



GRADING RUBRIC EXAMPLES For My Social and Cultural Psychology Courses



Abstract: This document shows the application of my grading principles and rubric to essays and activities for my social psychology and cultural psychology courses. It identifies the types of questions asked in these courses and provides examples of actual questions and graded answers. These examples are intended to help students be properly prepared before taking exams in my courses.

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Sample Graded Essay Questions

A 4-Point Short Essay Question from Social Psychology with a Sample Student Answer

- In your opinion, what is the most prominent concept in the study of social interaction (conflict, aggression, prejudice, and prosocial behavior)? Describe the important terms and principles of a theory that incorporates this concept.**

I believe that helping theory is the most important concept. I would like to believe that humanity is naturally good but this theory shows that the presence of possible benefits and of other people actually determine how we react. It is this theory of helping where people go through stages on the way to help others. First people need to see the emergency. Then you finally interpret the event as an emergency. Next you take responsibility for helping and then you decide on how to help. Finally you provide help. I never thought people could be so callous, but with cases like the Kitty Genowveve case it shows that the knowledge of these steps may improve the chances to help.

Category		Satisfactory	Good
Theories & Concepts (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
Interpretation & Integration (0-1 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Some errors <input type="checkbox"/> Unorganized	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proper Format for Question <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Few Grammatical/Spelling Errors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focused and Integrated Organization	

Essay Grade:
3/4 Points

- The answer does indeed describe an important theoretical perspective on helping, but it is not as detailed as it could be. Whose theory is being described? Why is this theory chosen as the most important?
- The answer is reasonably focused (it was about one-half of an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper). While the writing is a bit informal and there are a few errors, it (barely) meets expectations.

A 10-Point Essay Question from Social Psychology with a Sample Student Answer

2. The field of social psychology endured significant critique during the 1960s and 1970s. What were the most important elements of this critique and how has this altered the study of human social behavior?

During the 60s and 70s, social psychology was criticized for two primary reasons: 1 - it did not take history and culture into account and 2 - its use of research methods suffered from ethical problems.

The textbook notes that many of the studies conducted in social psychology through the 70s were primarily on American-college students (just like the studies I had to participate in for my Intro Psych credit last year!). The field increased the number of cross-cultural studies during the 90s (they mention a study by Markus on the self). This has led to an improvement of the field.

The second challenge (unethical studies) resulted largely from Milgram’s famous “shock” study of obedience. This study caused debate because some believed that it was unethical - how can you ethically shock people and not let them leave the experiment? There are many everyday topics we want to know more about (such as aggression and romantic relationships), but the field needs to find ethical ways of studying these topics. Following the Milgram study, the field increased the number of ethical standards research needs to follow.

Each of these challenges to the field is important because they represent a more “pluralistic” approach to research, where many different methods are used. They show that the history of social psychology research has a very real application to everyday life.

Category	Unacceptable	Problematic	Satisfactory	Good
Theories & Concepts (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
Everyday Applications (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
Research Evidence (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
Interpretation & Integration (0-1 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Improper Format for Question <input type="checkbox"/> Several Grammatical/Spelling Errors <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or Haphazard Organization		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proper Format for Question Few Grammatical/Spelling Errors Focused and Integrated Organization	

**Essay Grade:
9/10 Points**

- The student uses terms from the literature (jargon such as “pluralistic”) and they are defined. The two primary criticisms are described in sufficient detail in separate paragraphs.
- The answer uses several everyday applications (e.g., Intro Psychology experiences, aggression) to support the answer and they are integrated into the answer.
- The main points are supported by research. However, the essay does not provide enough study details to demonstrate the relevance of the study to the question.
- The answer is reasonably focused (it was about 2.5 hand-written pages in a Blue Book). While the writing is a bit informal, it meets expectations for an in-class essay.

A 10-Point Essay Question from Psychology and Culture with a Sample Student Answer

3. Historically, psychology has not always incorporated cultural issues into its field of study. What impact has this had on the field? What challenges does this pose for our understanding of human behavior?

In the past, culture was basically nonexistent - that it wasn't important or didn't matter - in psychology. However, by doing cross-cultural research, psychologists discovered that there are major differences between cultures and this has had a huge impact on the field.

It is now recognized that attitudes, beliefs, values, etc. can have impact on how people behave and see the world. Cross-cultural psychologists now care and conduct research on emics (culture specific psychological principles) and etics (universal "truths") and the role they play in culture. This has opened up a new understanding for why people are different and provide more accurate results in studies because what was once believed to be true for all people is now shown to be false in some cultures.

Challenges are still posed in certain aspects of the field, particularly in the conduct of research. Cross-cultural has had to pay attention to aspects of research that were not an issue in earlier research: problems in defining culture, problems in sampling, problems in translation, etc. The study on marital satisfaction (I don't know the source, sorry!) demonstrates the difficulties of cross-cultural research.

Overall, the inclusion of culture into psychological research has led to a greater variety of research topics, research methods (for example, Pe Pau's indigenous methods), and research findings. It has challenged psychologists to think more about the impact of culture on all aspects of human thought and behavior.

Essay Grade:
4/10 Points

Category			Satisfactory	Good
Theories & Concepts (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described <input type="checkbox"/> No Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Thorough
Everyday Applications (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described <input type="checkbox"/> No Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Thorough
Research Evidence (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described <input type="checkbox"/> No Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Thorough
Interpretation & Integration (0-1 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Improper Format for Question <input type="checkbox"/> Several Grammatical/Spelling Errors <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or Haphazard Organization		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proper Format for Question <input type="checkbox"/> Few Grammatical/Spelling Errors <input type="checkbox"/> Focused and Integrated Organization	

- The student uses terms from the literature (jargon such as "etic" or "emic") and they are defined. But what exactly is a "universal truth" in psychology? Has psychology really ignored culture?
- The essay provides no everyday applications of the knowledge. For example, how might your personal beliefs about psychology be flawed because of this lack of research?
- References are made to research (for example, the marital satisfaction study and to Pe Pau's method). But how does the study demonstrate the main point and tie into the answer?
- The answer is reasonably focused (about 3 hand-written pages in a Blue Book). While the writing is quite informal (e.g., use of contractions, first person, etc.), it meets expectations for an in-class essay.

Sample Graded Activities

A 3-Point In-Class Activity from Social Psychology with a Sample Student Answer

Your Group Task: In the space below, identify factors that you believe influence bystander intervention. For each type, please provide: 1) a clear name or label for that factor, 2) the important principle or logic behind that factor, and 3) at least one example that fits that factor.

Factor Influencing Helping	Explanation and an Everyday Example
<p>Label for This Factor:</p> <p>Observation of a helpful model</p>	<p>Brief Explanation of the Main Principle Behind this Factor:</p> <p>When someone helps another person, we should be doing the same thing. Assume responsibility.</p> <p>Brief Example Where This Factor Influences Helping:</p> <p>At the grocery store, helping an elderly person load their care. Or holding the door open for someone.</p>
<p>Label for This Factor:</p> <p>Not in a hurry</p>	<p>Brief Explanation of the Main Principle Behind this Factor:</p> <p>When people are not in a rush, they're more willing to intentionally intervene to help.</p> <p>Brief Example Where This Factor Influences Helping:</p> <p>Loading groceries, helping someone (neighbor) rake their yard, get their mail.</p>
<p>Label for This Factor:</p> <p>Few other bystanders</p>	<p>Brief Explanation of the Main Principle Behind this Factor:</p> <p>The person may not feel judged if they choose to help someone that others may be intimidated by.</p> <p>Brief Example Where This Factor Influences Helping:</p> <p>Helping someone who is handicapped complete a task they may not be able to do on their own. Giving up a seat on a bus.</p>

Category	Excellent	Satisfactory	Good
Part I: Applications (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Inaccurate	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough

Activity Grade:
2/3 Points

- The labels for the factors are a bit vague, but the brief explanations do help to clarify what the student is thinking. However, the examples are not always clearly and explicitly an application of the factor that has been described. The student should have been clearer about how giving up a seat on a bus is related to "few other bystanders."
- Note that writing style (grammar, etc.) is not evaluated here. Therefore, there is no deduction for the sentence fragments.

A 3-Point Out-of-Class Activity from Social Psychology with a Sample Student Answer

An Individual Task: Consider what empirical studies have shown about how Latane and Darley’s model of bystander intervention help us to integrate the various findings about helping. How has research supported the model by looking at helping in general (and bystander intervention in particular)?

Summary of a Relevant Empirical Study
<p>Brief Descriptive “Title” of the Study: Bystander Experiment</p> <p>Author(s) and Year of the Study: Latane and Darley, 1970</p>
Basic Details of the Study
<p>What were the Goals of the Study and How Where They Tested?</p> <p>The goal of this study was to see how bystanders affect intervention in emergency situations. To do this, they conducted four dozen experiments that compared help given by bystanders who perceived themselves to be either alone or with others.</p>
<p>What are the Specific Findings of this Study?</p> <p>In about 90 percent of the comparisons, lone bystanders were more likely to help. If people believe that they are alone, they are more likely to help. It is less likely that a victim will get help when many people are around. As the number of bystanders increase, any given bystander is less likely to notice the incident, less likely to interpret the incident as a problem or emergency, and less likely to assume responsibility for taking action.</p>
<p>How does this Study Answer the Question for this Activity?</p> <p>Latane and Darley’s experiments definitely helped support their model. They helped develop the definition of the bystander effect. In a way the bystander effect is like social loafing in a sense that when other people are around, responsibility is split between who is there.</p>

Activity Grade:
2/3 Points

Category		Satisfactory	Good
Part I: Applications (0-3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described <input type="checkbox"/> No Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Thorough

- Most of the material here is good. However, the student could have provided more detail about how the studies were actually conducted. Similarly, the link between the studies’ results should be made more direct.
- Although the writing style (grammar, etc.) is not officially evaluated here, notice that the writing is in complete sentences.