Social Psychology

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Welcome to Psych 512. Social psychology is the scientific study of individual behavior as a function of (social) context. Social psychologists are interested the meaning people make of their experiences and the impact of contexts on thinking, feeling, and action as measured by self-report, overt behavior, reaction time to response, and neural and physiological response. Contexts include others (real or implied), situations, social structures, and culture. Meaning making can be explicit, conscious and controlled or implicit, non-conscious, and associative. Contextual effects can be intended or unintended, systematic or haphazard in structure, proximal or remote. Given this broad purview, social psychologists study a variety of *topics* – identity and self-concept; stigma and stereotyping; pro-social and antisocial behavior, liking, love, aggression, and violence; interpersonal and intergroup relations and culture to name a few. Social psychologists also study a number of core *processes*, such as attribution, person perception, associative and systematic reasoning. The goal of this class is to provide students with a chance to consider these core processes and apply them to their own topics or processes of interest. To attain this goal, you will be asked to lead class discussion with another student a number of times during the semester and otherwise come prepared to discuss the readings. You will also be asked to prepare for week 6 a draft of your final project, which will be an articulation of the topic you are interested in and how core theories of social psychological processes highlight studies you could do to test your phenomena of interest. On the last day of class you will present briefly your core idea and the experiments you will be interested in given what you have read, your final project will be due a week later (Dec 13). If you are eligible for an NSF, your NSF proposal can be the basis of your final project, the NSF is due before the end of the semester, so read ahead if need be. Otherwise your final project will take the form of a set of studies you propose based on the readings. To demonstrate that you have attained the goal of having a broad perspective of social psychology and its roots, you should use readings across weeks rather than a deep dive into a single week.

Your Grade: You can think of your grade as having two parts: Ongoing participation, and final written product. I assume that by participating the final written product will begin to emerge through weekly conversations. Ongoing participation and final written product each have a number of interlocking components and each has equal weight in the final grade. By ongoing participation I mean reading each week, writing up your responses to the questions, participating in the weekly small and larger group discussion and leading the discussion, at least one question each week will ask you to turn to your own domain of interest. By final written product I mean three interlocking steps (1) Working draft (Week 6) having something written for Week 6 that describes your focus and how the readings on theory building, orientations to the nature of humankind, Gestalt, attribution, and cognitive consistency theories can begin to help you shape your ideas for research in your own topic domain. Total should be not more than 5 pages. (2) Overview presentation (last class) having an oral presentation of your content domain and using the core process models we have discussed in class to articulate gaps in your domain of interest (and if you can, studies to address them). (3) Final paper (due a week after the last class) using input from your oral presentation to write a paper describing your topic of interest and what the core models from class suggest as gaps in theory/research in your domain of interest and (if possible) studies you would devise to you’re your predictions as to what is going on. Page total should be not more than 15 pages. If you find that your interests overlap with another student in class, feel free to partner and work together on your final paper.

WEEK 1 AUGUST 23 Introduction: Who is who and what do we do? What is a theory, assumptions about humankind that shape our orientations

This first session is an introduction, to one another and our goals and interests as well as to the field itself. We start with a series of short chapters laying out the beginning of social psychology. It will be important for everyone to have read the first reading so that we can have some common language as a starting point.

Readings

* Shaw, M. & Costanzo, P. (1970) Chapter 1 Social psychology and social theory, pp. 3-19. In *Theories of Social Psychology*. McGraw-Hill.
* Deutsch, M. & Krauss, R. (1965) Chapter 1 The role of theory in social psychology In *Theories in Social Psychology*. 1-13. Basic Books.
* Kruglanski, A.W & Stroebe (2012). The Making of Social Psychology. In A. Kruglanski & W. Stroebe (Eds). Handbook of History of Social Psychology, pp 3-17. New York: Psychology Press

WEEK 2 AUGUST 30 Theories in social psychology

We discuss the Gestalt formulation (highlighting Asch and Heider) and connect Gestalt psychology to attribution theories and the emergence of modern social cognition. Gestalt psychologists focused on the ways in which people create coherence and meaning from structuring cues, social cognition theorists translated these insights into meaning-making in the social world.

Readings

* Deutsch, M. & Krauss, (1965). The approach of Gestalt Psychology, Chapter 2 in *Theories in Social Psychology*. pp 14-36. NY: Basic Books.
* Deutsch, & Krauss, (1965) Attribution theory
* Hamilton, D. & Carlson, D. (2014) The emergence of social cognition. Pp16-32. Chap 2 In D. E. Carlson (Ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Social Cognition.*
* Reeder, G. (2014) Attribution as a gateway to social cognition. Pp 95-117. Chp 6. In D. E. Carlson (Ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Social Cognition.* New York: The Oxford Press

WEEK 3 SEPTEMBER 6 Cognitive Consistency

This third session focuses on cognitive consistency as a basic principle in social psychology. Cognitive consistency is the simple proposition that people prefer consistency between their attitudes – opinions, judgments, preferences, motivations, actions that seem to conflict produce a press to change.

Readings

* Cooper, J. & Carlsmith, K. (2001). Cognitive dissonance. International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences. (on line html version 4 pages)
* Cooper, J., Mirabile, R., Scher, & S. J. (2005). Actions and attitudes: The theory of cognitive dissonance. In T. Brock & M. Green (Eds) *Persuasion: Psychological insights and perspectives*, 2nd ed., (pp. 63-79). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publication. ISBN 0-7619-2809-X
* Cooper, J. (2012). Cognitive Dissonance Theory. In P. Van Lange, A. Kruglanski & E.T Higgins (EDS). *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, Vol 1, pp. 377-397
* Gawronski, B. & Strack, F. (2012). Cognitive consistency as a basic principle of social information processing. Pp1-16. In B. Gawronski & F. Strack (Eds.) *Cognitive consistency, a fundamental principle in social cognition*. Guilford Press.
* Hilton, D. (2012). The emergence of cognitive social psychology: A historical analysis (pp 45-80). In A. Kruglanski & W. Stroebe (Eds.) *Handbook of the History of Social Psychology*. Psychology Press.

WEEK 4 SEPTEMBER 13 Learning and Reinforcement Theories

If people seek rewards and avoid costs, prefer interactions in which they expect rewards to outweigh costs, they may learn automatically and associatively with or without a meaning-making framework. This week focuses on reinforcement, exchange and interdependence theories -- the effects of self-interest, costs and rewards, relationships and learning

Readings

* Shaw, M. & Costanzo, P. (1970) Chapter 2 The Reinforcement-Theory Orientation, pp. 23-49 in *Theories of Social Psycholog*y. New York: Mc Graw-Hill
* Van Lange, P & Rusbult, C. (2012). Interdependence Theory. In P. Van Lange, A. Kruglanski & E.T Higgins (Eds). *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, Vol 2, pp 251-272. Los Angeles: Sage.

WEEK 5 SEPTEMBER 20 What do we mean by context? Evolution and society as context

Evolutionary and Sociological formulations (why might we be so social)

Readings

* House, J. (1977). The three faces of social psychology. *Sociometry*, 40, 161-177.
* Kendrick, D.T (2012). Evolutionary Theory and Human Social Behavior. In P. Van Lange, A. Kruglanski & E.T Higgins (Eds). *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, Vol 1, pp 11-31. Los Angeles: Sage.
* Mesoudi, A. (2016). Cultural evolution: integrating psychology, evolution and culture, *Current Opinion in Psychology, 7*, 17-22.

WEEK 6 SEPTEMBER 27 WORK DAY-NO CLASS

Assignment, take this week to write a one paragraph to one page description of the topic that interests you, a one or two page outline of the key points from classic social psychology that are relevant to your topic of interest (bullet points are fine), and bullet points of experimental tests. All is up for revision as the semester proceeds; this is just to get started.

7 OCTOBER 4 Attitudes

Engaging with others in structures sets up expectations for how the world works, from birth humans are the target of persuasion attempts, how do attitudes get formed?

Readings

* Brinol, P. & Petty, R.E (2012). A History of Attitudes and Persuasion Research. In A. Kruglanski & W. Stroebe (Eds). Handbook of the History of Social Psychology, pp 283-320. New York: Psychology Press
* Schwarz, N. (2007). Attitude construction: Evaluation in context. In B. Gawronski (ed.), What is an attitude? Special issue of Social Cognition, 25, 638-656.

8 OCTOBER 11 Social Cognition (social psychology in the paradigm of information processing

‘Social cognition’ involves thinking in social contexts or in contexts in which others are inferred. Thinking (cognition) refers to the many different processes by which people understand and make sense of the world, including attention, perception, memory, meaning making and planning. Rather than simply describe, a key goal of social cognition theorizing is simplifying process-oriented explanations of complex social phenomena

Readings

* Bargh, J. (1997, 2014). The four horsemen of automaticity: Awareness, intention, efficacy, and control in social cognition. Chapter 1 in Wyer Jr, R. S., & Srull, T. K. (Eds.). (2014). *Handbook of Social Cognition: Volume 1: Basic Processes Volume 2: Applications*. Psychology Press.
* Bargh, J. A., Chen, M., & Burrows, L. (1996). Automaticity of social behavior: Direct effects of trait construct and stereotype activation on action. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *71*(2), 230.
* Wyer, R. (2011). A theory of social information processing. In P. Van Lange, A. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins, pp158-177. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
* Libby, L. & Eibach, R. (2013). The role of visual imagery in social cognition. Chapter 8 in In D.E Carlston (Ed). The Oxford Handbook of Social Cognition, pp 147-166. New York: The Oxford Press

9 OCTOBER 18 Knowledge activation and its structure

Readings

* Higgins, E. T. (1996). Knowledge activation: Accessibility, applicability, and salience. Pp133-168 In E. T. Higgins & A. Kruglanski (Eds.) Handbook of Social Psychology: Basic Principles.
* Rim, S-Y, Trope, Y., Liberman, N., & Shapira, O. (2013). The highs and lows of mental representation: A construal level perspective on the structure of knowledge. In In D.E Carlston (Ed). The Oxford Handbook of Social Cognition, pp 194-219. New York: The Oxford Press.

10 OCTOBER 25 Self, self-concept, and identity

We focus here on broad formulations of self, self-concept and identity and how this cognitive structure and set of mental images links cognition, social context, motivation, roles, and social structure research as well as gaps in research to date.

Readings

* McConnell, A.R & Brown, C.M & Shoda, T.M (2013). The Social Cognition of Self. In D.E Carlston (Ed). The Oxford Handbook of Social Cognition, pp 497-516. New York: The Oxford Press
* Oyserman, D., Elmore, K., & Smith, G. (2012). Self, self‐concept and identity. In M. Leary & J. Tangney (Eds). *Handbook of Self and Identity, 2nd Edition* pp. 69-104. New York, NY: Guilford Press

11 NOVEMBER 2 Goals and self-regulation

Readings

* Fishbach, A. & Ferguson, M. (2007). The Goal Construct Psychology. In A. Kruglanmski &E.T Higgins (Eds). *Social Psychology Handbook of Basic Principles. 2nd Ed*, pp 490-515. New York: The Guilford Press
* Gollwitzer, P. M., & Sheeran, P. (2006). Implementation intentions and goal achievement: A meta‐analysis of effects and processes. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, *38*, 69-119.
* Carver, C. and Scheir, M (2012) A model of behavioral self-regulation, Chapter 24, pp505-525. In Handbook of theories of social psychology, vol 1., Van Lange, A Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds). CA: Sage

12 NOVEMBER 9 Social Structure part II: Groups and culture

Humans are social beings. Our identities are for a large part defined by the different social groups we belong to – groups that can be as small as a family and as large as a nation. Those around us influence who we are and our thoughts, our emotions and our behavior are continuously shaped by others through an exchange of ideas, expectancies and practices. Each social group has its own standards or norms for behavior, based upon what is considered good or correct behavior within that social group. Such socially shared norms are usually not made explicit, but become apparent through observing the behavior of the group members and through understanding the expectations they have for how others in their social group should behave.

Readings

* Kashima, Y & Gelfand, M.J (2012). A History of Culture in Psychology. In A. Kruglanski & W. Stroebe (Eds). *Handbook of the History of Social Psychology*, pp 499-519. New York: Psychology Press
* Oyserman, D., & Lee, S.W. S. (2008). A situated cognition perspective on culture: Effects of priming cultural syndromes on cognition and motivation. In R. Sorrentino & S. Yamaguchi (Eds.), *Handbook of Motivation and Cognition across Cultures*. (pp. 237-265) NY: Elsevier.
* Chiu, C-Y, Ng, S., Au, E. (2014). Culture and social cognition. Chapter 37 pp767-785. In D. Carlson Ed. *Oxford Handbook of Social Cognition*. New York: The Oxford Press
* Oyserman, D. (in press) Culture Three Ways. Annual Review of Psychology

SESSION 13 NOVEMBER 16 Translating theory into practice.

The experimental method --whether in the lab, on-line, in the field, or as translated to intervention, is at the heart of the social psychological approach. Theories use experimental methods as tests, specifying constructs to be operationalized as independent and dependent variables. In writing up results, neither how best to operationalize constructs in a particular culture, time and place, nor how to make the experimental context feel psychologically meaningful to participants is made explicit. Yet, for an experiment to actually work, both operationalization of independent and dependent constructs and psychological meaningfulness for participants are critical. We consider both the issue of the situatedness of operationalization of independent and dependent variables to culture, time, and the issue of creating psychologically meaningful experiences for experiments to work.

As we discuss, the same issues apply to intervention and replication. While replications often fix attention in repeating a particular laboratory procedure, theory testing is not about the laboratory procedure, it concerns the generality of causal principles. If an experiment fails to manipulate the independent variable, it does not test the hypothesis. It is misguided to focus on the simple structure of procedures while disregarding underlying psychological processes. Figuring out if an operationalization of a construct cues the focal is typically checked with a “manipulation check.” What constitutes a useful manipulation check is not always straightforward because some constructs do not yield a clear self-reportable experience or outcome and because the same manipulation might mean different things, depending on context.

These same complications occur when considering replication of field experiments – beyond manualizing the intervention (which is like replicating the lab procedure) what are the contextual variables that need to be considered in figuring out how to replication so that the process model is being tested is typically not discussed at all.

This broad set of readings covers more than you may choose to know. Pick three or four readings and store the rest for later.

Readings:

One set of readings focuses on issues relevant to replication

* C.S. Crandall & J.W. Sherman (2016). On the scientific superiority of conceptual replications for scientific progress. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 66*, 93–99.
* L.R. Fabrigar, & D.T. Wegener (2016) Conceptualizing and evaluating the replication of research results. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 66*, 68–80.
* Hüffmeier, J. Mazei, J., & Schultze, T. (2016). Reconceptualizing replication as a sequence of different studies: A replication typology, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *66,* 81-92.
* Pirlott, A. G., MacKinnon, D. P. (2016) Design approaches to experimental mediation, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *66*, 29-38.
* J.K. Sakaluk (2016) Exploring Small, Confirming Big: An alternative system to the new statistics for advancing cumulative and replicable psychological research, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *66*, 47-54.
* Stroebe, W. (2016). Are most published social psychological findings false? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *66*, 134-144.

The second set of readings focuses on issues relevant to field studies and psychological relevance

* Cheung, A C. K. & Slavin, R. (2016) How methodological features affect effect sizes in education. *Educational Researcher, 45*, 283-292.
* Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). Social influence: Compliance and conformity. *Annual Review of Psychology, 55*, 591-621.
* Maner, J. K. (2016) Into the wild: Field research can increase both replicability and real-world impact, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *66*, 100-106.
* Oyserman, D (2016). Train the trainer manual for Pathways to Success.
* Schultz, P. W., Nolan, J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., & Griskevicius, V. (2007). The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms. *Psychological Science, 18*, 249-434.

SESSION 14 NOVEMBER 23 Workday final prep on presentation and advanced draft work on final paper

SESSION 15 NOVEMBER 30 Wrap up presentations. There are 4 50-minute blocks to class (allowing for some down time between presentation sets). This will allow each student to make an 8-minute presentation of his or her key idea as formulated using the process models and frameworks learned in this class followed by a 2-minute question time.