

Emily Smith  
Honors US History- Dr. Ross  
May 21, 2018

### The Stanford Prison Experiment: Conclusion

While the results of the Stanford Prison Experiment are crucial to the ongoing debate over prison reform, I took to interest in the topic because of the psychological findings. I was intrigued by how educated, civil men could transform in such little time into people resembling the mentally unstable. It still fascinates me. The experiment is better remembered for its psychological discoveries, so alongside a paper I decided to write a journal so I could show my interpretations of the changes both the prisoners and the guards underwent during the experiment. After closely analyzing the behavior, I am still astounded at the mental journey that took place in these men over the course of five days. At the beginning of my research, I always found myself questioning why the guards or prisoners didn't simply remind themselves that it was an experiment, but I have now been shown that they could not, and that is the whole purpose of the experiment. They were so convinced that they were in an actual prison that they did not have the strength to remember reality. I hope that through my journals I am able to express my understanding of the importance of the experiment, as well as show the evolution in the deterioration of these men's sanity. Philip Zimbardo's study will remain in history as one of the most critical studies of psychology, as he may have convinced me that humans are naturally evil and need a government to obey to, and it has made me question just what I am capable of in some situations.