Psychology 7871: Social Cognition  
Spring 2013  
Tuesday & Thursday 12:45PM - 2:05PM  
University Hall 0151

Instructor  
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Course Overview  
This course is intended to provide an introduction to research in social cognition. Social cognition is the study of the cognitive underpinnings of social behavior and the ways individuals think about our social world.

This class will meet for two 80-minute sessions a week. Approximately two-thirds of the sessions will be devoted to a lecture, although adequate time will be allotted for questions and commentary. These lectures will provide an overview of the historical developments with respect to a given issue within the social cognition literature. The other class sessions will be devoted to a discussion of a set of recent articles related to the general issues covered in the preceding meeting(s).

Course Textbook  

This book of readings is a collection of classic and contemporary journal articles from the social psychological literature on social cognition. It also includes valuable ancillary material introducing each major topic area.

Additional readings, including those pertaining to the discussion sessions, will be made available on the course’s Carmen website.

The following are excellent texts that can provide useful background information, if you desire additional information about any given topic.


Course Requirements

Readings are assigned for each class meeting, and are to be read prior to the class with which they are associated. Readings consist of journal articles reprinted in Hamilton’s reader or provided on Carmen.

Grades will be based on:

1. Midterm exam covering the first half of the syllabus and weighted 40% of the course grade. The midterm will be administered during class on February 26.
2. Final exam covering the second half of the syllabus and weighted 40%. The final will be administered during finals week. According to the Registrar’s final exam schedule, the exam is scheduled for April 30, 2:00-3:45.
3. Class participation weighted 20%. This includes contributions to the discussions in general, as well as the discussion that each student will be leading. Each of the discussion articles will be assigned to a student, who will assume the responsibility of: (a) preparing a single-page handout summarizing the reading for distribution to the class, (b) presenting a brief overview of the article, (c) offering observations about the research, and (d) generating issues or questions for class discussion.

Academic Misconduct

All students at the Ohio State University are bound by the Code of Student Conduct (see http://oaa.ohio-state.edu/coam/code.html). Violations of the code in this class will be dealt with according to the procedures detailed in that code. Specifically, any alleged cases of misconduct will be referred to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/.
Tentative schedule (subject to change)

January 8: Course introduction

January 10: Social perception and impression formation – Historical overview
   From Heider/Bruner/Asch to modern social cognition; Some basic concepts;
   The constructive nature of perception

   Hamilton: Introductory Overview; Readings 1, 6, 22

January 15: The rise of social cognition
   Priming and category accessibility

   Hamilton: Readings 4, 9

January 17: No class – SPSP meeting

January 22: Person memory
   Recall of expectancy-congruent versus incongruent information; Information processing goals

   Hamilton: Preview Part 6; Readings 2, 7, 23, 24, 25

January 24: Discussion session


January 29: Memory as re-constructions of the past
   Expectancy-guided retrieval; False memories

   Hamilton: Readings 33, 34
January 31: Discussion session


February 5: Probability estimation
  Judgments under uncertainty; Heuristics

Hamilton: Preview Part 3; Readings 10, 11

February 7: Automaticity
  Nonconscious processing; Automatically-driven attention, categorization, and behavior

Hamilton: Preview Part 4; Readings 13, 14, 15, 16

February 12: Discussion session


February 14: Dispositional Inferences
  Attribution processes; Biases and errors

Hamilton: Preview Part 5; Readings 17, 19, 20, 21
February 19: Spontaneous trait inferences
Trait inferences; Trait Transference

Hamilton: Reading 18

February 21: Discussion session


February 26: MIDTERM

February 28: Review of Midterm

March 5: Stereotypes
Stereotype activation; The consequences of stereotypes for information processing; Their functional value

Hamilton: Preview Part 2; Readings 3, 8

March 7: Stereotype development

Hamilton: Preview Part 7; Readings 26, 28, 29

March 12 & 14: No class – Spring break

March 19: Discussion session


March 21: Stereotyping from the perspective of the target
Attributional ambiguity; Stereotype threat

March 26: Discussion session


March 28: Hypothesis testing
Confirmatory testing; Diagnosticity; Self-serving reasoning

Hamilton: Preview Part 8; Readings 30, 31, 32

April 2: Expectancies and social interaction
The impact of expectancies on social interaction; Expectancy maintenance and confirmation

Hamilton: Readings 12, 27, 37

April 4: Discussion session


April 9: **The affect ↔ cognition interface**  
Effects of cognition on affect; Misattribution and emotion  

Hamilton: Preview Part 9; Reading 38

April 11: **The affect ↔ cognition interface**  
Effects of affect on cognition; Affective consequences of counterfactual thinking; Emotion-congruent processing; Feelings as information; Affect and creativity  

Hamilton: Readings 35, 36

April 16: **Discussion session**


April 18: **Wrap Up**