Topic! discussant on a particular day.

**Hypothesis generation (20%):** Each student will complete McGuire’s creative hypothesis generation steps and develop three potential research hypotheses, which will be used as potential ideas for the final assignment. Each hypothesis must address a social neuroscience question. For example, it could address a social psychological issue with neuroscientific theory and/or methods. Or, it could address a question about neural function that relies on a social psychological theory and/or methods. This is your chance to get creative!

Each idea should be described succinctly (<300 words—please provide word count). As a first step, you will submit your ideas for blind peer review from two evaluators in the course on Oct 27. Based on peer feedback, you will submit your final list of hypotheses to the instructors on Nov 10. We will provide feedback and choose one idea for you to develop further for the research proposal assignment. All ideas for presentation/term paper must be approved. If your topic is not approved, 20% will be deducted from your proposal and presentation grade.


**Research Proposal (30%):** Your research proposal represents a fleshed-out version of hypothesis idea approved by the instructors. This proposal will include a presentation of
the hypothesis, which includes background to frame the hypothesis and clear theoretical statements of your hypothesis. It will also include a new section on your methodological approach. This should include an overview section describing why you felt that your chosen approach is optimal, along with a brief description of the procedure and measures to be used. Written proposals must be between 750 and 1000 words (plus an additional reference pages). Please submit your proposal via the class website on **Dec. 19th**.

**Presentation (20%)**: Each student will briefly present her or his research proposal (10-15 minutes) during the last class meeting (**Dec. 8th**). These presentations should be clear and concise, with a focus on your theoretical hypothesis and proposed methodological approach. Standard presentation format involves Keynote/PowerPoint, but you are free to use any format necessary to communicate your proposal. You will be graded on your ability to clearly and elegantly communicate the main points of the theory or research proposal.

**Social media bonus points (up to 2%)**: This is your one-and-only opportunity to bolster your grade. We will not let you complete an “extra assignment” or let you turn in a “revision” of your term paper if you did a bad job. If you are worried about your grade, please complete any or 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 published article related to the content we have covered in class. Your tweet must communicate the core point of the paper, provide a link to the paper, and include reference to @social_neuro. If your twitter identity is not the same as your name, you should also email a copy of your tweet to ensure you receive credit (**Due Dec. 21st**).

**GRADING SCHEME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>10 points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading Discussion</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Topic! paper response</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Generation</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<td>Proposal paper</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;59</td>
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If you have questions or concerns about your grades you should meet with either instructor after class to discuss them.
### Topic and Assignment Schedule

#### Calendar At a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>Course overview, history, and methods of Social Neuroscience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>Perceiving People</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>Thinking about the Self and Others; fMRI methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>Attitudes and decision making; EMG and ANS methods</td>
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<td>Oct. 6</td>
<td>Emotion; EEG methods</td>
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<td>Oct. 13</td>
<td>No class – Fall Recess</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
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<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>Goals and motivation</td>
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<td>Nov. 3</td>
<td>Social attachment and exclusion</td>
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<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>Group dynamics and intergroup relations</td>
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<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>Prejudice and Stereotyping</td>
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<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td>Morality and ideology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>Social Neuroendocrinology and Immunology; Hormone methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 8</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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</tbody>
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### September 8: Course overview, history, and methods of Social Neuroscience


**See brain images on posted Blackboard for some neuroanatomy references**

For more on the use of fMRI in social neuroscience, read pp. 8-16 of:
Additional reading:


**September 15: Perceiving People**


Additional reading:

September 22: Thinking about the Self and Others (fMRI methods)

Chapter 14 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: fMRI Methods


Additional Reading:


September 29: Attitudes and decision making; EMG and ANS methods

Chapter 5 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: EMG Methods


Additional reading:


October 6: Emotion


Additional Reading


**October 13: NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)**

**October 20: Self-regulation and cognitive control; EEG methods**

Chapter 10 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: EEG Methods


Additional Reading:


**October 27: Goals and motivation**

Chapters 7 & 9 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: ANS and EEG Methods


Additional Reading:


**November 3: Social attachment and exclusion**


Additional reading:


**November 10: Group processes and intergroup relations**


Additional reading:


**November 17: Prejudice and Stereotyping**

Chapter 6 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: Startle Eyeblink Methods


Additional reading:


**November 24: Cooperation, morality, and politics**

Chapter 11 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: TMS Methods


Additional reading:


**December 1: Social Neuroendocrinology and Immunology; Hormone methods**

Chapter 3 in Harmon-Jones & Beer: Hormone Methods


Additional reading:

Harmon-Jones & Beer, Chapters 4 and 13


**December 8: Research Presentations**

**December 19: Final papers are due by midnight**

**Course website**

Log in and you should see this course. If you don't, please let me 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 me, or post it online. If several people email me a similar question I 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 me 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 papers and assignments are designed for what you can do based on what we are covering in this class and the skills you have already learned.