

Course Syllabus

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Obedience

Fall 2023

Instructor: Edward (Ed) Royzman, Ph.D

Meeting time: Thursday, 1:45-4:45 PM

Meeting place: Solomon, C-16 (tentative)

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Office hours: by appointment

1. General overview.

Though more than half a century old, Milgram's 1961-1962 studies of "destructive obedience" continue to puzzle, fascinate, and alarm. I believe that one reason for their continued grip on the field's attention is simply that they leave us with a portrait of human nature that is radically different from the one that we personally wish to endorse or that the wider culture teaches us to accept. In this seminar, we will take an in-depth look at these famous studies (along with the more recent replications) and explore their psychological, historical, and philosophical ramifications.

As with other seminars, this course has a number of goals that go beyond just enhancing one's understanding of a particular field (important as it may be).

One such a goal is to enable you to think critically (though not disparagingly) about other people's research and theoretical claims that ensue from it, all with the hope that you can then apply the self-same critical acumen to the work.


Second, I hope that our interactions throughout the course will offer a hospitable environment for developing (and exchanging) some insights of your own. Your work on your individual reaction papers and on the term paper in particular will be key to achieving that goal.

Lastly, I hope that, along with other upper-level courses, this seminar will offer a sensible (yet informal) introduction to research methodology and research ethics . This objective will be met primarily through class discussions, "doing psychology" exercises, and, of course, the course readings.

2. Course format, discussion facilitation and participation.

The format of our class sessions will vary and will include some combination of lectures, film screenings, in-class exercises, and, above all, discussions.

With respect to the latter, the idea is to have a trio of students co-lead / facilitate a discussion related to some of the readings, with each designated team developing a set of "discussion starter/facilitator" questions, then moderating discussions we have in response to these questions.

You will find the discussion leader/facilitator sign-up sheet [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RpmT8AcPsOyNNsKkT2Hm-oW0bB67R0zOhu8E2XW_Jjl/edit?pli=1)  (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RpmT8AcPsOyNNsKkT2Hm-oW0bB67R0zOhu8E2XW_Jjl/edit?pli=1). (We will discuss this further in our first class session).

As with any capstone seminar, participation is **paramount**.

Participation means:

Attending and taking part in class discussions.

Providing constructive criticisms in response to your fellow students' presentation of their ideas, observations, and data.

Being an active participant in class exercises.

The most basic prerequisite for being an active participant is, of course, attendance. The expectation is that you will attend every single class and that, if you must miss a class for medical reasons, you will obtain a note from a health professional that states you were either unable to come to the class or were advised against it for health-related reasons.

3. Reaction papers and term papers.

The class involves two types of writing endeavors:

Reaction papers

Much of the success of this class rests with the students and their level of preparation. To assure that preparation is indeed high, and to form a further basis for participation evaluation, there is a one-page (single-spaced) reaction paper/commentary that each student is required to submit for **the five** core class sessions two days before a given class (i.e., Tuesday, 1:30 pm ET). (Students should also be ready to present their papers in class).

A typical reactions paper will include a critique, analysis, and/or integration of the assigned readings for a given week. This aside, the assignment is intentionally open-ended and subject to interpretation. The only rule is that each paper should cover at least two of that week's readings (and attempt to show a connection between them) and that the papers should express your opinions about what you read rather than be simply a summary of the readings.

I am hoping for some good discussion throughout the course, and I hope that doing some advanced thinking necessary to write each paper will encourage that.

Term papers

The purpose of the term paper is to give you the opportunity to explore in greater depth a course-related idea that intrigues you the most. As such, each paper will be a review, a critique or a reflection on any aspect of the phenomenon of obedience and/or its various ramifications. Each 8-10 page (double-spaced) paper must include a 150-200 word abstract, "Concluding remarks", and a bibliography that features at least five references (which could be a book or a journal article), at least three of which should be other than those that were part of this class.

The paper must be typed, justified, and in 12-point Times News Roman font, with 0.5 inch margins on all sides except for the 1-inch margin on the left.

Additional information about the format and the content of the paper as well as ideas for possible topics will be discussed in class. The due date for the paper will be finalized towards the end of the course, but it will be due no sooner than a week after the last day of the class.

4. Evaluation.

Each **reaction paper** will be worth 5 points and the **capstone paper** will be worth 40 points. **Class participation** will be worth 20 points. Your performance as part of a **discussion starter/moderator** team will be worth 5 points. The **"influence"** exercise (that we will talk through in class) will be worth 10 points.

The point-to-grades cutoffs are as follows:

> 93	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
<84	B-



5. Readings.

The principal readings for the course are contained in (1) Stanley Milgram's "Obedience to authority" (henceforth, OTA) and (2) electronic materials linked to below.

Schedule (subject to change)

8/31. Introductions and overview. Definition of terms. Course logistics.

9/7. Milgram, the man: "a scholar and a gentleman." Watch (in class): *Experimenter*.

Read: OTA, Chs. 1-4. [Milgram \(1963\). Obedience to Authority \(https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716257/download?wrap=1\)](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716257/download?wrap=1)  (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716257/download?download_frd=1) . [Milgram \(1973\). Perils of obedience \(optional\). \(https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716306/download?wrap=1\)](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716306/download?wrap=1)  (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716306/download?download_frd=1)

9/14*. The obedience studies: getting down the facts. Watch (in class): *Obedience*. *Reaction paper 1 is due*.

Read: OTA. Chapters 6,8,9. [Shanab & Yahya \(1974\) \(optional\). Behavioral study of obedience in children](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716293/download?wrap=1) [↓](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716293/download?download_frd=1) [↓](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716284/download?wrap=1) [↓](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716284/download?download_frd=1) [Burger \(2009\). Replicating Milgram](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716256/download?wrap=1) [↓](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716256/download?download_frd=1) [Elms \(2009\). Obedience lite \(a commentary on Burger\).](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716256/download?download_frd=1) [↓](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716256/download?download_frd=1)

9/21. Stanford prison experiment: Another replication? Watch (in class): *Quiet Rage*.

Read: [Reicher & Haslam \(2006\). Rethinking the psychology of tyranny](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Rethinking-the-psychology-of-tyranny%3A-the-BBC-Reicher-Haslam/fadb67dd6bb54b7dc07eb577fde1c0a33a7ba3a1) [↗](http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/pdfs/bjsp%20(2006)%20zimbardo%20commentary.pdf) [Zimbardo \(2006\). Response](http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/pdfs/bjsp%20(2006)%20zimbardo%20commentary.pdf) [↗](https://www.wired.com/story/beware-the-epiphany-industrial-complex/) [The lifespan of a lie](https://www.wired.com/story/beware-the-epiphany-industrial-complex/) [↗](https://gen.medium.com/the-lifespan-of-a-lie-d869212b1f62) [The informed consent forms used in SPE](https://gen.medium.com/the-lifespan-of-a-lie-d869212b1f62) [↗](http://pdf.prisonexp.org/consent.pdf) [.](http://pdf.prisonexp.org/consent.pdf)

9/28*. Milgram vs. Orne: Did they really buy it? *Reaction paper 2 is due.*

Read: OTA. Chapter 14, ps. 169-174/ sections 1 and 2. [Orne & Evans \(1965\). Social control in a psychological experiment.](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716279/download?wrap=1) [↓](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716279/download?download_frd=1) [Patten \(1977\). Milgram's shocking experiments](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716276/download?wrap=1) [↓](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716276/download?download_frd=1) [Ingram \(1977\). Deception, obedience and authority \(a reply to Patten\).](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716300/download?wrap=1) [↓](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716300/download?download_frd=1)

10/5. Explaining Milgram. The "followership" controversy.

Watch: (<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/watch/aftershock-obedience-identity>) *Aftershock*.

Read: [Haslam & Reicher \(2018\)](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716315?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716315?wrap=1>)
↓ (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716315/download?download_frd=1) . [Hollander & Turowertz \(2018\)](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716304?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716304?wrap=1>)
↓ (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716304/download?download_frd=1) .

Also [The bystander effect](http://faculty.babson.edu/krollag/org_site/soc_psych/latane_bystand.html). ↗ (http://faculty.babson.edu/krollag/org_site/soc_psych/latane_bystand.html)

Happy Fall break!



10/19*. Milgram vs. Baumrind: the ethics of deception. *Reaction paper 3 is due.*

Read: [Baumrind \(1964\). Some thoughts on ethics of research](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716313/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716313/download?wrap=1>)
↓ (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716313/download?download_frd=1) . [Milgram \(1964\). Reply to Baumrind](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716308/download?wrap=1).
(<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716308/download?wrap=1>)
↓ (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716308/download?download_frd=1)


[Patten \(1977\). The case that Milgram makes](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716288/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716288/download?wrap=1>)
↓ (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716288/download?download_frd=1) . [APA ethical guidelines \(look through pages 1-4\)](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716317/download?wrap=1)
(<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716317/download?wrap=1>)
↓ (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716317/download?download_frd=1) .

10/26 Watch at home: [The Holocaust \(a brief history\)](https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/watch/the-holocaust-2?context=channel:adolf-eichmann) (<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/watch/the-holocaust-2?context=channel:adolf-eichmann>) . *Conspiracy*.



(HBO, 2001).

Read: OTA. Chapter 14, ps. 174-178 / section 3. [Browning \(1998\). Ordinary men \(excerpt\)](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716253/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716253/download?wrap=1>) 
 (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716253/download?download_frd=1) . [Goldhagen interview](https://charlierose.com/videos/6203)  (<https://charlierose.com/videos/6203>) .

11/2*. Milgram and the Holocaust (The men of Police Battalion 101). *Reaction paper 4 is due.*

Read: [Zangwill \(2003\). Perpetrator motivation: Some reflections on the Browning/Goldhagen debate](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716307/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716307/download?wrap=1>) 
 (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716307/download?download_frd=1) . [Browning interview](https://charlierose.com/videos/13707).  (<https://charlierose.com/videos/13707>)

11/9*. Milgram and Eichmann: a case study in destructive obedience? *Reaction paper 5 is due.*

Read: [Arendt \(1963\). Eichmann in Jerusalem](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716289/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716289/download?wrap=1>)  (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716289/download?download_frd=1) . [Cesarani \(2004\). Eichmann: his life and crimes](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716322/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716322/download?wrap=1>) 
 (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716322/download?download_frd=1)





Watch: *The Specialist* (1999).

11/16. Watch and discuss: *Sophie Scholl: the final days* (2005). (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716322/download?wrap=1>)

11/21. Term papers previews.

Happy Thanksgiving!

11/30. Did Milgram kill off character? Milgram and Moral luck. Case study in moral luck--- Sophie Scholl and the White Rose? The social influence exercise.











Read: [Harman \(1999\). Moral philosophy meets social psychology](https://www.princeton.edu/~harman/Papers/Virtue.html)  (<https://www.princeton.edu/~harman/Papers/Virtue.html>). [Nagel \(1976\). Moral luck](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716312/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716312/download?wrap=1>)  (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716312/download?download_frd=1) . esp. last paragraph on page 5 through the first two paragraphs on page 6. Articles on the White Rose [1](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716320/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716320/download?wrap=1>)  (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716320/download?download_frd=1) and [2](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716319/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716319/download?wrap=1>)  (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/files/123716319/download?download_frd=1) .

12/7. Term papers preview. Influence strategy exercise. Concluding thoughts.

Final paper is due: TBA (please e-mail to edwardroyzman@yahoo.com (<mailto:edwardroyzman@yahoo.com>)).

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
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Date	Details	Due
Tue Sep 12, 2023	 Reaction Paper 1 (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342955)	due by 3pm
Tue Sep 26, 2023	 Reaction Paper 2 (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342956)	due by 3pm
Tue Oct 17, 2023	 Reaction Paper 3 (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342957)	due by 3pm
Tue Oct 31, 2023	 Reaction Paper 4 (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342958)	due by 3pm
Tue Nov 7, 2023	 Reaction Paper 5 (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342959)	due by 3pm
Thu Dec 7, 2023	 Doing psychology: Social influence strategy exercise (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342952)	due by 3pm
	 Capstone paper (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342950)	
	 Discussion facilitation (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342951)	
	 Extra credit (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342953)	
	 Participation (https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1737979/assignments/11342954)	