

The Psychology of Social Influence (PSYC 342) - Winter 2025

Required Text:

(77.95 CAD) Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and Practice* (Fifth Edition). Boston, MA:

Allyn and Bacon.

Course Objectives and Format:

This lecture course is designed to provide students with an introduction to research on social influence. Particular attention will be given to reviewing theory and empirical research on conformity, compliance, and obedience. The first 9 weeks of the course will focus on covering basic research in these areas. The final 3 weeks will concentrate on applying findings from the social influence literature to understanding influence processes in various social contexts (e.g., political contexts, “brainwashing” contexts, and military psychological operations contexts).

Exams:

There will be two exams. These exams will be a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The midterm exam will include material covered in approximately the first half of the term. The final exam will primarily concentrate on material covered in the second half of the term. However, the final exam will include some questions that will require integration of material across the entire term. The emphasis of exam questions will be on material covered in lecture, but some questions will be drawn exclusively from the text or in-class videos. The midterm and final exams will be weighted such that

your best exam mark will be 50% of the total course mark and your lowest exam mark will be 38% of the total course mark. It is expected that students will write both exams. If there is a valid medical reason or other important life circumstance that requires a student to miss the midterm exam, the general policy will be to prorate the midterm exam to the final exam. However, in very special circumstances (e.g., non-attendance as part of an officially sponsored Queen's activity), an alternative exam date will be arranged. Exams are an essential component of the course and all students are required to complete at least one exam.

Homework:

There will be two homework assignments assigned during this course (each worth 4% of the total course mark). Both assignments will stress application of principles covered in lecture and the text to understanding social influence as it occurs in everyday life. Homework assignments will be posted in onQ at least 3 weeks prior to their due date. They will be submitted via onQ. It is expected that students will complete both homework assignments. If there is a valid medical reason or other important life circumstance that requires a student to not complete a homework assignment, the general policy will be to prorate the first homework assignment to the second homework assignment or to prorate the second homework assignment to the final exam. Homework assignments are an essential component of the course and all students are required to complete at least one homework. In the event of a due date extension, that extension cannot exceed a maximum of 2 weeks, which is the target date for students to receive feedback on their submitted assignments.

Discussion:

Contribution to weekly discussion boards available on OnQ will count towards 4% of your final grade. The spirit of these discussion boards is to encourage active engagement with the material and prompt debate and inspiration. Boards will open after Monday lectures and close Sundays at midnight. For a given week, a student can earn 0.5% credit for up to 2 substantive posts or replies. Thus, to earn full marks a student will have to post on at least 4 given weeks.

Grading:

- Midterm Exam (50% or 38%)
- Final Exam (50% or 38%)
- Homework 1 (4%)
- Homework 2 (4%)
- Discussion (4%)

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queens Official Grade Conversion Scale:

Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
A+	90-100

A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

Queen's Policy Statement on Academic Integrity

Queen's University is dedicated to creating a scholarly community free to explore a range of ideas, to build and advance knowledge, and to share the ideas and knowledge that emerge from a range of intellectual pursuits. Queen's students, faculty, administrators and staff therefore all have responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity. Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility and by the quality of courage. These values and qualities are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University.

The following statements from "The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity" (2nd edition), developed by the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI), contextualize these values and qualities:

1. **Honesty** Academic communities of integrity advance the quest for truth and knowledge through intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.
2. **Trust** Academic communities of integrity both foster and rely upon climates of mutual trust. Climates of trust encourage and support the free exchange of ideas which in turn allows scholarly inquiry to reach its fullest potential.
3. **Fairness** Academic communities of integrity establish clear and transparent expectations, standards, and practices to support fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, and administrators.
4. **Respect** Academic communities of integrity value the interactive, cooperative, participatory nature of learning. They honor, value, and consider diverse opinions and ideas.
5. **Responsibility** Academic communities of integrity rest upon foundations of personal accountability coupled with the willingness of individuals and groups to lead by example, uphold mutually agreed-upon standards, and take action when they encounter wrongdoing.
6. **Courage** To develop and sustain communities of integrity, it takes more than simply believing in the fundamental values. Translating the values from talking points into action -- standing up for them in the face of pressure and adversity — requires determination, commitment, and courage.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and adhering to the Senate [regulations](#) concerning academic integrity, along with [Faculty or School](#) specific information. Departures from academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation,

forgery and falsification. Actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning, to loss of grades on an assignment, to failure of a course, to requirement to withdraw from the university.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to working with students with disabilities to remove barriers to their academic goals. Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS), students with disabilities, instructors, and faculty staff work together to provide and implement academic accommodations designed to allow students with disabilities equitable access to all course material (including in-class as well as exams). If you are a student currently experiencing barriers to your academics due to disability related reasons, and you would like to understand whether academic accommodations could support the removal of those barriers, please visit the [QSAS website](#) to learn more about academic accommodations or start the registration process with QSAS by clicking *Access Ventus* button at [Ventus | Accessibility Services | Queen's \(queensu.ca\)](#)

VENTUS is an online portal that connects students, instructors, Queen's Student Accessibility Services, the Exam's Office and other support services in the process to request, assess, and implement academic accommodations.

To learn more go to: <https://www.queensu.ca/ventus-support/students/visual-guide-ventus-students>

Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances

Academic Consideration is a process for the University community to provide a compassionate response to assist students experiencing unforeseen, short-term extenuating circumstances that may impact or impede a student's ability to complete their academics. This may include but is not limited to,

- Short term Physical or Mental Illness or Injury (stomach flu, anxiety/depression, mononucleosis, concussion, broken bones, surgery, medical treatments, etc.)
- Traumatic Event/Confidential (Bereavement, serious injury, illness or required treatment for a significant other/family member or a traumatic event such as divorce, sexual assault, social injustice, etc.)
- Requirements by Law or Public Health Authorities (court dates, jury duty, requirements to isolate, etc.)
- Significant Event (varsity athletic event, distinguished event, serving in the Reserve Forces, etc.)

Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances. For more information, please see the [Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances](#).

Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. For more information, undergraduate students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences should consult the Faculty's webpage on [Academic Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances](#) and submit a request via the [Academic Consideration Request Portal](#). Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

Students are encouraged to submit requests as soon as the need becomes apparent and to contact their instructor and/or course coordinator as soon as possible once academic consideration has been granted. Any delay in contact may limit the options available for academic consideration.

For more information on the Academic Consideration process, what is and is not an extenuating circumstance, and to submit an Academic Consideration request, please see the Faculty of Arts and Science's [Academic Consideration website](#). ASO courses include links to information on Academic Consideration on your Course Homepage in onQ.

Please see the Teaching Team page for contact information for your instructor and TA(s), where relevant.

If you need to request academic consideration for this course, you will be required to provide the following name and email address to ensure it reaches our team accordingly:

Course Coordinator Name: Tara Karasewich

Course Coordinator email address: psyc.accom@queensu.ca

Students are encouraged to submit requests as soon as the need becomes apparent and to contact their Course Coordinator as soon as possible once Consideration has been verified. Any delay in contact may limit the Consideration options available.

Please follow up with Tara Karasewich using email (psyc.accom@queensu.ca) within 2 days of receiving verification of your Consideration request.

Timing of Final Examinations

Once the exam schedule has been finalized, the exam date will be posted on your SOLUS account. The exam dates for each term are listed on the Faculty of Arts and Science webpage under "[Important Dates](#)." Student exam schedules for the Fall Term are posted on SOLUS immediately prior to Thanksgiving and on the Friday before Reading Week for the Winter Term. Students should delay finalizing any travel plans until after the examination schedule has been posted. Exams will not be moved or deferred to accommodate employment, travel/holiday plans or flight reservations. For information regarding what is considered extenuating circumstances and qualifications for Academic Consideration, please visit the [Faculty of Arts and Science's Academic Consideration webpage](#).

Copyright of Course Material

Course materials created by the course instructor, including all slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other similar course materials, are the intellectual property of the instructor. It is a departure from academic integrity to distribute, publicly post, sell or otherwise disseminate an instructor's course materials or to provide an instructor's course materials to anyone else for distribution, posting, sale or other means of dissemination, without the instructor's express consent. A student who engages in such conduct may be subject to penalty for a departure from academic integrity and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

Course Outline

Dates	Topic	Readings
Week 1 (Jan 6, 8)	Introduction To Social Influence/Conformity Types of Social Influence Nondeliberative/Deliberative Processes Social Norms	Ch. 1
Week 2 (Jan 13, 15)	Conformity Sources of Influence in Conformity Types of Conformity Factors Regulating Conformity Behavioural Mimicry	
Week 3 (Jan 20, 22)	Compliance Introduction to Compliance Social Relationship Based Compliance - Liking - Reciprocity	Ch. 2, 5
Week 4 (Jan 27, 29)	Compliance Self-Concept/Belief Based Compliance - Reciprocity - Consistency	Ch. 3
Week 5 (Feb 3, 5)	Compliance Self-Concept/Belief Based Compliance (continued) - Consistency Assignment 1 Due (Feb 9)	
Week 6 (Feb 10, 12)	Compliance Self-Concept/Belief Based Compliance (continued) - Consistency	

	Midterm on Feb 12 (will cover material up to and including the Consistency Principle in Compliance)	
Reading Week	No Class	
Week 7 (Feb 24, 26)	Compliance Information Based Compliance - Authority - Social Proof - Scarcity	Ch. 4, 6, 7, 8
Week 8 (Mar 3, 5)	Obedience - Overview of the Milgram Procedure - Variations of the Milgram Procedure - Zimardo's Prison Study - Contemporary Obedience Research	None
Week 9 (Mar 10, 12)	Self-Influence - Habit Building - Environmental Triggers - Productivity - Parental Libertarianism Assignment 2 Due (March 15)	None
Week 10 (Mar 17, 19)	Special Topics in Social Influence - Politics	None
Week 11 (Mar 24, 26)	Special Topics in Social Influence – Brainwashing and Cults	None
Week 12 (Mar 31, Apr 2)	Special Topics in Social Influence - PSYOPS	None