

## **Social Interaction**

Spring 2022

GU4696

Instructor: Katherine Thorson

Email: [kthorson@barnard.edu](mailto:kthorson@barnard.edu)

Office: 415D Milbank (Barnard Campus)

Student hours: TBD

Class meetings: TBD

Class location: TBD

### **Course Description**

In this seminar, we will read and discuss current literature in psychology related to social interaction. We will examine fundamental processes involved in social interaction, consider how social interaction varies as a function of people's social identities (e.g., gender, social class, and race), and discuss how social interaction influences close relationships, intergroup attitudes, and well-being. We will pay close attention to how these topics are studied (e.g., to methods, samples, and researcher identities) and to the broader implications of the research.

This course is an advanced seminar, designed particularly for graduate students, for advanced undergraduates who are majoring in Psychology or in Neuroscience and Behavior, and for students participating in the Postbaccalaureate Psychology Program. These students will have priority in registration, followed by junior majors and then non-majors.

Prerequisites for this course include one course in introductory psychology, one course in research methods or statistics, one course in social psychology, and/or instructor permission.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Explain fundamental processes involved in social interaction from perceiver and target perspectives
- Identify how people's social identities influence their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during social interaction (as well as those of their interaction partners)
- Describe how social interaction influences close relationships, intergroup attitudes, and well-being
- Understand and evaluate empirical research on psychological processes relevant to social interaction
- Propose an empirical study to address an unanswered question regarding social interaction

### **Course Requirements**

**Course Readings:** We will read a set of papers (listed in the syllabus and posted on CourseWorks on the "Modules" page) prior to each class meeting. You should read each paper actively—I encourage

taking notes as you read. After reading each paper, you should be able to (1) state the key points and conclusions the authors are making and (2) describe the data the authors are using to support those key points and conclusions. Please note that each week there is not nearly enough reading to thoroughly cover the topic we are discussing! I will typically send out additional, optional readings after each class discussion that I think may be of interest to the class and/or useful in developing your final research project.

**Discussion Questions:** For each of the class sessions, you will submit one or two discussion questions to the Discussion Board on CourseWorks no later than 5 p.m. on the day preceding the class meeting. Questions should reflect thoughtful analysis of the assigned reading and should be capable of generating discussion. Appropriate questions include, but are not limited to, those that address critical aspects of the research methods or theoretical perspective, those that relate different readings to each other (either readings from the same week or from a prior week), those that relate the findings to your life experiences or to material you have learned in other courses, and those that address the implications of the findings. If you are not sure how to write discussion questions or what constitutes a good discussion question, please see me during student hours—I can help! Make sure you spend some time considering how you would answer your discussion questions, as you will likely be asked to speak first for any questions you develop. These will be graded as check plus (A), check (B+), check minus (B-), or not submitted (0).

**Reaction Papers:** To help you prepare for discussion and to practice your writing, you will submit two 1- to 1.5-page, single-spaced reaction papers on the readings no later than 5 p.m. on the day preceding the relevant class meeting. Your papers should convey and elaborate on one clear thesis statement. This might be an idea for future research or a critique of the research we read. You need to show clear evidence that you carefully read and understood the articles you are discussing. You are free to choose which weeks you want to submit reaction papers (the first possible week is Week 2 and the last is Week 13), but you must submit at least one of them by Week 7.

Tips for writing reaction papers:

- To generate ideas for your paper, consider the following questions: What did you learn? What was surprising? How do the conclusions relate to prior readings in this class, material from other courses, or your life experiences? What questions were left unanswered for you? Did you agree with how the authors characterized their findings – why or why not? What did you find missing from the papers or discussion of this topic? Do you have any new questions or hypotheses based on the current research? Do you see any novel applications of the research? Consideration of these questions may help you figure out what to write about.
- Convey one complete, novel thought – with a beginning, middle, and end. If you have several ideas for that week, choose the best one. Your thought should not be a question. You may begin your paper with a question but then you should attempt to answer that question throughout your paper.
- If you want to critique the methods of the research, describe why this critique matters. Every study has shortcomings. Why do these shortcomings matter? Why do you expect that the results

of the study would be different if the methods were different? How would you design a new study to address these shortcomings? What would that contribute to our knowledge?

- You do not need to discuss every aspect of every (or even one) reading in your paper, but it does need to be clear that you thoroughly read and understood the readings from that week.
- No points will be awarded for reaction papers that only summarize the readings.

**Participation:** Everyone is expected to attend every class and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion. If you must miss a class, you must speak with me in advance (as soon as possible). I will provide three participation grades that are equally spaced throughout the semester and which will be based on both the quantity and quality of your involvement. If you are not sure what constitutes good participation or if you are uncomfortable participating, please see me during student hours—I can help! As a group, we will draft a set of guidelines regarding discussions and classroom etiquette on the first day of the course. In these guidelines, we will address questions such as the following: What is the goal of discussion in this course? What do we expect of each other in terms of preparation for each class session? How can we make our class a safe space to talk about sensitive topics or to voice confusion? What makes a respectful listener? How can we effectively disagree with each other? What policies would we like to have regarding potential classroom distractions (being late, bringing food to class, using phones and laptops, etc.)? These guidelines will be distributed after our first class and will function as a “contract” regarding class discussions throughout the semester.

**Classroom Presentation and Final Paper:** The final project in this course will be a research proposal, in which you propose a study to improve our knowledge of any aspect of social interaction. You may choose a topic that is closely related to the readings in this course or one that we have not covered but is of interest to you. The final paper should be 15 to 20 pages long and written according to the guidelines in the APA Publication Manual, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. I will provide feedback on your materials along the way, as well as detailed grading rubrics for both the presentation and paper as you are working on them. In addition, you will also work in small feedback groups throughout the second half of the semester to provide feedback and support to one another regarding your final projects. Aside from the presentation, all assignments related to this project should be turned in on CourseWorks.

Please make note of the following dates regarding this project:

1. A one-page, single-spaced description of your proposal is due by 5 p.m. on TBD (graded as pass/fail and will count for 3% of final paper grade).
2. A list of at least ten articles or chapters that will be background reading for your project is due by 5 p.m. on TBD (graded as pass/fail and will count for 3% of final paper grade).
3. A two-page, single-spaced description of your proposal is due by 5 p.m. on TBD (graded as pass/fail and will count for 3% of final paper grade).
4. Your research presentation will occur in class on Week 14 (last day of class).
5. Your final paper is due by 5 p.m. on TBD.

### Requirement Weights

<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Discussion Questions	15%
Reaction Papers	25%
Participation	15%
Classroom Presentation	10%
Final Paper	35%

Numeric scores will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. Below are the numeric cutoffs for letter grades:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
98	94	91	88	84	81	78	74	71	61	< 61

### Course Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Final Project Assignments</b>
Week 1	Introduction; Reading Scientific Papers	
<b><i>Part 1: Fundamental Processes in Social Interaction</i></b>		
Week 2	Communication	
Week 3	Social Perception	
Week 4	“Successful” Social Interactions	
Week 5	“Unsuccessful” Social Interactions	
<b><i>Part 2: Influence of Social Identities on Social Interaction</i></b>		
Week 6	Gender	
Week 7	Power and Status	One-page description of proposal due
Week 8	Social Class	
Week 9	Race and Ethnicity	List of readings due
Week 10	Culture	
<b><i>Part 3: Outcomes Associated with Social Interaction</i></b>		
Week 11	Close Relationships	Two-page description of proposal due
Week 12	Intergroup Attitudes	
Week 13	Well-Being	
Week 14	Class Presentations	Final paper due TBD

## Course Policies and Resources

**Announcements:** I may make small changes and additions to this syllabus. I will announce these changes in class and/or via CourseWorks.

**Student Hours:** Student hours are listed at the top of the syllabus and are by appointment also (i.e., by any other time that you and I mutually agree upon). During these times, I am available to discuss questions regarding this course, and I'm also available to discuss other topics in psychology, your education more broadly, and career development. These hours are for you – please do not worry that you are interrupting me or my work by coming to them. I am eager to talk to you!

**Honor Code:** I expect students to adhere to the honor code of their school. Be honest about your work. This is your education, so use it wisely. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to plagiarizing (copying someone else's work or ideas and misrepresenting them as one's own), falsification (making up fictitious information and presenting it as real or altering records for the purpose of misrepresentation), and facilitation (helping another student to cheat, plagiarize, or falsify). If you are unsure about what constitutes an honor code violation, please ask me.

**Academic Accommodations:** If you believe you may encounter barriers to the academic environment due to a documented disability or emerging health challenges, please contact me and/or the relevant center at your school for assistance.

**Affordable Access to Course Materials:** All students deserve to be able to study and make use of course texts and materials regardless of cost. All the course readings in this class are freely accessible to you as a member of the Columbia community and are posted on CourseWorks.

**Missed Class for Holidays:** If you are observing religious holidays this semester and you need accommodations for any class or assignment, please contact me at least one week in advance of class or the assignment due date.

**Wellness:** Being a student can be stressful, and it is important to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. Supporting your own health and well-being will help you get the most out of your student experience. I urge you to take care of yourself – get enough sleep, eat healthy, exercise, and spend time with friends. Columbia has several resources that can help you in different areas of your life, and I encourage you to take advantage of them at any point during the semester. If you need assistance connecting with resources, please let me know.

## Course Readings

### ***Week 1: Reading Scientific Papers (Optional)***

Jordan, C. H., & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), *The self in social psychology* (pp. 461-470). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Raff, J. (2013, August 25). How to read and understand a scientific article. *Violent Metaphors*. <https://violentmetaphors.com/2013/08/25/how-to-read-and-understand-a-scientific-paper-2/>

Pain, E. (2016, March 21). How to (seriously) read a scientific paper. *Science Magazine*.  
<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2016/03/how-seriously-read-scientific-paper>

***Week 2: How do we communicate with others?***

Levinson, S. C. (2016). Turn-taking in human communication – Origins and implications for language processing. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 20(1), 6-14.

Stephens, G. J., Silbert, L. J., & Hasson, U. (2010). Speaker–listener neural coupling underlies successful communication. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107 (32), 14425-14430.

Roter, D. L., Frankel, R. M., Hall, J. A., & Sluyter, D. (2006). The expression of emotion through nonverbal behavior in medical visits. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 21(1), 28-34.

Martin, J., Rychlowska, M., Wood, A., & Niedenthal, P. (2017). Smiles as multipurpose social signals. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 21(11), 864–877.

***Week 3: How do we perceive others?***

Heyes, C. M., & Frith, C. D. (2014). The cultural evolution of mind reading. *Science*, 344(6190), 1234091-1 to 1234091-6.

Zaki, J., Bolger, N., & Ochsner, K. (2008). It takes two: The interpersonal nature of empathic accuracy. *Psychological Science*, 19(4), 399-404.

Funder, D. C. (2012). Accurate personality judgment. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 21(3), 177-182.

Brown, J. A., & Bernieri, F. (2017). Trait perception accuracy and acquaintance within groups: Tracking accuracy development. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 43(5), 716-728.

***Week 4: What happens during “successful” social interactions?***

Lakin, J. L., Jefferis, V. E., Cheng, C. M., & Chartrand, T. L. (2003). The chameleon effect as social glue: Evidence for the evolutionary significance of nonconscious mimicry. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 27(3), 145-162.

Huang, K., Yeomans, M., Brooks, A. W., Minson, J., & Gino, F. (2017). It doesn't hurt to ask: Question-asking increases liking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113(3), 430-452.

Truong, M., Fast, N. J., & Kim, J. (2020). It's not what you say, it's how you say it: Conversational flow as a predictor of networking success. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 158, 1-10.

Jolly, E., & Chang, L. J. (2021). Gossip drives vicarious learning and facilitates social connection. *Current Biology*.

**Week 5: What happens during “unsuccessful” social interactions?**

Mastroianni, A. M., Gilbert, D. T., Cooney, G., & Wilson, T. D. (2021). Do conversations end when people want them to? *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *118*(10), e2011809118.

Sun, K. Q., & Slepian, M. L. (2020). The conversations we seek to avoid. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *160*, 87-105.

Cooney, G., Mastroianni, A. M., Abi-Esber, N., & Brooks, A. W. (2020). The many minds problem: disclosure in dyadic versus group conversation. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *31*, 22-27.

Kumar, A., & Epley, N. (2020). It’s surprisingly nice to hear you: Misunderstanding the impact of communication media can lead to suboptimal choices of how to connect with others. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *150*(3), 595–607.

**Week 6: How does gender influence social interaction?**

Mulac, A., Bradac, J. J., & Gibbons, P. (2001). Empirical support for the gender-as-culture hypothesis: An intercultural analysis of male/female language differences. *Human Communication Research*, *27*(1), 121-152.

Mehl, M. R., Vazire, S., Ramírez-Esparza, N., Slatcher, R. B., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2007). Are women really more talkative than men? *Science*, *317*(5834), 82-82.

Neff, L. A., & Karney, B. R. (2005). Gender differences in social support: A question of skill or responsiveness? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *88*(1), 79-90.

Gallus, J., & Bhatia, S. (2020). Gender, power and emotions in the collaborative production of knowledge: A large-scale analysis of Wikipedia editor conversations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *160*, 115-130.

**Week 7: How do power and status influence social interaction?**

Hall, J. A., Murphy, N. A., & Carney, D. R. (2006). On the varieties of asymmetrical dependency: Feelings, motives, behavior, and accuracy in a dyadic interaction. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *36*(4), 583–599.

Blader, S. L., Shirako, A., & Chen, Y.-R. (2016). Looking out from the top: Differential effects of status and power on perspective taking. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *42*(6), 723–737.

van Kleef, G. A., & Lange, J. (2020). How hierarchy shapes our emotional lives: effects of power and status on emotional experience, expression, and responsiveness. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *33*, 148-153.

Anicich, E. M., Fast, N. J., Halevy, N., & Galinsky, A. D. (2016). When the bases of social hierarchy collide: Power without status drives interpersonal conflict. *Organization Science*, *27*(1), 123-140.

### ***Week 8: How does social class influence social interaction?***

Kraus, M. W., Piff, P. K., & Keltner, D. (2011). Social class as culture: The convergence of resources and rank in the social realm. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *20*(4), 246-250.

Kraus, M. W., & Keltner, D. (2009). Signs of socioeconomic status: A thin-slicing approach. *Psychological Science*, *20*(1), 99-106.

Carey, R. M., & Markus, H. R. (2017). Social class shapes the form and function of relationships and selves. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *18*, 123–130.

Ross, J. M., Karney, B. R., Nguyen, T. P., & Bradbury, T. N. (2019). Communication that is maladaptive for middle-class couples is adaptive for socioeconomically disadvantaged couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *116*(4), 582-597.

### ***Week 9: How do racial and ethnic identities affect social interaction?***

Bergsieker, H. B., Shelton, J. N., & Richeson, J. A. (2010). To be liked versus respected: Divergent goals in interracial interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *99*(2), 248-264.

Trail, T. E., Shelton, J. N., & West, T. V. (2009). Interracial roommate relationships: Negotiating daily interactions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *35*, 671-684.

Sawyer, P. J., Major, B., Casad, B. J., Townsend, S. S., & Mendes, W. B. (2012). Discrimination and the stress response: Psychological and physiological consequences of anticipating prejudice in interethnic interactions. *American Journal of Public Health*, *102*(5), 1020-1026.

Mendes, W. B., Blascovich, J., Lickel, B., & Hunter, S. (2002). Challenge and threat during social interactions with White and Black men. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *28*(7), 939-952.

### ***Week 10: How does culture influence social interaction?***

Henrich J., Heine S.J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). Most people are not WEIRD. *Nature*, *466*, page 29.

Gendron, M., Roberson, D., van der Vyver, J. M., & Barrett, L. F. (2014). Cultural relativity in perceiving emotion from vocalizations. *Psychological Science*, *25*(4), 911–920.



Rychlowska, M., Miyamoto, Y., Matsumoto, D., Hess, U., Gilboa-Schechtman, E., Kamble, S., ... & Niedenthal, P. M. (2015). Heterogeneity of long-history migration explains cultural differences in reports of emotional expressivity and the functions of smiles. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(19), E2429-E2436.

Thomson, R., Yuki, M., Talhelm, T., Schug, J., Kito, M., Ayanian, A. H., Becker, J. C., Becker, M., Chiu, C., Choi, H.-S., Ferreira, C. M., Fülöp, M., Gul, P., Houghton-Illera, A. M., Joasoo, M., Jong, J., Kavanagh, C. M., Khutkyy, D., Manzi, C., ... Visserman, M. L. (2018). Relational mobility predicts social behaviors in 39 countries and is tied to historical farming and threat. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(29), 7521–7526.

### ***Week 11: How do we develop close relationships via social interaction?***

Reis, H. T., Maniaci, M. R., Caprariello, P. A., Eastwick, P. W., Finkel, E. J. (2011). Familiarity does indeed promote attraction in live interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101, 557–570.

Laurenceau, J. P., Barrett, L. F., & Pietromonaco, P. R. (1998). Intimacy as an interpersonal process: The importance of self-disclosure, partner disclosure, and perceived partner responsiveness in interpersonal exchanges. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(5), 1238-1251.

Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Impett, E. A., & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(2), 228-245.

### ***Week 12: How do social interactions influence intergroup attitudes?***

Bruneau, E. G., & Saxe, R. (2012). The power of being heard: The benefits of ‘perspective-giving’ in the context of intergroup conflict. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(4), 855-866.

Broockman, D., & Kalla, J. (2016). Durably reducing transphobia: A field experiment on door-to-door canvassing. *Science*, 352(6282), 220-224.

Mousa, S. (2020). Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq. *Science*, 369(6505), 866-870.

Paluck, E., Green, S., & Green, D. (2019). The contact hypothesis re-evaluated. *Behavioural Public Policy*, 3(2), 129-158.

### ***Week 13: How do social interactions influence well-being?***

Cohen, S. (2005). The Pittsburg common cold studies: Psychosocial predictors of susceptibility to respiratory infectious illness. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 12, 123–131.

- Kiecolt-Glaser, J., Loving, T., Stowell, J., Malarkey, W., Lemeshow, S., Dickinson, S., et al. (2005). Hostile marital interactions, proinflammatory cytokine production, and wound healing. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *63*, 1377-1384.
- Pietromonaco, P. R., & Collins, N. L. (2017). Interpersonal mechanisms linking close relationships to health. *American Psychologist*, *72*(6), 531-542.
- Slavich, G. M., Way, B. M., Eisenberger, N. I., & Taylor, S. E. (2010). Neural sensitivity to social rejection is associated with inflammatory responses to social stress. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *107*(33), 14817-14822.