

Graduate Research Workshop on Psychological Interventions Psychology 274/Education 287

Instructors

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Class Meetings

Thursdays, 3-5 (workshop days may run longer, generally not past 5:45 in 160-318).

Course Readings

Readings will be made available each week.

Enrollment

The course is designed as an advanced seminar. Priority will be given to doctoral students in psychology or in education. Enrollment is limited to 15 students.

Course Objectives

The power of psychologically wise interventions has attracted growing attention in discussions of social problems and social policy, particularly in education but also in health, economics, intergroup relations, interpersonal relationships, and environmental contexts. This course provides students with an opportunity to design and refine their own wise intervention experiment grounded in social psychological theory. It is based on a workshop model, in which each student will present a proposed experiment and then receive intensive constructive feedback on its aims and the procedures for accomplishing them, much the way a writer's workshop provides feedback to authors on ways to make their story better embody their intent. The expectation is that students will end the course with a proposed experiment that is of high quality, that they feel confident in, and that they conduct.

Given these objectives, and the limited time frame of the academic quarter, it is expected that all students begin the course with an idea of the problem they wish to study and the intervention they wish to test. It is also ideal for students to have prior coursework in social psychology and experimental methodology.

The workshop is intended to be not evaluative but constructive—a space where people from different disciplines and backgrounds can collaborate with one another with the goal of advancing all of our learning and the quality of their work. While students are expected to invest thought and effort in their initial proposals, all the proposals will be seen as works in progress that are improvable through this collective process.

The initial classes will be dedicated to discussing social psychological interventions and the intellectual and applied traditions that they are based on. Key concepts are the power of context; the importance of people's subjective construal of the context; the background field of forces or tension system in which all interventions take place; how and when interventions have long-lasting effects;

and issues related to how best to disseminate and scale interventions and the insights on which they are based.

Research Proposal

Both the initial proposal and the final proposal should describe an original randomized experiment testing the effect of a social psychological intervention on an important outcome. Your experiment must have at least one experimentally manipulated independent variable (i.e., the intervention) and the proposal should follow the standard format of a research proposal. It should contain an introduction describing the theoretical background and rationale, a methods section, a predicted results section, and a discussion section highlighting implications and limitations. In short, you want to present your intervention and the intellectual and applied contexts in which you conceptualize it.

In addition, please include a preface on your initial proposal describing where you are in its development and 1-3 questions that you would like feedback on.

The initial proposal should be a shortened version of the final proposal. The final proposal should expand and improve upon the initial proposal, incorporating the feedback that you received during your workshop.

The initial proposal is due the Sunday before your scheduled workshop at 5 pm. The final proposal is due Friday, March 13.

Both instructors will be available to consult on topics throughout the quarter

Course Requirements and Grades

All students are expected to attend all classes, to participate in class discussion, and to thoughtfully read all readings and research proposals.

To facilitate discussion of readings, please come prepared with a comment or question on the readings for that day. To facilitate workshops, please review each proposal as you would review a paper submitted for publication or grant proposal submitted for funding.

Grades will be based on a combination of class participation (25%), the initial research proposal (25%), and the final research proposal (50%). You can enroll in the class for a grade or credit/no credit.

Laptop Policy

To facilitate discussion, we request that students refrain from using laptops unless necessary.

Course Schedule and Readings

Thursday, January 9: Introductions and Course Overview

Thursday, January 16, Theoretical Background

Cohen, Garcia, & Goyer. (2017). Turning point: Targeted, tailored, and timely psychological intervention. In *Handbook of Competence and Motivation (2nd Edition): Theory and Application*

Walton & Cohen (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science*.

Thursday, January 23: Mechanisms

Ferrer & Cohen (2019). Reconceptualizing self-affirmation with the “Trigger and Channel” framework: Lessons from the health domain. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*.

Goyer, Cohen, Cook, Master, Apfel, Lee, Henderson, Reeves, Okonofua, & Walton (2019). Targeted identity-safety interventions cause lasting reductions in discipline citations among ethnic-minority boys. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Walton & Brady (2020). “Bad” things reconsidered. To appear in J. P. Forgas, K. Fiedler, & W. D. Crano (Eds.) *Sydney Symposium of Social Psychology: Applications of Social Psychology*.

Thursday, January 30: Contexts and Heterogeneity

Paluck, E. L., Shepherd, H., & Aronow, P. M. (2015). Changing climates of conflict: A social network experiment in 56 schools. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Walton, G. M. & Yeager, D. S. (in press). Seed and soil: Psychological affordances in contexts help to explain where wise interventions succeed or fail. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*.

Yeager, Hanselman, Walton, Murray, Crosnoe, Muller, Tipton, Schneider, B., Hulleman, Hinojosa, Paunesku, Romero, Flint, Roberts, Trott, Iachan, Buontempo, Hooper, Carvalho, Hahn, Gopalan, Mhatre, Ferguson, Duckworth, & Dweck (2019). A national experiment reveals where a growth mindset improves achievement. *Nature*.

Thursday, Feb 6, Workshop 1

Presenters:

Thursday, Feb 13, Workshop 2

Presenters:

Thursday, Feb 20, Workshop 3

Presenters:

Thursday, Feb 27, No class (SPSP)

Thursday, March 5, Workshop 4

Presenters:

Thursday March 12, Course Wrap Up (Readings TBD)