**Prosocial Behavior**

**Spring 2013**

**Contact Information:**

**Professor:** Dr. Michelle Beechler

**Office Location:** 302 C Valade Hall

**Office Hours:** M/W 2:15-2:45, T/TH 11:15-11:45 a.m., or by appointment

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**E-mail Address:** mbeechler@adrian.edu

**Course Information:**

**Course and Section:** PSYC 300a-1

**Location:** 327 Valade Hall

**Meetings:** T 1:00 – 2:40

**Prerequisite:** PSYC 100 – General Psychology

**Course Website:** psychologyofprosocialbehavior.weebly.com

**Required Readings:** Readings will be original journal articles and chapters, which will be made available to students through Blackboard, emailed, or handed out during class. See reading list for more information.

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**Course Description, Rationale and Vision:**

Catalogue Description: An examination of the research and theory surrounding the psychology of helping behaviors.  This course will integrate several approaches within the greater discipline of psychology, including evolutionary psychology, social psychology, personality, and developmental psychology

This psychology course presents theory and research regarding why and when people help. Students are expected to enter this class with an understanding of basic psychological concepts, which they should have developed in General Psychology (PSYC 100). This course will prepare both psychology majors and non-majors for upper level education or a variety of careers in which knowledge of prosocial behavior, and how it affects behaviors and interactions with others, may be useful. Students will get an integrative experience with his course, as they learn about different psychological approaches to understanding helping behavior.

In this class, students will work in small and large groups toward shared goals of academic discussion and debate. Students will integrate from many areas of psychology, as well as one another, in understanding different perspectives of altruism and helping. Students will read primary sources, such as journal articles rather than a textbook, and will discuss these articles in class with their peers and the professor. Students will contribute to a course website associated with the class. Additionally, students will compare, contrast, and integrate two areas of psychology (for example, social and cognitive perspectives) in understanding helping, and formally present this integration to the class. In this way, students will practice thinking like an integrative experimental psychologist. Through discussion of issues, working with others, and by completing readings and required coursework, students will have many opportunities to both develop and demonstrate creativity and individuality in their handling of their application of what they have learned in the class.

**Ribbons of Excellence:**

Caring for Humanity and the World: Students will gain understanding about when and why people help, and what factors contribute to people caring for others, and the world.

Learning Throughout a Lifetime: Students will tackle important human questions, such as whether people are inherently selfish or altruistic, how helping behaviors can be fostered, etc… which they can use throughout their lives.

Thinking Critically: Students will practice “thinking like a psychologist” throughout this class, and will therefore practice thinking methodically, and apply what they have learned to real life situations. Multiple theoretical views pertaining to prosocial behavior will be examined, contrasted, and integrated.

Crossing Boundaries and Disciplines: Students will be exposed to different psychological approaches to understanding helping (cognitive, social, personality, etc.). Students will practice integrating these different psychological theories, but the same principles can be applied on a larger interdisciplinary scale as well. Students will also be working closely with others in class in discussion and completion of integrative presentations, allowing them the opportunity to learn about other students’ perspectives.

Developing Creativity: Students will have many opportunities to both develop and demonstrate creativity and individuality in their handling of their application of what they have learned in the class. Additionally, students create an integrative presentation, in which they formally present two approaches to understanding helping behavior and then bring them together to yield a greater understanding of a specific problem or issue related to prosocial behavior, allowing them to express creativity through the aesthetics and delivery of their presentation, their handling of a complex problem, their creative writing ability, etc.

**Goals:** My primary goal in this class is to teach you how to think like an integrative experimental psychologist. Important theories and research relevant to prosocial behavior will be covered because these are fundamental to what many psychologists believe and what they do. But rather than rote memorization, it is my goal for you to walk away with a deeper understanding of why and when people help. This will include understanding of theory, understanding of how this translates to research, and then how these theories and research can be integrated with one another to understand the problems surrounding helping more deeply.

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of this class, students should have a working knowledge of relevant approaches when applied to prosocial behavior including:

* Social/Cognitive
* Personality
* Evolutionary/Biological
* Developmental

Additionally, students will understand that by integrating multiple approaches, experimental psychologists can better understand the problems and issues surrounding helping, altruism, and prosocial behavior.

**Online Information**: Lecture notes, discussion points, readings, student presentations, etc…will be posted on the course website: psychologyofprosocialbehavior.weebly.com. Readings will be made available via Blackboard. You are responsible for all information and announcements sent over email, made available via the website and Blackboard or made during class.

**Course Components, Criteria and Evaluation:**

Article Summaries (35%): It is required that you read and understand the assigned articles, and complete article summaries for each article. Summaries are required for the day that the article is to be discussed. Summary sheets will be made available on the course website. Summaries must be computer generated in APA format (12 point Times New Roman or similar font, 1’ margins, double spaced with no extra spaces between paragraphs). Please note that while you may work with others with these summaries, your answers MUST be your own! Copying answers will be considered academic dishonesty. Bring two copies to class: one for me, and one for discussion. You must also turn in a copy via Safe Assign in Blackboard.

Scores will be earned based on the following criteria:

* ~20 = Summary is excellent in both content and in writing, grammar, spelling, format, etc…
* ~18 = Summary quality demonstrates understanding of most or all findings/studies/concepts
* ~14-16= Summary quality demonstrates some understanding of article findings/studies/concepts
* ~8-12 = Summary quality is does not display student understanding
* ~2-6 = Summary is incomplete, or illegible, etc…
* ~0 = Summary is not completed/not turned in/plagiarized

For a high score (18-20), summaries must:

* Report all of the main points, studies, or findings of the article
* Support the main points with results or examples
* Be accurate, with no factual errors or misinterpretation
* Not have misspellings or grammatical errors

I will drop the lowest three article summaries.

Late summaries will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Missions: Student will participate in several “Mission Assignments” throughout the semester, in which they will perform some prosocial behavior, and record the results. Students will be expected to write a small report of their assignment and be prepared to talk about their missions during the next class. Bring two copies to class: one for me, and one for discussion. You must also turn in a copy via Safe Assign in Blackboard. Scores will be assigned in a similar format to Article Summaries.

Blog! ***Excellent******work (on*** missions, ***and possibly on Article Summaries) will be posted on the class blog! If your work is chosen, you may include pictures, videos, etc…***

Presentations: Students will work in pairs integrating the approaches of two or more areas to better understand some question surrounding prosocial behavior that is best understood using multiple perspectives. These will be formal presentations made to the class, and will comprise a large portion of the course grade. Student presentations will be posted on the course website. Both students presenting must be present the day the presentation is given. Make-up presentations will only be given with a documented, legitimate, and approved reason for missing class, and only after notifying me at least 24 hours prior to the missed class. The presentation must be completed within one week following the scheduled date. If you do not contact me by that time, you will not be permitted to complete the presentation, and you will receive a grade of 0 for that portion of your grade, which will be averaged into your final grade.If you know you will be absent the day of your presentation, for any reason, please contact me as soon as possible to reschedule. More information, grading criteria, and recommendations will be made at an appropriate point in the course.

Active Participation*:*  Much of the course is focused on academic discussion of assigned articles, relevant issues, and group work with peers. Participation will be assessed in the following way:

* ~100% – Student regularly attends class, is engaged during lectures and discussions, and is an active participator and problem solver. The student arrives prepared and ready to work.
* ~85% – Student regularly attends class, contributes during lectures add discussions, and participates with groups – but is not as prepared as he/she should be, and does not contribute as much as he/she should.
* ~70% – Student misses some classes, does not seem to be involved in lectures, discussions or group work. Student does not appear prepared. During group work and discussion, this member does not contribute useful ideas. Somewhat depends on others to do the work.
* ~60% – Student may miss class often, does not involve him/herself in lectures, discussions or group work. Student is not prepared, uses his/her phone during class, talks with other students during lectures or discussions, passes notes during class, etc… Student remains uninvolved in group work.
* ~50% or less – Student misses class often, or is completely uninvolved and disengaged in all activities. Completely depends on other students to do the work.

Excellent participation (90-100%) contains these components:

* Provides useful ideas when participating in group and classroom discussion.
* Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems.
* Never is publicly critical of the work of others. Has a positive attitude.
* Consistently stays focused and is self-directed.
* Brings needed materials to class and is prepared to work.
* Listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others.

NOTE: If students are not prepared for class, a pop quiz will be given on the assigned articles, and scores on the quizzes will be used in computation of final grades.

**Evaluation and Final Grades:**

In short, grades will be based on these four elements, which break down as follows:

**Element % of Final Grade Your Scores**

Article Summaries 35% \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Presentations 35% \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Participation 20% \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Missions 10% \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

100%

**There is no extra credit available in this course!**

**Grading Scale:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (yay!) | B+ 87-89.9% | C+ 77-79.9% | D+ 67-69.9% |  |
| A 94-100% | B 84-86.9% | C 74-76.9% | D 64-66.9% | F Below 60% |
| A- 90-93.9% | B- 80-83.9% | C- 70-73.9% | D- 60-63.9% | (oops) |

**The last day to withdraw is March 22, 2013.**

**Classroom Policies and Expectations:**

Attendance: It is both expected and required that you attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period. Late arrivals and early departures will be noted, and 2 of either will count as one absence. You are allowed 2 absences (which include arriving late or leaving early) each semester, and then your grade will be reduced by 2% for each subsequent absence. Student athletes *must* provide written verification of absences from coaches, and it is the student’s responsibility to notify coaches of this requirement. Note that attendance also comes into play with turning in article summaries and missions, participation and discussion, and presentations which cannot be made up.

Personal Responsibility:You are expected to take responsibility for your own learning and behavior. Summary sheets and any lecture notes will be posted prior to class, but it is necessary for you to attend class to complement the readings, presentations, and assignments. It is advised that you exchange contact information with classmates in order to receive missed notes or information. You are responsible for any material or announcements made in class, or posted on the course website, Blackboard, or over e-mail. You are expected to check your Adrian e-mail account, course website and Blackboard at least once per day. You are expected and required to be prepared for class, to be responsible to record and monitor your own scores and grades, and to take initiative if your scores are not where they should be. Finally, it is expected that if you would like some assistance during the semester that you will come and talk to me at any time – part of the responsibility of learning is to know when to ask for help!

Mutual Respect: It is very distracting to me for you to use your cell phone during class, and so they are not permitted. Please do not make or receive calls, text message, etc… while you are in class – even during group work or discussion. Using your cell phone in class will result in you being marked absent for that day without warning. Please note that after two absences, your grade will be reduced by 2% per absence.

It is also distracting to me and to your fellow-classmates for you to come in to class late or leave early, or to come and go during class. Please use the restroom and/or get a drink before class begins, and do not leave during class. If there are special circumstances, please let me know before class begins, and I will accommodate you. Note that late arrivals, early departures, and coming and going during class will be recorded, and 2 of either will count as one absence.

Use of personal computers (or similar technology) is not permitted in class outside of some group activities, unless you have made arrangements with me ahead of time. I prefer you to be involved in lectures and discussion, and it also distracting to students sitting nearby.

Talking and passing notes with other students while I am lecturing or while the class is holding discussion is disruptive and you may be asked to leave class for the day, and will not be able to make up missed work. If you have something relevant to contribute, please raise your hand. If you do not, please save it for after class. I will not yell over students during class because they are talking. Socializing inappropriately during class will result in you being marked absent for that day.

Treat your classmates with respect as well: do not be rude, insulting, disruptive, deceiving, etc… Additionally, do not be disruptive in class while a fellow classmate is speaking or contributing to discussion. Likewise, I will treat you with respect by teaching to the best of my ability, encouraging the expression of ideas, and creating a warm and intellectually stimulating environment.

**Student Support Services:**

Academic Services:

*Free Tutoring:* Individual and group tutoring sessions are available all semester for all classes. If you feel you would benefit from tutoring, you may contact Patricia Gray at 517-265-5161 ext. 4090.

*Disabilities Services:* Students with recent professional disability documentation should contact the Disabilities Services Specialist in 205 Jones Center. These services are available in order to grant equal access, reasonable and appropriate services, and improve campus support to those with disabilities. Please contact Danielle Ward at dward@adrian.edu or 517-261-5161, ext. 4094.

*Learning and Study Skills Consultation:* These free services are available to students who wish to strengthen their academic skills, such as time management, textbook reading, etc. Interested students should contact the Support Services Specialist at 517-265-5161, ext. 4095.

Counseling Services*:* Because of the nature of psychology courses, some material may be upsetting for some students over the course of the semester. Students who would like to talk to someone should contact Counseling Services, which is located in the Caine Student Center, Room 210.

**Academic Integrity:**

It is required and expected that all students will demonstrate academic integrity in all activities in this class, with no exceptions. Plagiarism and cheating (presenting others’ ideas as your own, copying exam answers or homework, etc.) will not be tolerated. To avoid the appearance of plagiarism in your written work, reference the sources of your ideas so the difference between others’ ideas and yours will be clear. Reasons for plagiarism and cheating such as “I didn’t know” and “I didn’t understand” will not be accepted.

Consequences for violations of academic integrity will include, at minimum, a zero for the assignment or presentation in question, and reporting to the college for further sanctioning. Gross violations of academic integrity will result in immediate failure of the course in addition to notification to the college for further sanctioning.

It is strongly encouraged that individuals who learn of other students cheating or plagiarizing notify me as soon as possible. It is unfair to others in the class – and to the cheating student – to allow such behavior to carry on.

For the complete Academic Integrity Policy for Adrian College, please refer to the Student Handbook for 2012-2013, pages 53-54. Sanctions can be found on pages 49-50 of the Handbook. You are responsible for reading and understanding this information. If you ever have any questions regarding the policy, or whether a particular action is considered academically dishonest, please ask!

**Tips for Success!**

1. Stay current with readings and assignments. Expect to spend a fair amount of time reading and understanding the original articles.
2. Ask questions! If you knew everything already, you wouldn’t be in college.
3. Understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.
4. Organize your syllabus, notes, readings, and assignments in a three-ring binder. Refer to the syllabus often.
5. It is my job to teach you, not give you the answers. Be prepared to search for them!
6. If your goal is to learn and have fun, and not just ‘get through the class’, learning will be easier and more interesting.
7. When you say, “I don’t have time!” try to replace it with “It’s not a priority.” If it is very important to you, you will make time. This mindset is useful well beyond this class!

**Reading List**

Archer, R.L., Diaz-Loving, R., Gollwitzer, P.M., Davis, M.H., & Foushee, H.C. (1981). The role of dispositional empathy and social evaluation in the empathic mediation of helping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40,* 786-796.

Barnes, R.D., Ickes, W., & Kidd, R.F. (1979). Effects of the perceived intentionality and stability of another’s dependency on helping behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 5,* 367-372.

Batson, C.D., Dyck, J.L., Brandt, J.R., Batson, J.G., Powell, A.L., McMaster, M.R., & Griffit, C. (1988). Five studies testing two new egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55,* 52-77.

Cialdini, R.B., Schaller, M., Houlihan, D., Arps, K., Fultz, J., & Beaman, A.L. (1987). Empathy-based helping: Is it selflessly or selfishly motivated? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*, 749-758.

Dekovic, M. & Janssens, J.M.A.M. (1992). Parents’ child-rearing style and child’s sociometric status. *Developmental Psychology, 28,* 925-932.

deWaal, F.B.M. (2008). Putting the altruism back into altruism: The evolution of empathy. *The Annual Review of Psychology, 59,* 279-300.

DeWall, C.N., Baumeister, R.F., Gailliot, M.T., & Maner, J.K. (2008). Depletion makes the heart grow less helpful: Helping as a function of self-regulatory energy and genetic relatedness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34,* 1653-1662.

Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R.A., Schaller, M., Carlo, G., & Miller, P.A. (1991). The relations of parental characteristics and practices to children’s vicarious emotional responding. *Child Development, 62,* 1393-1408.

Eisenberg, N., Lennon, R., & Roth, K. (1983). Prosocial development: A longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology, 19,* 846-855.

Knight, G.P., Johnson, L.G., Carlo, G., & Eisenberg, N. (1994). A multiplicative model of the dispositional antecedents of prosocial behavior: Predicting more of the people more of the time. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66,* 178-183.

Maner, J.K. & Gailliot, M.T. (2007). Altruism and egoism: Prosocial motivations for helping depend on relationship context. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 37,* 347-358.

Penner, L.A., Dovidio, J.H., Piliavin, J.A., & Schroeder, D.A. (2005). Prosocial Behavior: Multilevel Perspectives. *The Annual Review of Psychology, 56,* 365-392.

Penner, L.A., Fritzsche, B.A., Craiger, J.P., Freifeld, T.R. (1995). Measuring the prosocial personality. In J.N. Butcher & C.D. Spielberger, C.D. (Eds.), *Advances in Personality Assessment* (Vol. 10, pp. 147-163). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Piliavin, I.M., Piliavin, J.A., & Rodin, J. (1975). Costs, diffusion, and the stigmatized victim. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 32,* 429-438.

Poulin, M. (2012). Our genes want us to be altruists. *Association for Psychological Science Observer, 25*. Retrieved from: http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2012/december-12/our-genes-want-us-to-be-altruists.html

Rushton, J.P., Chrisjohn, R.D., & Fekken, G.C. (1981). The altruistic personality and the self-report altruism scale. *Personality and Individual Differences, 2,* 293-302.

**Tentative Course Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings** | **Due** |
| 1 | 1/15 | Course Introduction and Overview  Introduction to the Issues |  |  |
| 2 | 1/22 | Social/Cognitive Perspectives | Piliavin et al. (1975) | Mission 1 |
| 3 | 1/29 | Social/Cognitive Perspectives | Cialdini et al. (1987)  Batson et al. (1988) |  |
| 4 | 2/5 | Social/Cognitive Perspectives | Maner & Gailliot (2007) | Mission 2 |
| 5 | 2/12 | Social/Cognitive Perspectives | Barnes et al. (1979)  DeWall, C.N. et al. (2008) | Mission 3 |
| 6 | 2/19 | Personality Perspectives | Archer et al. (1981)  Rushton et al. (1981) |  |
| 7 | 2/26 | Personality Perspectives | Penner et al. (1995) | Mission 4 |
| 8 | **3/5** | **NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK!** |  |  |
| 9 | 3/12 | Evolutionary Perspectives | deWall, F.B.M. (2008)  Poulin (2012) | Mission 5 |
| 10 | 3/19 | Developmental Perspectives | Eisenberg et al. (1983) |  |
| 11 | 3/26 | Developmental Perspectives | Eisenberg et al. (1991)  Dekovic & Janssens (1992) | Mission 6 |
| 12 | 4/2 | Integration | Penner et al. (2005) |  |
| 13 | 4/9 | Integration | Knight et al. (1994) |  |
| 14 | 4/16 | Presentations |  | **Presentations** |
| 15 | 4/23 | Presentations |  | **Presentations** |
| EXAMS |  | TBA |  |  |

**NOTE:**

Article summaries are due for the date the readings are assigned. For example, the article summary for Piliavin et al. (1975) is due on 1/22 at the beginning of class. That article will be discussed in class that day.

This reading list and schedule are tentative and may change at any time. You are responsible for any changes which are made. If you have any questions, please contact me and I would be happy to help.