Attitudes and Attitude Measurement
Psychology 5306

Professor: Stephen L. Crites, Jr., Ph.D.
Office: 222D Psychology Building
E-mail: scrites@utep.edu Phone: 747-6571
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday – 9:00-10:00 (or by appointment)

Text: None – The reading materials for this course will be theoretical and empirical articles. I will place a folder in the main office with the course readings so you can make photocopies at your convenience.

Course Overview: The objective of this course is to review the current attitude theory. Attitudes are an integral construct in many areas of contemporary research – marketing and consumer behavior, eating, health, prejudice, self-perception, interpersonal relations, jury decision making, politics, etc. This class will review: what attitudes are and how do they relate to other psychological constructs (e.g., personality, emotion, mood, stereotypes, and beliefs); how can attitudes be measured (including instances in which people do not wish to report their attitudes); the mechanisms through which attitudes can be changed; ways in which attitudes guide thinking and behavior, and other issues that are relevant to attitude theory.

Classroom Procedures: This is a seminar course and class participation is a necessary and essential part of the course. To help facilitate classroom discussion and participation, you will be required to hand-in thought papers over the weekly reading(s) at the beginning of each class. In these papers, you should discuss your thoughts and reactions to the assigned reading(s) – this might be questions about ideas that were unclear, ideas on which you agree or disagree with the author(s), research ideas related to the readings, thoughts about the practical importance of findings or ideas, ideas about how certain ideas might extend to other research domains, etc.

Grades: Grades will be based on the thought papers and class participation (60%) and two writing assignments (20% each).

Thought Papers: Each week you will be required to complete a single thought paper (1 to 2 pages) about the week’s reading or readings. The objective of these papers is to encourage you to think critically about the readings and think about how ideas in the readings relate to your own research interests. There are no formal rules regarding the content or format of these papers – you may write about any topic or idea that occurred to you based on the readings. These thought papers are due one hour before class.

Writing Assignments: There will be two more formal writing assignments in the semester. The purpose of these papers is to help you express your ideas succinctly and coherently. Thus, you should attempt to provide a reasoned analysis of a single topic. I will carefully review these papers and provide you with suggestions about improving the papers specifically and your writing more generally. You will then need to revise each paper and return it to me.
Readings

Required Readings (12 pt. font)

Secondary Readings (indented and 10 pt. font)

Week 1 (1/14): Course Overview and Brief Introduction to Attitudes
None

Week 2 (1/21): Overview of Attitudes

Week 3 (1/28): Measuring Attitudes

Week 4 (2/4): Attitudes & Behavior
Week 5 (2/11): Persuasion

Week 6 (2/18): Norms & Social Influence

Week 7 (2/25): Context Effects & Measurement

Week 8 (3/3): Self-evaluation

Week 9 (3/10): Implicit Processes/Measures
Week 10 (3/17): NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Week 11 (3/24): Effective Persuasion

Week 12 (3/31): NO CLASS (Caesar Chavez Day)

Week 13 (4/7): Health Attitudes

Week 14 (4/14): Values

Week 15 (4/21): Psychophysiological Measures
Cacioppo, J. T., Petty, R. E., Losch, M. E., & Crites, S. L. (1994). Psychophysiological approaches to attitudes: Detecting affective dispositions when people won't say, can't say, or don't even know. In S. Shavitt & T. C. Brock (Eds.), *Persuasion: Psychological insights and perspectives*. (pp. 43-69).

Week 16 (4/28): To Be Announced