

# Psy 325: Prejudice and Minority Experience

Professor: Allen McConnell

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Student hours: [Thursdays, 1-2 p.m. on Zoom](#) (and at other times, by appointment)

Class meets in 127 PSYC each week on

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:05 - 11:25 a.m.

Canvas site for [Fall 2021 PSY 325A](#)

## Course texts

- Eberhardt, J. L. (2020). *Biased: Uncovering the hidden prejudice that shapes what we see, think, and do*. Penguin Books.
- Payne, K. (2017). *The broken ladder: How inequality affects the way we think, live, and die*. Viking Press.
- Other readings (available as PDFs on the course's Canvas site)

## Course overview

The study of prejudice and minority experience in social psychology has a long and storied tradition, dating back to Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* in 1954. The importance of this work has grown across time. Understanding events of the 20th Century such as the Holocaust, the Civil Rights Movement, gender equality, and the Stonewall riots led social psychologists to study processes underlying intergroup behavior. The value of this work continues today in the wake of Black Lives Matter, #metoo, anti-Asian prejudice, and LGBTQ+ equality (among many others). Although discourse about prejudice and minority experience has at times been coopted for political gain, we will focus on the *science* underlying how stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and minority experience affect human behavior. We will read two popular books written by leading social psychologists (*Biased* focusing on race, and *The Broken Ladder* focusing on social and economic inequality) as well as scientific papers that add experimental insights to the themes covered in these books. Additional class activities will broaden our class coverage (e.g., people with physical disabilities, the women's rights movement).

We will study phenomena associated with one's beliefs about members of social groups (stereotypes), evaluations of group members (prejudice), and behaviors toward members of social groups based on their group membership (discrimination). Also, we will study how these issues impact the experiences of social group members, especially when they are members of low status, minority, or under-represented groups.

Discussing these topics can be uncomfortable because the issues are intertwined with important self-relevant experiences and identities. Sometimes, these topics can lead to emotionally-laden discussions. On the other hand, conversations about these topics are often skirted because of norms of political correctness or to avoid interpersonal discomfort. In this class, we will engage these topics honestly and empathetically to explore these important phenomena and experiences. *Everyone* in our course can experience both privilege and stigma, and thus, we can learn a great deal from each other and about ourselves when we engage this material in an honest, open, supportive, empathetic, affirming, and respectful fashion.

This course has several important goals:

- We will develop an in-depth, integrative understanding of how approaching issues of prejudice and minority experience from a social psychological perspective improves our knowledge of human behavior.
- Also, we will learn how this work can be applied to understanding important real-world events and movements, both historical (e.g., the Holocaust, the Stonewall riots) and modern day (e.g., BLM, #metoo).
- Our readings will help equip us to not only understand the processes underlying prejudice and minority experience but how to approach our own and others' experiences in affirming and empathic ways.
- Assignments will not only allow students to demonstrate mastery of course material, but these exercises are designed to promote self-understanding of each student's lived experiences and perspectives.

## Grades

| Qty.   | Item                     | Points each | Total Points | Percent |
|--------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------|
| 2      | In-term Exams            | 200         | 400          | 40%     |
| 1      | Final Exam               | 250         | 250          | 25%     |
| 12     | Weekly Assignments (WAs) | 20          | 240          | 24%     |
| 11     | Reading Quizzes          | 10          | 110          | 11%     |
| 1      | Paper                    | 50          | 50           | 5%      |
| Totals |                          |             | 1050         | 105%    |

Final grades will be determined by total points accumulated applied this 1000-point scale:

| Points     | Percent    | Grade |
|------------|------------|-------|
| 925 - 1050 | 93% - 105% | A     |
| 895 - 924  | 90% - 92%  | A-    |
| 865 - 894  | 87% - 89%  | B+    |
| 825 - 864  | 83% - 86%  | B     |
| 795 - 824  | 80% - 82%  | B-    |
| 765 - 794  | 77% - 79%  | C+    |
| 725 - 764  | 73% - 76%  | C     |
| 695 - 724  | 70% - 72%  | C-    |
| 665 - 694  | 67% - 69%  | D+    |
| 625 - 664  | 63% - 66%  | D     |
| 595 - 624  | 60% - 62%  | D-    |
| 0 - 594    | 0% - 59%   | F     |

There are 1050 total points available, but the grade scale is based on 1000 points (i.e., 1000 points = 100%), which means there are 50 “cushion points” available. Cushion points provide students with flexibility should they experience challenges or disruptions during the semester (e.g., being sick, technical snafus). Students should view cushion points as something to “save for a rainy day” to meet potential challenges during the course of the semester. Also, please note that late work, regardless of the circumstances, will not be accepted (remember, there are 50 points of grade cushion available). Please submit assignments on time and work ahead so deadlines are not an issue!

The instructor reserves the right to adjust the grading scale. If modifications occur, such changes will only make it easier for students to get a better grade (i.e., the scale will never be adjusted against students). However, it would be unwise to anticipate that an adjustment will occur. Final grades will be based on the final number of points earned as applied to the above grading scale, no exceptions. There is no end-of-semester negotiation period where students can plea and barter for a better grade in the class. Students who are dissatisfied with their performance in the class should discuss their situation with the professor early in the semester (e.g., attend student hours, identify new learning strategies) and not wait until it’s too late.

## Exams

Three exams (mostly essay and short answer) will be administered during the course. The first two exams are in-term exams and are *not* cumulative (Exam 1 covers material from August 24 through September 30; Exam 2 covers material from October 7 through November 18), but the *final exam is cumulative*. Exams focus primarily on the readings, class discussions, and course lectures. Although exam material will primarily reflect what is discussed in class, material that is assigned but not discussed in class is fair game. However, exams will never assess trivial aspects of the readings. The primary purpose of the exams is to assess how well students are mastering the material and integrating the readings and class discussions.

## Quizzes

Short pop quizzes (11 total) on assigned readings will be administered to provide feedback on reading comprehension and to reward students for keeping up to date. They will not be difficult. For students who read conscientiously, this will be the easiest 10% of the grade. They will be administered at the very beginning of class. Students who are late to class or are absent *cannot* make them up (even with an excuse).

## Weekly assignments

During most weeks of the semester, students will complete weekly assignments (WAs), which ask students to dig deeper into relevant issues (e.g., reflect on their privileged and stigmatized identities, visit the Project Implicit website to learn more about implicit bias, listen to a variety of podcasts and reflect on their content). Each WA will involve an experience related to course material (e.g., exploring the Innocence Project, listening to podcasts on topics such as the Women's Rights Movement of the 19th Century or the Stonewall Riots) and completing a short write-up describing each student's experience and reflection on the activities. These WA write-ups must be uploaded to Canvas by Saturday at 5 p.m. on the assignment week. Late uploads, regardless of the circumstances, are not accepted. Please note that although assignments are due by Saturday at 5 p.m., they may be completed well in advance of this deadline (i.e., it only becomes "weekend homework" if students procrastinate on completing WAs) -- early submissions are encouraged! These assignments have been selected to provide interesting ways for students to apply course content to understanding the world around them.

## Academic integrity

Both Miami University and the Department of Psychology are dedicated to providing a learning environment based not only on academic excellence but on academic integrity as well. In this course, it is expected that students will adhere to all Miami University guidelines regarding academic misconduct and academic integrity (<https://miamioh.edu/policy-library/students/undergraduate/academic-regulations/academic-integrity.html>).

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting work (homework, papers, etc.) conducted for another course without professor approval
- Submitting the work of another individual or party (whether in part or in whole) as one's own, including work from another student, a website, a book, or failing to provide appropriate citations for others' ideas
- Allowing other students to submit one's work as their own
- Possessing prohibited materials during a test or quiz in any form
- Providing or receiving assistance from another student without the professor's permission

Engaging in academic misconduct can result in penalties ranging from a *minimum* of an F on the assignment to an F in the course, an "AD" signifying academic dishonesty on Miami transcripts, academic suspension, and expulsion from Miami University. Misunderstanding appropriate academic conduct will not be accepted as an excuse for academic misconduct (see *Miami Student Handbook*, Chapter 5). Students who Please see the professor for clarification regarding any of the above policies.

## Class policies

*RTFS:* Countless hours have gone into crafting this detailed syllabus. Before asking a question, please read the syllabus! Most questions (e.g., “I know I missed the weekly assignment deadline, but can I turn it in late and get some points?” [no], “Is the final exam cumulative?” [yes]) are easily answered by reading the syllabus.

*Assignments:* Weekly assignments (and the one short paper assignment) are due before Saturday at 5 p.m. (US Eastern Time) on the week they are assigned. Late work (even 1 min late), regardless of the circumstances, will not be accepted (Canvas locks the assignment after the deadline). Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class, and it is each student’s responsibility to attend to these announcements.

*Writing competency:* Writing competency is expected in all assignments. Students needing assistance with their writing skills should contact the Howe Center for Writing Excellence (<http://miamioh.edu/hcwe>).

*Special considerations:* In situations where special, documented circumstances exist (e.g., official university obligations, religious observances), special arrangements can be made with the professor. However, students must make these arrangements before the end of the second week of the semester and provide documentation for them. Also, please note that weekly assignments can be completed in advance, thus the majority of conflicts with a due date do not require accommodation (e.g., a religious observance falling on a Saturday due date is not an issue because the work can be submitted many days before that deadline).

*Accommodations:* Students with a disability who feel that they may need a reasonable accommodation to fulfill the essential functions of the course listed in this syllabus, or students with physical, medical or psychiatric disabilities, or students with AD(H)D or specific learning disabilities are encouraged to contact the Miller Center for Student Disability Services (<https://miamioh.edu/student-life/sds/>; 513.529.1541, V/TTY).

*Course materials, recordings, and legal disclaimers:* Attending class, obtaining course materials, and taking notes (on class discussions and course readings) are each student’s responsibility. The professor will not lend out notes or materials not provided on Canvas under any circumstances. If students miss a class, they should get notes from a fellow student. Students may lend notes to fellow students as long as they do not financially profit from doing so (i.e., the commercialization of class notes or class-related materials is strictly prohibited).

*Uploaded assignments:* All assignments require uploading documents to Canvas. Uploaded documents must in one of three formats: PDF (Acrobat’s Portable Document Format), DOC (Microsoft Word’s Document format), or RTF (Rich Text Format). All other formats (e.g., JPEG, Mac Pages) will receive zeros because Canvas cannot process them. All documents will be scanned to ensure authentic scholarship (see academic integrity, above). Students with questions (e.g., how to upload documents, questions about academic integrity) should ask the professor well before assignments are due (e.g., problems with uploading or uncertainty about how to use Canvas will not excuse late or incomplete assignments). If (and only if) Canvas is unavailable immediately before a deadline, email the assignment to the professor to ensure it is not late (but only do this if Canvas is down, and make sure you have tried Canvas multiple times on the due date; the email’s timestamp will serve as the indicator of whether the work was completed on-time, and emailed assignments after the due date and time will not be considered). Once students have uploaded an assignment to Canvas, they should double check to make sure it was received and posted correctly. Failure to double-check that an uploaded assignment was correctly posted is the student’s responsibility. Canvas does not “lose things,” so statements such as, “really, I uploaded it, I don’t know what happened, maybe our WiFi wasn’t working” will not excuse missing assignments. Students spend a lot of time on coursework, so it’s important that they spend an extra moment to *confirm* that their uploaded assignment arrived in good shape. Missing assignments will receive zero points, no exceptions.

*Illnesses and significant health disruptions:* Should a student become seriously ill and unable to complete assignments for a sizable portion of the class because of illness, the student should contact the professor immediately by email to determine how alternative arrangements might be made. Students are ultimately responsible for the material covered in class, regardless of whether the student is absent or present. If a student's absences are of significant duration or severity, the professor will advise them about available options, including assigning an incomplete grade (see below) or requesting a medical withdrawal.

*Incompletes:* Except for cases of documented medical (see previous point) or family emergencies, incompletes will not be given. There is no need for students to do poorly in this class: the professor is available for student hours and will answer e-mail questions promptly. Points are earned in many small increments rather than in a couple of monolithic assignments. There are 50 cushion points built into class, providing students with flexibility to navigate adversity. Deadlines for dropping classes and withdrawals are provided by the Office of the Registrar. Students who miss these deadlines assume responsibility for the consequences. Please consult Miami's official websites regarding deadlines and university policies.

*Classroom conduct, respecting others:* Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and civil manner in class, and they are encouraged to express their opinions and beliefs. It is another thing, however, to be disrespectful or rude to students or to the professor. It is fine to disagree with others and to express non-politically-correct views. However, bigotry or disrespectful behavior is unacceptable. A baseline amount of respect and civility is *especially important* in a course focused on prejudice and minority experience -- our class must be a place where people feel comfortable, valued, and have a voice.

Disruptive conduct (e.g., distracting texting and computer use, conversations in class) is unacceptable and students who disrupt class (for students or for the professor) will be asked to leave class. Further, these norms of respect and decency extend beyond our formal class meetings to on-line forums as well even those, at times, on-line communication may *seem* less formal (e.g., posting a comment in an on-line chat window should not be viewed as less formal than saying something aloud in the presence of others). Please be courteous and respectful in all forms of communication and interaction in our course.

The Miami Department of Psychology is strongly committed to diversity and inclusion (for details, visit <https://www.miamioh.edu/cas/academics/departments/psychology/about/diversity-inclusion/index.html>). Here is a statement adopted by the Department of Psychology on diversity and inclusion:

We, members of the Department of Psychology, value diversity and inclusion because the goal of psychology is to improve understanding and outcomes for all individuals. We value persons of all identities, including dimensions such as age, culture, national origin, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and others. As psychologists, we understand that diverse groups bring diverse perspectives; this diversity produces better outcomes in a variety of contexts, including learning and decision making, and our ability to work with one another. Consistent with these values, our department actively seeks opportunities to increase and improve understanding of diversity. These enduring efforts include conducting research with diverse populations on topics related to intergroup understanding and asking questions that are relevant to different groups. We promote the academic and professional development of students, faculty, and staff from different backgrounds and provide education to improve intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes for all members of our academic community. We endeavor to actively engage in positive behaviors in order to achieve these goals. In sum, we value diversity because multiple perspectives improve our ability to understand psychological processes and to understand and contribute to the communities we serve.

## Semester schedule

Reading assignments are due for day listed, and Weekly Assignments (WAs) must be uploaded to Canvas before Saturday at 5 p.m. EST of that week (🔊 denotes podcast). Readings are either chapters from Eberhardt's or Payne's books (as noted) or entire PDFs of primary source readings available on Canvas (listed by authors). Updated 15nov2021.

|             | Date |       | Topic                            | Assignments   |
|-------------|------|-------|----------------------------------|---|
| Week 1      | Tu   | 8/24  | Introduction to the course       |   |
|             | Th   | 8/26  | Getting uncomfortable            | DiAngelo (2018) part 1; <b>WA:</b> Identities assignment                |
| Week 2      | Tu   | 8/31  | Ingroups and outgroups           | Brewer (2017)   |
|             | Th   | 9/2   | Stereotype threat                | Murphy et al. (2007); <b>WA:</b> Project implicit exploration           |
| Week 3      | Tu   | 9/7   | Implicit bias                    | McConnell & Leibold (2001)  |
|             | Th   | 9/9   | Intergroup interactions          | Richeson & Shelton (2007); <b>WA:</b> 🔊 <i>In the air we breathe</i>    |
| Week 4      | Tu   | 9/14  | What meets the eye               | Eberhardt (chapters 1-2)  |
|             | Th   | 9/16  | Intergroup deficits              | Bernstein et al. (2007); <b>WA:</b> Project innocence exploration       |
| Week 5      | Tu   | 9/21  | Race and policing                | Eberhardt (chapters 3-4)  |
|             | Th   | 9/23  | Biases in perception             | Wilson et al. (2017); <b>WA:</b> 🔊 <i>The edge of gender</i>            |
| Week 6      | Tu   | 9/28  | Race and essentialism            | Eberhardt (chapters 5-6)  |
|             | Th   | 9/30  | Dehumanization                   | Haslam & Loughnan (2014); <b>WA:</b> Advertising analysis               |
| Week 7      | Tu   | 10/5  | <b>Exam 1</b>                    |   |
|             | Th   | 10/7  | No Class: Watch <i>Crip Camp</i> | Reaction paper for <i>Crip Camp</i> (due Saturday by 5 p.m.)            |
| Week 8      | Tu   | 10/12 | The Way Out: Part 1              | Eberhardt (chapters 7-8)  |
|             | Th   | 10/14 | Interventions for change         | Walton (2014); <b>WA:</b> 🔊 <i>The Green Book</i>                       |
| Week 9      | Tu   | 10/19 | The Way Out: Part 2              | Eberhardt (chapters 9-10)   |
|             | Th   | 10/21 | Becoming the minority            | Craig & Richeson (2017); <b>WA:</b> 🔊 <i>Women's movement</i>           |
| Week 10     | Tu   | 10/26 | Economics of inequality          | Payne (chapters 1-2)  |
|             | Th   | 10/28 | Social comparisons               | Evans & McConnell (2003); <b>WA:</b> 🔊 <i>Why no one feels rich</i>     |
| Week 11     | Tu   | 11/2  | Threat and polarization          | Payne (chapters 3-4)  |
|             | Th   | 11/4  | Minority stress and health       | Levy et al. (2016); <b>WA:</b> 🔊 <i>People like us</i>                  |
| Week 12     | Tu   | 11/9  | Inequality and health            | Payne (chapters 5, 7)   |
|             | Th   | 11/11 | Community-police relations       | Lloyd et al. (2020); <b>WA:</b> 🔊 <i>A bird in jail is worth two...</i> |
| Week 13     | Tu   | 11/16 | Structural factors and change    | Ofuso et al. (2019)   |
|             | Th   | 11/18 | What drives change               | Gülzög et al. (2019); <b>WA:</b> 🔊 <i>Remembering Stonewall</i>         |
| Week 14     | Tu   | 11/23 | <b>Exam 2</b>                    |   |
|             | Th   | 11/25 | No Class: Thanksgiving           |   |
| Week 15     | Tu   | 11/30 | Allyship                         | Radke et al. (2020)   |
|             | Th   | 12/2  | Authentic dialogues              | DiAngelo (2018) part 2  |
| Finals Week | Tu   | 12/7  | <b>Final exam</b>                | Administered from 10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. in 127 PSYC                   |