APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY
Psychology 672: Contemporary Problems in Social Psychology
Fall, 2009

Instructor: Dr. Paul Boxer, Assistant Professor of Psychology
Office: Smith Hall 333
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11:00-12:00 and by appointment
Contact: pboxer @ psychology.rutgers.edu
Classroom: Smith Hall 371
Meeting times: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:50 pm

Course description:
What is applied psychology? How is psychology applied? What are the key differences and similarities between “applied” and “basic” psychology? This course will consider the multiple ways in which psychological science is applied to address problems and issues in the “real world.” The field of applied psychology cuts across disciplines, but applied psychological activities share a few important features in common including a general ethic of “evidence-based” or “empirically supported” practice, the constant interweaving of science and practice, interest in policy-level issues and recommendations, and concerns for the relation between internal and external validity. The goal of this course is to provide a broad survey of different methods and theories used and behavioral/social problems targeted by applied psychologists and other behavioral/social scientists using psychological methods or approaches to empirical inquiry.

Course requirements:
Class attendance and participation are expected. You are expected to be an engaged participant in any in-class group activities. You are responsible for all assigned readings. These should be read before each class so that you are prepared for lecture and discussion.

The instructor makes use of the Blackboard online course management system (http://blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu) for reading assignments and handling out-of-class assignments. All assigned articles for reading will be posted on Blackboard. If you are not familiar with the operation of Blackboard you are responsible for becoming familiar with it, and can request assistance from the instructor if need be.

Evaluation in this course will be based on the following:

1. Thought questions and impression notes: Four “thought questions” are due in class every week. These should be questions that can be applied to class discussion about the readings. These should be accompanied by “impression notes” – one to two
pages of commentary about the readings that reflect your own opinions and concerns in response to the material covered in the readings.

2. Weekly “real world” assignment: Each week students will bring in one newspaper article (printouts of on-line articles are fine; straight news only and no op-eds or analysis pieces) that relates in some way to the application of psychology covered in class each week. Students should be prepared to discuss and defend how psychology can in some way be applied to the topic of the article. Example: Incident this past summer of police officer arresting Henry Louis Gates in his home, and how research on implicit race bias could be applied to selecting community police officers. NOTE: This is not a writing assignment! Just bring in the article.

3. Rotating presentations: Except where noted in the calendar below, each week one student will present the readings of the day to the class, complemented by one new paper selected by the student. The format of the presentation is open, but the following goals should be met:
   a. The major findings of the class readings should be described, with special attention to the theories and methods utilized in the investigation.
   b. The new paper selected by the student should report a BASIC PSYCHOLOGY study that illuminates one or more of the theoretical aspects of the assigned applied psychology papers. For example: Applied studies of stress-reduction interventions for anxious patients would be complemented by a basic study of how activities designed to reduce stress impact sympathetic nervous system response.
   c. An electronic version of the paper selected by the student must be emailed to me (pboxer@psychology) one day prior to class so that it can be posted to Blackboard.

4. Research project grant proposal: A longer paper is due one week after the last day of class. This paper will follow the format of NIH grant proposals and describe a proposal for a new applied psychology research project conducted using theories, methods and measures of interest to you. Proposals will be presented on the last day of class and this is part of the total score on the final product. More detail on the paper will be discussed in class.

The breakdown of your final grade will be as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought questions/impression notes</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation/engagement</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project proposal final paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Course policies:

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. The instructor maintains a zero tolerance approach to academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Any instances of academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the policies and procedures of Rutgers University.

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus with adequate notice.