WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BRAIN SCIENCES

PSYCHOLOGY 396: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF EMPATHY
Fall 2019~MWF 3:00-3:50 PM
Rebstock 215

Instructor: Dr. Alan Lambert;
Office: 319B Psychology Building
Email: alambert@wustl.edu
Office Hours: Fridays 11:00-12:00 PM or by appointment

Assistants in Instruction (AIs)

Megan Wilson
Email: meganwilson@wustl.edu
Office hours: 1-2:30 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays
Office: 452B Psychology Building

David Grybinas
Email: davidgrybinas@wustl.edu
Office hours: 1:30-3:00 pm Monday and Wednesdays
Office: 351C Psychology Building

Course Description

In this course we shall explore the antecedents and consequences of empathic motivation, defined broadly. Along the way, we shall consider answers to several interesting questions: Why are some people generally more empathic than others? Are there cultural differences in levels of this trait? To what extent is empathy an “emotional” or “cognitive” phenomenon? We shall also consider the conditions under which empathy is associated with pro-social outcomes (e.g. reduce racial prejudice) but with recognition that empathy has a “darker” side, one that can ironically exacerbate people’s pre-existing biases. The approach to empathy will be highly interdisciplinary, as we shall consider research and theory within several fields within psychology (social, personality, cognitive) as well as areas that draw from other scholarly disciplines (e.g. social neuroscience, social anthropology, theology, religious studies).

Class Readings

Readings will consist of selected chapters and material from books and journal articles; these will be posted on Canvas well in advance of the date on which we will cover that material. There is no required text for this course (in the sense of students being required to purchase anything). The reading load for this course is not unusually heavy. However, relative to other introductory courses, the readings are written at a somewhat higher level (i.e. are more challenging). Taking separate notes on the reading (apart from notes from lecture) is strongly encouraged and you must do a careful reading of all of the assigned readings in order to do well in this course.

Class Attendance

Regular class attendance is required although we do not take formal attendance. You are responsible for everything covered in class, including lectures, films, remarks of guest speakers, and announcements. The class material complements the text but does not substitute for it. In some cases, material covered in class will overlap that in the textbook; in other cases, the lecture content will diverge from that of the text. Material covered in class forms a large part of the tests, and hence, your presence in every class is essential if you want to do well in this course.
Readings
Lectures will be structured assuming that students have already read the assigned material prior to coming to class. Therefore, it is important that you do the assigned reading before each class meeting. This will vastly improve your understanding and enjoyment of the lectures.

PowerPoint slides
PowerPoint slides will be posted online after each chapter is completely finished. So for example, if I happen to finish up the lecture on a Friday, then the slides for that chapter will be posted by the end of the day that Friday. However, if I finish the lecture for that chapter on the following Monday, I will post the slides at the end of the day on that Monday. This is often helpful for students as you go over your notes that you took in class. However, these slides are meant to SUPPLEMENT course notes taken during class and are NOT meant to be a “replacement” for actually attending.

Tests and Final Examination.
Your knowledge will be evaluated by three tests and an optional cumulative final examination. Note that taking the optional final can only help your grade, it cannot hurt you (presuming that you have taken the three previous exams). The dates, rooms, and times are listed below. Each test, as well as the final exam, will be worth 50 points and will be composed of multiple-choice questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Monday, September 30</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Rebstock 215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>Monday, November 4</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Rebstock 215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3</td>
<td>Friday, December 6</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Rebstock 215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Final</td>
<td>Thursday December 12</td>
<td>6:00--7:00 pm</td>
<td>Rebstock 215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE OPTIONAL FINAL EXAMINATION
The final exam is optional, provided that you take all three regularly scheduled exams. However, anyone who misses one of the regularly scheduled examinations for any reason other than a University-sponsored event MUST take the final examination. You may also elect to take the final examination to improve your score in the course. If you elect to take the final examination and your score on the final is greater than one of the three regularly scheduled exams, we will replace the lowest exam score with your score on the final exam. If your score on the final exam is lower than any of the regularly scheduled exams, then we will base your final grade on the three exam scores. Note that this means that taking the final cannot hurt your grade in any way, it can only improve your score.

POLICY ON MAKE UP EXAMS (Applies to all exams, required or optional)
There are no make-up examinations in this course, except for cases in which your attendance is required at a University-sponsored event, or because of a religious holiday. Because these events are known/planned well in advance, you must notify Dr. Lambert or one of the teaching assistants NO LATER THAN MONDAY, September 16th (no exceptions). This notification must be in the form of a written note explaining which exam you must miss and the University event that you will be attending. Please include the contact information of the faculty/staff advisor or sponsor of the event. Note: If you MIGHT be going to an out of town meet, but are not sure yet, you must still let me know ahead of time. Makeup exams may also be granted in the case of a true, catastrophic medical emergency or other comparable family emergency. However, these will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

SIX POINTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPATION (WITH OPTIONS)
As part of the requirements for this course, you are to participate in 6 hours of posted experiments. This is akin to a laboratory requirement in other sciences and serves to acquaint you with the methods and issues of contemporary psychology. Each hour of experimental participation is worth 1 point, for a total of 6 maximum
points. In a latter part of this syllabus, I have included a one-page sheet describing how to sign up for and participate in experiments. Every activity associated with participating in research, including checking how many experiment credits you have earned over the course of the semester, will be handled through our subject pool website. The website address will be provided on this handout.

**Other Options to Earning Your Six Points!**
If you would rather not earn credit through participation in research, you have other options:

**Option 1: Creative outside-of-class project (variable credit to be negotiated with instructor)**
Here is your chance to get creative. I will bend over backwards to allow students latitude and flexibility to earn their credits through any sort of project or exercise. For example, with the huge popularity of smart phones, and inexpensive video editing software, this allows people to easily create videos without a great deal of effort (certainly, less than the old days). Keep in mind that if you elected to shoot a video, we would be talking about a very short video, on the order of a few minutes. But again, this is only one idea. **The only constraint is that you receive approval by your instructor ahead of time. All requests for such projects must be received by Monday September 16th. This deadline is firm.**

**Option 2: Creative in-class project (variable credit to be negotiated with instructor)**
A few years ago some students got together to do a social psychologically-themed test of ESP on stage. It was creative, fun, instructive, relevant to the course material, and the rest of the class loved it. This is just one example, of course, it doesn’t have to be on ESP (and I’d rather you choose something else, in fact). But if you can come up some in-class project that meets all of these desiderata, you can earn up to six points that way too. Again, I will bend over backwards to give you as much flexibility as you want and need. But once again, the only constraint is that you receive approval by your instructor ahead of time. **All requests for such projects must be received by Monday September 16th. This deadline is firm.**

**Option 3: Attendance at one of the departmental colloquia (one credit per lecture)**
These are one-hour talks that typically are on most (but not all) Mondays, from 4-5 pm. Space for these talks is limited, and you must sign up for these in advance. Please keep in mind that this option is limited and relatively few students will be able to avail themselves of this option.

**Important:** no matter what you decide to do, it is up to you to make sure that you earn your six points by the last day of the semester, by 9 pm. Advance planning is key here. The instructor assumes no responsibility if you end up running out of time or experience other difficulties in getting your points.

**Grading**
Your grade will be based on (a) 3 exams, each worth 50 points (note that one of these may be the optional final), and (b) 6 additional points, which can be earned in any number of ways (see above). Thus, the maximum possible score in the course is 156. The grading scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89-92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85-88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>81-84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>77-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>69-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>65-68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>61-64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>57-60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>53-56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>53% or lower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade Appeals
If you feel strongly that your grade on some test was unfair, you have the right to appeal. In such cases, write a note stating (a) what test item you are questioning and (b) your rationale for the appeal. Such appeals MUST be submitted within one week in which grades for that exam are posted.

Extra Credit Points
You can earn two (2) additional extra credit point in this course by completing the on-line course evaluation at the end of the semester. (This is an all or none tabulation. If you complete the course evaluations, you will earn two extra credit points; if you don’t complete the evaluations, no points.). These points will be added to your total at the end of the class before we compute your percentages, which will still be based on a maximum of 156. For example, suppose you have 143 points from the exams and research participation. And suppose further that you earn the two extra credit points by completing the course evaluations. If so, you will end up with a total of 145 points, which would give you an A for the course (145/156) = 93%. (see note below about rounding). Course evaluations must be completed by Tuesday December 10th, at 5 pm. Please note that this is earlier than the official WU deadline, because we need these points in order to tabulate your initial grade prior to the optional final.

About rounding: After adding in your extra credit points (as applicable), your percentage is rounded once, to the nearest whole number. Ties round upward, in the student’s favor. Thus for example:

92.52 rounds to nearest whole number: 93.0
92.50 rounds to 93.0 (tie goes to student’s favor).
92.45 rounds to nearest whole number: 92.0
Tentative class schedule

This schedule may be subject to change pending extenuating circumstances.
Specific reading assignments for each upcoming lecture will be announced in class.

Excerpts from the following readings will be posted on Canvas.

---

Part 1: Monday August 26 through Friday September 27th

8/26: No assigned readings

Readings from Davis (1996): Background and Foundation

Note: Chapters are relatively short!

Chapter 1: History and Definition
Chapter 2: Evolutionary Origins
Chapters 3 and 4: Individual Differences
Chapter 5: Non-Affective outcomes
Chapter 6: Affective outcomes
Chapter 7: Altruism and Helping Behavior
Chapter 8: Aggression and Antisocial Behavior
Chapter 9: Social Relationships and Social Behavior

Exam 1: Monday, September 30th (In Class): Chapters 1-9 and anything covered in class.
Material from lecture and readings are weighted equally

---

Part 2: Wednesday October 2nd through Friday November 1st

Selected readings from Zaki (2019) and other short articles TBA

Exam 2: Monday, November 4th (In class): Any assigned readings and anything covered in class.
Material from lecture and readings are weighted equally

---

Part 3: Wednesday November 6 through Wednesday December 4th

Selected readings from Bloom (2016) and other short articles TBA

Exam 3: Friday, December 6th (In class): Assigned reading and anything covered in class
Material from lecture and textbook is weighted equally.

---

Optional Cumulative Final: Thursday Dec 12th 6:00PM - 7:00PM
(Note final exam is only one hour)
Commonsense etiquette during class

This course is based on a simple principle of mutual respect and politeness. Just as it is important for your instructor to act in a courteous and respectful way toward you, it is equally important for you to extend the same courtesy to your fellow students and also, the instructor. Empirical research shows that the following behaviors are judged to be equally disruptive to students and faculty:

a. Students talking with their neighbor after the instructor has begun lecturing. Students rate this as extremely annoying because it interferes with their ability to take notes. It is also distracting to your instructor and will inevitably prevent him or her from presenting the class material. Dr. Lambert will not repeat portions of their lecture that could not be heard because of others talking or because of other similar disruptions (see below). Thus, when you talk to your neighbor you may well be hurting the grades of others around you (and your grade, too!). Thus, once the instructor steps to the podium, as a courtesy to your fellow students and to your instructor, this is a signal to stop talking with your neighbor.

b. Coming in late. Class starts promptly at the top of the hour. If you come to class late, please select a seat in the back row; do not clamber over other students to find your usual “favorite” seat.

c. Ringing/beeping/using cell phones and pagers. Please turn off all phones and beepers before class begins.

d. Surfing the web in class. It is fine to bring a laptop to class in order to take notes. However, please limit your use to taking notes. It is distracting to other students and to the instructor to surf the web, check Facebook, watch YouTube, etc.

Student Resources:
Cornerstone: The Center for Advanced Learning, located on the South 40 at Gregg Hall, offers academic resources such as study groups, peer mentors, help desks, and course workshops to students seeking additional support in classes ranging from Chemistry and Calculus to Spanish and Freshman Writing. The Center also offers technological resources like programs for web design and learning style assessments. Those seeking disability information should contact Disability Resources at 935-5970 or link to Disability Services from the Cornerstone website (http://cornerstone.wustl.edu) for further information.
How to Participate in Experiments for Credit in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

As part of this course, you may earn credit by participating in one or more experiments being offered by the Department of Psychology. Read your syllabus carefully for information on how this credit factors into your final grade. Nearly all aspects of this participation, including registration as a user, signing up for experiments, and making sure that your instructor is notified of the points you have earned, is handled by our website. The website can be accessed at https://wupsych.sona-systems.com.

**Important Tips/Reminders for Earning Credit via Sona**

- **There is no connection between the Psychology and Business school subject pool websites.** They have separate logins and there is no transferring or sharing of credit of any sort between these two systems.

- **Alternatives to earning research credits:** If you would rather earn your credit in ways other than doing research, every instructor provides his or her students at least two alternatives: (a) attendance at colloquia or (b) a project (often a paper), the details of which will be arranged/negotiated with your instructor. Available colloquia will be posted on the subject pool website, typically within a week of the talk. Any deadlines for completing papers or other projects are set by instructors. Students are responsible for obtaining information about, and meeting, any relevant deadlines. Any questions about alternatives should be directed toward your instructor.

- **Questions about individual studies should be sent to the researcher who is conducting that study.** His or her email is easily obtained by clicking on the study in question.

- **Cancellation policy:** If you sign up for a session, you MUST show up on time, or cancel the session ahead of time within the cancellation window. Different studies may have different cancellation windows; make sure you make note of these when you sign up. Students who accumulate more than one (1) unexcused absence run the risk of being prohibited from earning research credit for the rest of the semester.

- **The last date to participate in experiments is the last day of regular class (Arts and Sciences schedule).** Experiments do not run into study/finals week. DO NOT DELAY completing your hours! There may be far fewer opportunities later in the semester and if you wait too long you may not be able to earn any credit at all. If you are a new user and/or need a new password, it is strongly advised that you register within the first month of the semester to avoid last-minute complications.

- **Lifetime research cap.** After students have earned a total of 24 research credits via the Psychology subject pool, a credit (typically, 6 points) is applied to your account by the webmaster. **Paid studies do NOT count towards this total.** THIS IS NOT DONE AUTOMATICALLY. You must contact the webmaster each semester in order to have these credits applied. Students are required to email the subject pool chair (Dr. Richard Abrams, rabrams@wustl.edu) within one (1) month of the beginning of the semester in order to use this option. Students who miss this deadline run the risk of not receiving credit.

- As noted above, students who have specific questions about a study should contact the researcher running that session; emails are always listed alongside the study as posted in Sona. Other questions (apart from study-specific issues) should be directed towards Dr. Richard Abrams, the subject pool chair, rabrams@wustl.edu)