

# Social Psychology Seminar: The Seven Deadly Sins

PSY 430, Fall 2009

Monday / Wednesday 3:05 – 4:45

## Professor

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## Objective

There are multiple objectives of this course. First, students will gain an understanding of a variety of human behaviors maladaptive to the human and/or to society. Rather than exploring the sins from moral, religious, or philosophical viewpoints, we'll explore empirical studies that have identified important predictors, moderators, and behavioral outcomes associated with maladaptive behavior. Second, through exposure to primary articles, students will develop the ability to read research, understand research, and think about research like psychologists. Third, students will develop their speaking and writing skills by exploring a maladaptive behavior of their choosing.

## Your Responsibilities

- Discussion Topics.* By 5pm the night prior to each class, please submit three topics to me via email. Please present *one of each* (A, B, and C), and please include the word *Sins* in the subject line.
  - Critique:* Present a criticism of one of the studies and/or papers.
  - New Variable:* Present a new variable – either independent, subject, or dependent – that you think would have been interesting to include in one of the paper's studies. Explain what you think would have resulted had the variable been included.
  - Big Question:* Be broad, be big. Present a thoughtful, conceptual question about the topic in general rather than about any particular study or paper in particular. When possible, it's a good idea to relate the readings to other topics discussed in class – or any other topic from any other class, for that matter.
- Class Participation.* Your participation is essential for a successful seminar. Volunteer questions, ideas, criticisms, arguments, and insight of all kinds.
- Term Paper and Oral Presentation.* For the paper and presentation, you will choose which human behavior you feel qualifies to be the "Eighth Sin." You will soon receive handouts describing this assignment in more detail, but here's an overview:
  - When you have a behavior in mind, submit a brief paragraph arguing why that behavior can be categorized as an Eighth Sin, along with three relevant citations from PsycInfo that have explored the behavior (no need to summarize the papers – just the citations are fine at this point). Only one person can choose any behavior, and it's "first come first served," so don't delay.

- B. By Wednesday, October 7, you will submit a first draft of your paper. You will receive detailed feedback (and a grade) within one week of submission.
- C. Your final paper will be due on Monday, November 23.
- D. On November 9, 11, or 16, you will present a formal 20-minute presentation.

## Grading

Final course grades will be awarded as follows:

Thought Topic Submissions	20%
Class Participation	20%
Term Paper: First Submission	10%
Term Paper: Final Submission	30%
Oral Presentation	20%

## Course Schedule

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### WEEK 1: WELCOME

Week 1 is just Wednesday, September 9 – we'll get to know each other and talk about the course.

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### WEEK 2: MODERATORS

#### 2A. Delaying Gratification

1. Mischel, W., & Ebbesen, E. B. (1970). Attention in delay of gratification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 16, 329-337.
2. Shoda, Y., & Mischel, W. (1990). Predicting adolescent cognitive and self-regulatory competencies from preschool delay of gratification: Identifying diagnostic conditions. *Developmental Psychology*, 26, 978-986.
3. Wulfert, E., et al. (2002). Delay of gratification: Impulsive choices and problem behaviors in early and late adolescence. *Journal of Personality*, 70, 533-552.

#### 2B. Ego Depletion

1. Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. M. (1998). Ego depletion: Is the active self a limited resource? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1252-1265.
2. Govorun, O., & Payne, B. K. (2006). Ego-depletion and prejudice: Separating automatic and controlled components. *Social Cognition*, 24, 111-136.

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## WEEK 3: ENVY

### 3A: Self-Evaluation Maintenance Theory

1. Tesser, A., Millar, M., & Moore, J. (1988). Some affective consequences of social comparison and reflection processes: The pain and pleasure of being close. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 49-61.
2. Beach, S. R. H., et al. (1998). Pleasure and pain in doing well, together: An investigation of performance-related affect in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 923-938.

### 3B. Envy and Schadenfreude

1. Smith, R. H., et al. (1996). Envy and Schadenfreude. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 158-168.
2. Van Dijk, W. W., Ouwerkerk, J. W., Goslinga, S., Nieweg, M., & Gallucci, M. (2006). When people fall from grace: Reconsidering the role of envy in Schadenfreude. *Emotion*, 6, 156-160.
3. Leach, C. W., Spears, R., Branscombe, N. R., & Doosje, B. (2003). Malicious Pleasure: Schadenfreude at the Suffering of Another Group. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 932-943.

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## WEEK 4: LUST

### 4A: Information Processing and Decision Making

1. Clark, R. D., & Hatfield, E. (1989) Gender differences in receptivity to sexual offers. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality*, 2, 39-55.
2. Abbey, A. (1982). Sex differences in attributions for friendly behavior: Do males misperceive females' friendliness? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42, 830-838.
3. Ariely, D., & Loewenstein, G. (2006). The heat of the moment: The effect of sexual arousal on sexual decision making. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 19, 87-98.

### 4B: Infidelity, Mate Poaching

1. Schmitt, D. P., & Buss, D. M. (2001). Human mate poaching: Tactics and temptations for infiltrating existing mateships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 894-917.
2. Schmitt, D. P., & Shackelford, T. K. (2003). Nifty ways to leave your lover: The tactics people use to entice and disguise the process of human mate poaching. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29, 1018-1035.

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## WEEK 5: GLUTTONY

### 5A: The Person

1. Wansink, B., Painter, J. E., & North, J. (2005). Bottomless bowls: Why visual cues of portion size may influence intake. *Obesity Research, 13*, 93-100.
2. Vartanian, L. R., Herman, C. P., & Wansink, B. (2008). Are we aware of the external factors that influence our food intake? *Health Psychology, 5*, 533-538.
3. Chandon, P., & Wansink, B. (2007). The biasing health halos of fast-food restaurant health claims: Lower calorie estimates and higher side-dish consumption intentions. *Journal of Consumer Research, 34*, 301-314.

### 5B: Society

1. Faith, M. S., Fontaine, K. R., Baskin, M. L., & Allison, D. B. (2007). Toward the reduction of population obesity: Macrolevel environmental approaches to the problems of food, eating, and obesity. *Psychological Bulletin, 133*, 205-226.
2. Burton, S., Creyer, E. H., Kees, J., & Huggins, K. (2006). Attacking the obesity epidemic: The potential health benefits of providing nutrition information in restaurants. *American Journal of Public Health, 96*, 1669-1675.

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## WEEK 6: GREED

### 6A: Behavior in Social Dilemmas

1. Sheldon, K. M., & McGregor, H. A. (2000). Extrinsic value orientation and the tragedy of the commons. *Journal of Personality, 68*, 383-411.
2. Weber, J. M., & Murnighan, J. K. (2008). Suckers or saviors? Consistent contributors in social dilemmas. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, 1340-1353.

### 6B: Materialism

1. Ahuvia, A. (2008). If money doesn't make us happy, why do we act as if it does? *Journal of Economic Psychology, 29*, 491-507.
2. Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1993). A dark side of the American dream: Correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*, 410-422.

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## WEEK 7: SLOTH

### 7A: Procrastination

1. Tice, D. M., & Baumeister, R. F. (1997). Longitudinal study of procrastination, performance, stress, and health: The costs and benefits of dawdling. *Psychological Science*, 8, 454-458.
2. Fritzsche, B. A., Young, B. R., & Hickson, K. C. (2003). Individual differences in academic procrastination tendency and writing success. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 1549-1557.
3. Ariely, D., & Wertenbroch, K. (2002). Procrastination, deadlines, and performance: Self-control by precommitment. *Psychological Science*, 13, 219-224.

### 7B: Social Loafing

1. Latané, B., Williams, K., & Harkins, S. (1979). Many hands make light the work: The causes and consequences of social loafing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 822-832.
2. Kerr, N. L. (1983). Motivation losses in small groups: A social dilemma analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45, 819-828.
3. Kerr, N. L., & Bruun, S. E. (1983). Dispensability of member effort and group motivation losses: Free-rider effects. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44, 78-94.

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## WEEK 8: VANITY

### 8A: High Self Esteem

1. Bushman, B. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (1998). Threatened egotism, narcissism, self-esteem, and direct and displaced aggression: Does self-love or self-hate lead to violence? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 219-229.
2. Kernis, M. H., Grannemann, B. D., & Barclay, L. C. (1989). Stability and level of self-esteem as predictors of anger arousal and hostility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 1013-1022.

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## WEEKS 8 & 9: WRATH

### 8B: Situational Effects

1. Bushman, B. J., & Cooper, H. M. (1990). Effects of alcohol on human aggression: An integrative research review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *107*, 341-354.
2. Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (1997). Hot years and serious and deadly assault: Empirical tests of the heat hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*, 1213-1223.

### 9A: Cultural Effects

1. Cohen, D., Nisbett, R. E., Bowdle, B. F., & Schwarz, N. (1996). Insult, aggression, and the Southern culture of honor: An experimental ethnography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70*, 945-960.
2. Cohen, D., Vandello, J., Puente, S., & Rantilla, A. (1999). When you call me that, smile! How norms for politeness, interaction styles, and aggression work together in Southern culture. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *62*, 257-275.
3. Vandello, J. A., & Cohen, D. (2003). Male honor and female fidelity: Implicit cultural scripts that perpetuate domestic violence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 997-1010.

### 9B: Media Effects

1. Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1963). Imitation of film-mediated aggressive models. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *66*, 3-11.
2. Anderson, C. A., & Dill, M. E. (2000). Video games and aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the laboratory and in life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *78*, 772-790.
3. Bushman, B. J., & Anderson, C. A. (2001). Media violence and the American public: Scientific facts versus media misinformation. *American Psychologist*, *56*, 477-489.

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## WEEKS 10 & 10½ : THE EIGHTH SIN: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

## Important Policies

*Absences.* If you know that you will miss a class due to religious observances or athletic competition, please let me know no later than the week *prior* to the class to be missed.

*Late Submissions.* Papers are expected at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. Papers submitted later in the day will be subject to a 20% deduction. Papers submitted the following day are subject to a 30% deduction; the next day, 50%; while papers submitted more than two days late will not be accepted.

*Disabilities.* It is the policy of Union College to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and wish to request accommodations to complete the course requirements, please make an appointment with me. All discussions will remain confidential.

*Academic Dishonesty.* Judicial action will be taken against any student engaging in dishonest behaviors. Dishonest behavior includes, but certainly is not limited to plagiarism on any assignment, collaboration with fellow students on any assignment, or dishonesty during examinations. *Although discussion with your classmates about readings and independent assignments is encouraged, collaboration - working jointly toward the completion of an assignment - is not.* Students are advised to consult the Union College Statement on Plagiarism available online at [www.union.edu/PUBLIC/LIBRARY/refroom/statement.htm](http://www.union.edu/PUBLIC/LIBRARY/refroom/statement.htm).

*Schedule Changes.* Although I intend to follow the Schedule, I reserve the right to make changes if necessary. Such changes, if any, will be clearly stated in class; it is the student's responsibility to be aware of such changes by attending class.

*WAC Requirement.* Because this class fulfills a WAC requirement, failure to submit either draft of the paper constitutes a failure in the course.

