

## Seminar in Social Influence (PSY 64600.007) Syllabus - Spring 2010

### *General Seminar Information:*

*Instructor:* Kip Williams  
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Home page: <http://williams.socialpsychology.org>

*Office hours:* By appointment.

*Seminar hours:* Wednesdays 1:30-4:20pm in Rec 117

*Books:* Cialdini, R. (2008). *Influence: Science and practice*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). NY: Prentice Hall.  
Milgram, S. (1974), *Obedience to authority: An experimental view*. NY: Harpercollins.  
Pratkanis, A., & Aronson, E. (1992). *Age of propaganda: The everyday use and abuse of persuasion*. NY: Freeman.

*Articles:* We will be generating this list; each of you will select a subset of this list to present to the class, but everyone should read all of the articles.

### *Seminar Plan and Philosophy:*

We will immerse ourselves into the exciting subfield of social psychology: social influence. As a seminar, I will not be lecturing. Instead, we will have lively group discussions along with student presentations. There will be one major written assignment: a research proposal written in APA style, that is due at the end of the semester.

There are some “classic” books in the field of which any student of social influence should be aware and knowledgeable. Thus, we will begin by reading and discussing three books. We will start with Milgram’s seminal work on obedience. Then we’ll read and discuss Cialdini’s book on social influence. Finally, we will focus on Pratkanis & Aronson’s book on propaganda. Once we have done this, we will take a step back and try to figure out what we mean by social influence. What does it include? What is excluded?

Then we will read more recent articles that represent current trends in social influence. Each of you will prepare brief PowerPoint presentations that synthesize 3-4 articles, provide questions, and lead class discussion.

### *Seminar Evaluation:*

Seminar grades will be based on the following three weighted components:

(I) *Presentations (1/3)*: I'm looking for concise, insightful, integrative syntheses of 3-4 recently published studies in social influence. There ought to be a theme, either manifest or latent, around which the articles can be viewed and discussed. These presentations should be no longer than 30 minutes, so that we have plenty of time for theoretical, methodological, and practical critiques, and suggestions for future work. You should prepare questions that guide the discussion. I value original thinking, not regurgitation.

(II) *Participation (1/3)*: Please keep in mind that the value of this seminar will be a function of the quality of individual contributions to each meeting. The seminar will succeed on the strengths of all of our efforts. We're all responsible for the quality of this seminar experience. Accordingly, please participate actively in all our meetings. I am looking for thoughtful analyses, critiques, suggestions for future research, links to other research, etc. It should be obvious from your participation that you read the material and thought about it.

(III) *Proposal (1/3)*: I'm looking for a concise (15 double-spaced pages, not including references, tables, or figures) APA-style proposal of a study (or set of studies) that contribute to our knowledge of social influence. The proposals should be realistic; that is, they should be proposing something that you could actually do (and, I hope some of you actually follow through and do them!). They can be field or lab (I have special affection for clever field experiments). They should be original. They should test theory. They could have practical value, but this is of secondary concern. I value cleverness: unusual insights from existing research and theory, non-obvious predictions, innovative manipulations and measures. In your Expected Results section, you should include one or more graphs depicting the main prediction(s). In the Expected Discussion section, you should assume you found what you expected, and talk about (a) what you found, (b) why it is theoretically important, (c) why it has practical significance (if it does), and (d) what follow-up studies would flow from this research. The title, abstract, intro, and method should read like any APA article (assume success in your abstract). This is a proposal; so when you present your methods and results, talk in future tense.

## Course Schedule for 64600.007 (Seminar: Social Influence)

Wednesdays in Rec 117 from 1:30-4:20pm

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Class Presenter/Leader</u>
Jan 13	Go over syllabus	K. Williams
Jan 20	Milgram: Obedience	K. Williams
Jan 27	SPSP – no class meeting	
Feb 3	Cialdini: Social Influence	
Feb 10		
Feb 17	Pratkanis & Aronson: Propaganda	
Feb 24	So, what is this social influence thing?	K. Williams
Mar 3		
Mar 10		
Mar 17	Spring Vacation – no class meeting	
Mar 24		
Mar 31		
Apr 7		
Apr 14	(I'm not sure if I'll be here this week)	
Apr 21		
Apr 28		