

PSYC 241S
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Contact: I am terrible at responding to phone messages but very reliable about responding to email so I strongly recommend email as the preferred method of contact! Also, Distance Studies would like as much as possible for all assignments to be handled by email so we might as well start out thinking of email as the primary and preferred method of communication for the course.

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Overview.

The objective of PSYC 241 is to introduce students to the study of social psychology. PSYC 241 offers a broad and balanced look at historical and current advances in the field. The aims are to offer students a course that:

- 1) provides students with an appropriate link between Introductory Psychology and upper year social psychology courses;
- 2) provides a comprehensive overview of the topics investigated in social psychology;
- 3) provides an understanding of theoretical and applied social psychological research.

Excellent summaries of each topic are provided at the end of each chapter of the text.

Texts:

Brehm, S. S., Kassin, S. M., & Fein, S. (2002). *Social psychology* (5th Edition). New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. (**required**)

Fein, S., & Spencer, S. (Eds.) (1996). *Readings in social psychology: The art and science of research*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. (**NOT** required)

Fein, S., & Spencer, S. (2002). *Study Guide: Social Psychology*(5th Edition). New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. (**recommended**)

As far as I know, the Study Guide comes with the text if you buy it new and may be unavailable otherwise so ask for it also if you are buying a used copy. If it is not available, you may wish to look for another source. Also, I recommend the Study Guide particularly for final exam preparation. There will not be a copy on reserve and the bookstore is unlikely to ever have any separate from the text so do not wait until the end of the course before you secure a copy!

Don't even ask if previous editions will do. If you do not use the required text you are on your own. No allowances of any kind will be made for this, no exceptions!

***Evaluation:* I consider the following points to be similar to a contract. I will follow the 'rules' described here and I will require you to do so as well. Please read this section carefully.**

1. **Students are responsible for all text material AND all material in this package (the “lecture notes”).** That is, even if a topic in the text is not mentioned in the notes, you are responsible for the information because it is in the text. Similarly, if a topic is discussed in the notes but not in the text you are responsible for knowing it (but only for the assignments)
2. **There are 3 assignments worth 15% each and a 55% final examination** (see assignments for specific due dates and *please check immediately as the first assignment can creep up on you*).

READ ITEMS 3 to 10 VERY CAREFULLY!

3. **If the correct assignment is not received by the due date, the assignment is considered to have been 'missed'.** No exceptions will be made for any reason (but see the next 3 points). Please include a request for a reply indicating that any email you send has been received and **save the replies.** This will provide you with concrete evidence that your assignments were submitted on time.
4. **Marks for up to 2 missed assignments are added to the final examination.** Excuses (e.g., doctors notes) are not required. If you miss 1 or 2 assignments, the weight of the missed assignments will automatically be prorated to the final. Marks on the final may not be as high as the term marks, so try to complete as many of the assignments as possible.
5. **If you miss (fail to submit on time), all 3 assignments, your mark for one assignment will be zero and the marks for the other 2 will be added to the final!** Again, no exceptions! If you have a medical (personal, whatever) reason for missing all of the assignments, you should seek permission for a late drop of the course (consult the Undergraduate Chair of Psychology or the Associate Dean of Studies). If you frivolously fail to submit assignments early on and then encounter a legitimate medical or other problem, you will suffer for your earlier decision. Obviously, the best approach is to write at least one assignment as soon as possible.
6. **You will not be allowed to drop a mark because you did poorly on the assignment.** If you write and submit an assignment on time, it counts, no exceptions!
7. **A 55%, multiple-choice final examination will be given based solely on the Brehm, Kassin, & Fein textbook (2005, 6th edition).** Yes, that means the final is based only on the text. Questions are drawn from all chapters with approximately equal distribution (probably a bit low from the first chapter but not enough to alter the fact that you can be tested on anything in the text on the final). Of course, the final may be worth 70% or 85% if one or more assignments were not submitted on time.
8. **It is a policy of the Department of Psychology that a student can not pass a correspondence course without passing the final examination in the course! No Exceptions!**

9. The study guide provides excellent materials for preparing for the final exam! The multiple-choice questions used on the final are not created by the instructor. The questions are taken from a test bank, a prepared collection of multiple-choice questions provided to instructors with the text. Although no prior final exams are available for study, the people who wrote the test bank are the same people who wrote the study guide. No, the questions on the final will NOT be taken from the study guide - they will be taken from a source created by the same people who wrote the study guide.

10. The date, time, and location of the final exam will be determined by the exams office.

What's with all of these "no exceptions" comments? Over about 30 years of giving courses I have learned quite a bit about the kinds of issues that come up. There are all sorts of problems that arise for students and lead them to ask for leniency in some form or another. In general, faculty tend to be reasonable in these situations.

So in the past, when a student would say "I was ill and could not get the assignment in on time", I might have said it was acceptable to take an extra week. But then I would learn through the grapevine that this was abused as students would take advantage of the fact that another student had received feedback on the assignment and the "ill" student took this as an opportunity to cheat. Since there is no way to know who may or may not do this, only assignments received on time count and no feedback is given prior to the due date (in fact, I do not provide the marking key to the TAs until the due date).

Then a student who has missed the first assignment has a problem for the second assignment, and then the third. This tests the instructor's limits. I discovered that my absolute limit was that I would not permit a student to fail to complete less than 1/3 of the term work – it just seemed too much. Since consistency is an important part of fairness, once I had come to this decision it seemed sensible to let everyone know what the limits would be from the beginning. And then the department passed a policy stating that students could not pass without passing the final exam in correspondence courses so no choice existed on that issue.

I came up with the policy of automatically prorating missed test and assignment marks to the final. This generally is beneficial to students. If life has been difficult, just don't do that assignment. It is better than feeling undue pressure and doing a hasty, and thus possibly poor job. It is better than trying to catch up when you are already behind. You must read the entire text for the final anyway so you will just deal with the missed material at that time.

So the "no exceptions" policies are not a sign of rigidity but rather a limit to flexibility (or at least that's my story and I'm sticking to it).

All chapters will be covered in order:

Assignment 1 covers material from chapters 1 through 5.

Assignment 2 covers material from chapters 6 through 10.

Assignment 3 covers material from chapters 11 through 14.

NOTE:

1. The text and these notes contain all information covered on the assignments and the final examination.
2. The text is an excellent one with good organization and coverage of topics. But it is an American text. To make up for this, I have added sections on **Canadian content** at various points. These are descriptions of research done in Canadian universities (and at Queen's in particular) on the topics covered in the chapters.

Content of the Notes: In many places, I have added little. Indeed for some chapters I added nothing because the areas are ones I have not done research in and the text seemed to provide good coverage. Thus, where little is added to the text, little may appear in these notes. On other topics I have added a great deal. The added material is there for interest and edification and may be relevant to completing some assignments. The added material is NOT tested on the FINAL exam.

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS: If you are having technical problems such as accessing webCT, downloading files, contacting your marker via email, etc. **DO NOT CONTACT ME!** Contact Continuing and Distance Studies.

ACADEMIC PROBLEMS: If you have problems understanding portions of the course material or simply wish to know more about some content issue, that is what we (markers and I) are here for!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic integrity is a serious issue and one that the university requires that instructors address. Correspondence courses have particular problems in this domain. First, the university's regulations and thoughts on this issue can be addressed via the web as indicated below:

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility

1. Regulation 12 <http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/artsci/pg532.html>
2. New forms (the new forms are not available yet on the web)
3. Revised Guidelines <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/integrity/guidelines.html>

Next I will present a brief discussion of the most common problem for correspondence students, plagiarism.

Plagiarism is the act of taking the ideas or writing of another and passing them off as your own. Consider the following paragraph:

Malpass and Devine (1981) exposed students to a staged crime and had them attempt identifications from either a criminal-present or criminal-absent lineup. In this study, all of the foils were reasonably similar in appearance to the suspects. Prior to being shown the lineup, some witnesses were led to believe that the criminal was in the lineup (biased instructions) while others were told that he may not appear in the lineup (fair instructions). Fair (83%) versus biased (75%) lineup instructions did not significantly influence the rate of identification of the guilty party. However, fair instructions (33%) led to a significantly lower rate of identification of the innocent suspect than did biased instructions (78%). Again, the biased lineup

procedure failed to discriminate between guilty (75%) and innocent (78%) suspects. Biased lineup instructions destroyed the probative value of the lineup, presumably by encouraging witnesses to use relative judgments in this case. Fair instructions resulted in significantly fewer false identifications. Once again, the pattern of the results is that biased versus fair lineup procedures produce equal rates of correct identification but a biased lineup produces inflated rates of false identification. Again, nothing is gained by using a biased procedure.

This paragraph appears later in the course notes (Chapter 12, Law). Assume that you were asked to describe an experiment that tested the influence of a lineup bias. If your answer were identical to the above paragraph, was not set off by quotation marks at the beginning and end of the passage, and failed to provide the page number and reference information about the source from which it came, this would be a very clear case of plagiarism. The results would be unpleasant. The following information is copied directly from the web documents on “departures from academic integrity” and lists possible consequences:

rewriting or revising the assignment, the completion of other work, a low mark as is judged necessary, a failing grade (down to a grade of zero) in the course. **If the penalty amounts to a failure in the course, the student may NOT drop the course regardless of the drop deadlines.** Or, if the instructor believes that a more serious penalty is warranted, the case shall be referred to the Associate Dean (Studies)—see item 6 below, **Referral of Departures from Academic Integrity.**

Let’s try another example. Below, I repeat the beginning of the paragraph but alter a few words and leave out some parts. Parts that are in *smaller text* have been dropped from the original while those in *larger text* have been added and both are in *italics* while the mid sized text is identical to the original:

Malpass and Devine (1981) **Researchers** exposed students to a staged crime and had them attempt identifications from *either a criminal-present or criminal-absent lineup*. *In this study, all of the foils were reasonably similar in appearance to the suspects. Prior to being shown the lineup, Some witnesses were led to believe that the criminal was in the lineup (biased instructions) while others were told that he may not appear in the lineup (fair instructions).* Fair (83%) versus biased (75%) lineup instructions did not *significantly* influence the rate of identification of the guilty *party person*. However, fair instructions (33%) led to a *significantly* lower rate of identification of the innocent suspect than did biased instructions (78%).

Edited, this would look like the following:

Researchers exposed students to a staged crime and had them attempt identifications from lineups. Some witnesses were led to believe that the criminal was in the lineup (biased instructions) while others were told that he may not appear in the lineup (fair instructions). Fair versus biased lineup instructions did not influence the rate of identification of the guilty person. However, fair instructions led to a significantly lower rate of identification of the innocent suspect than did biased instructions.

This is still plagiarism! The fact that a few words have been substituted and some parts dropped does not alter the fact that this is the writing from the longer paragraph originally presented, not the student’s own writing.

Let’s assume you provided exactly the same paragraph but put quotation marks around it and at the end it read “...Again, nothing is gained by using a biased procedure. (2007 Lecture Notes, PSYC 241S, pg 93)” Are you “off the hook”? Yes in terms of plagiarism because you have honestly

disclosed your source so you are not cheating. On the other hand, you also are not describing your knowledge and thinking about the issue. This response would be given a lower grade than a response in your own words that conveyed the same information.

Here is an example that would **not** be a problem:

Two researchers (Malpass & Devine) conducted a study to test if biased instructions influenced eyewitness accuracy when doing a lineup task. After seeing a crime staged, people were either told that the guilty person was in the lineup or that he may not be in the lineup. Telling people that the guilty person is in the lineup was considered a biased instruction. Warning people that he may not be there was deemed a fair instruction. The difference in instructions did not matter if the guilty person was in the lineup because about the same number of people picked him with either instruction. But when the guilty person was not there, referred to as a “target-absent” lineup, people were much more likely to choose some one (an innocent person) if they had been given the biased instructions. The difference was large enough that it was statistically significant. The lecture notes conclude that “nothing is gained by using a biased procedure (241S Notes, 2007, pg 93).”

This paragraph conveys the information from the original paragraph but without using the original words and phrasing. What is the best way to balance the needs for accuracy, honesty, and originality? I suggest that you thoroughly read the materials that will be the basis of your answer. As part of this, you may wish to record some *brief* quotations including source and page numbers. Then put aside all original materials such as the course notes and write your answer in your own words looking only at the recorded quotations if you decide to include them to ensure that they are accurate. That is what I did when I wrote the acceptable example. After the answer is complete, return to the original sources to see if you believe that anything you wrote was incomplete or inaccurate as a response to the question. If so, follow the same procedure again. Prepare to answer, then put the sources away, then write the changes in your own words. Think about what you want to say but be sure the original materials are not being quoted unless that is your intention and then use proper acknowledgment (quotation marks and statements of where the quotation came from). Again, that is what I did. I did not mention the conclusion when I first wrote the acceptable version but thought it would add to the paragraph, I then thought it worked well as a quote so went that way.

Note that some exact wording is obviously acceptable. Thus, your answer (and mine) could include terms such as “biased lineup” and “biased instructions” and the use of such terms is not plagiarism. If in doubt, place quotation marks around the phrase but the purpose of this warning is not to make you paranoid about using any word or term but rather to make you aware that anything beyond a brief phrase that is identical to the source from which you got it needs to be properly acknowledged.

Another variation of plagiarism that arises in correspondence courses occurs when two students submit very similar answers, or sometimes completely identical assignments. Yes, this too is plagiarism since at least one student is claiming that another’s work is his or her own. Note that the person who wrote the original version is guilty of a breach of academic integrity if he or she allowed another person to submit the work as their own. The (unacceptable) excuse sometimes provided for this is that “we worked on the assignment together.” Good for you, study groups are a useful and often socially rewarding practice. But after the studying is over, follow the

recommendation suggested above and write your answers completely independently and you will never produce identical answers. Just consider your study partners to be another source of information and avoid using their exact words.

IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE!

One reason for the above section is to make it crystal clear that you know what plagiarism is and thus no argument that you did not understand will be acceptable. Sorry to have raised this as I know it applies to only a very few students but I am required to address the issue.

Now let's get into the content of the course and have some fun!