

PS470C WINTER 2008  
SEMINAR IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: SOCIAL COGNITION

SEMINARS:

Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 - 11:20  
N2005

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Roger Buehler  
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OFFICE HOURS:

Wednesday 11:00 - 12:00  
Friday 11:00 - 12:00  
(or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The goal of this course is to familiarize you with the broad area of social psychology that focuses on social cognition. Researchers studying social cognition seek to understand social psychological phenomena by examining underlying thought processes. In other words, they attempt to explain what's going on inside people's minds as they think about and interact with one another. Much of the research focuses on the sorts of judgments and thoughts that people are engaged in throughout the course of everyday life.

Each week we will be reading and discussing original research articles taken from the leading journals in social psychology. We will examine theory and research on basic processes of social cognition (e.g., attributions; knowledge activation; memories; predictions) as well as applications of the social cognition approach to a variety of topics and issues within the tradition of social psychology (e.g., prejudice, the self, social justice, and coping).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

[20%] 1. Class Participation: Part of your grade will be based on class participation. This is a seminar style course that involves a great deal of group discussion. Much of your learning will come from your own reading and discussion with classmates. Each week you should come to class prepared with comments and questions about issues from the readings that caught your interest. By preparing discussion questions in advance as well as responding to other students' comments and questions, everyone in the class should have something to contribute. Your grade will be based not only on the quantity of your participation but also the quality -- your contributions in class should demonstrate that you have gone through the assigned readings carefully and given them some thought, both individually and in relation to each other.

[10%] 2. Discussion Questions: You will typically be asked to read two journal articles each

week. To help you think about these readings, I will ask you to prepare a discussion question (or comment) concerning each reading. Questions are to be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of class on Tuesdays and will be evaluated using a simple three point scale (1 = needs improvement, 2 = good, 3= excellent). Questions will be considered 'good' if they demonstrate that you read and thought about the material; excellent questions will be outstanding and show careful critical thinking or creative insight. I will give you specific feedback on any questions/comments that need improvement. Questions may be handwritten as long as they are clearly legible. The questions should also serve as a stimulus for class discussion – you should keep a personal copy of your questions so that you will have them readily available during the discussion period. Although we may not get a chance to cover every discussion question, your credit will not depend on whether we discuss your question in class.

[20%] 3. Article presentations: Every Thursday, one or two students will be required to present a research article and to lead discussion concerning the article; each student will do one article presentation during the term. The presentations should be about 20-30 minutes long including discussion. When you present, keep in mind that the rest of the class will not have read the article. You should describe the research carefully, including the theoretical background, the hypotheses, the design, the method, and a summary of the results (a few key tables or figures can be helpful here). Visual aids and class activities are encouraged. Also, a good presentation will “go beyond” the article itself: For example, you could discuss practical and theoretical implications of the research and relate it to other ideas (e.g., material covered in this course, other psychology courses, or your own personal experiences), or you could conduct a class activity or demonstration. You should also prepare a short list of questions for the class to discuss and provide a 1-2 page handout summarizing the article. The articles will be assigned at least two weeks before they are to be presented.

[20%] 4. Quizzes: On 3 separate (unannounced) occasions, we will begin the seminar with a short “pop quiz” (approximately 20 minutes) that will test your understanding of the assigned readings for that week. Only the best 2 of your 3 quiz marks will be counted. Note that no alternative quizzes or rewrites will be scheduled. If extenuating circumstances force you to miss the class on the day of a quiz, you should notify the instructor as soon as possible and provide documentation. Otherwise a grade of zero will be assigned.

[30%] 5. Thought Papers: You will be asked to write three brief “thought papers” throughout the course. The thought papers should be 4-6 pages, typed, double spaced. The topic of your paper is open so long as it clearly relates to seminar readings and discussions from the previous weeks. You are expected to provide more than just a summary of the readings, but exactly what you talk about is up to you. You may want to consider problems that you’ve identified with a theory or a research approach, or suggest some way to extend a line of research in a new direction. You could discuss the ways in which a program of research may have practical implications in the “real world” and illustrate with real or hypothetical examples. You could try to connect ideas arising in this course to ideas found in other disciplines or other domains of psychology. Two weeks before each due date, I will provide you with a few optional sample topics in case you’re having trouble getting started. **Due dates for the thought papers are Feb 14, March 13, and April 3.** You may also choose to write a fourth thought paper if you wish, and your grade will be based on your top three papers; the extra thought paper must also be submitted by April 3.

## EXTENDED READING LIST:

Note: The assigned readings are marked with asterisks (\*\*). The others are extra articles that might be presented by students or discussed by the instructor. These extra articles may also be useful for your thought papers. Articles will be posted as pdf files on WebCT (with the exception of some Week 1 readings that are available outside my office for photocopying).

### **Week 1 (Jan 8, 10)**

#### **Introduction to social cognition**

- \*\* Fiske, S. T. & Taylor, S. E. (2008). *Social cognition: From brains to culture*. [Chapter 1: Introduction] New York: McGraw-Hill.
- \*\* Hamilton, D. L., Devine, P. G., & Ostrom, T. M. (1994). Social cognition and classic issues in social psychology. In P. G. Devine, D. L. Hamilton, & T. M. Ostrom (Eds.), *Social cognition: Impact on social psychology*. [Chapter 1, pp. 1-5] San Diego: Academic Press.
- \*\* Jordan, C. H., & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), *The self in social psychology* (pp. 461-470). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.
- Ross, M., & Sicoly, F. (1979). Egocentric biases in availability and attribution. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 322-336.
- Buehler, R., Griffin, D., & Ross, M. (1994). Exploring the “planning fallacy”: Why people underestimate their task completion times. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 366-381.

### **Week 2 (Jan 15, 17)**

#### **Attribution I: The correspondence bias**

- \*\* Gilbert, D. T., Pelham, B. W., & Krull, D. S. (1988). On cognitive busyness: When person perceivers meet persons perceived. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 733-740.
- \*\* Risen, J. L., & Gilovich, T. (2007). Target and observer differences in the acceptance of questionable apologies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 418-433.
- Weary, G., Vaughn, L.A., Stewart, B.D., & Edwards, J.A. (2006). Adjusting for the correspondence bias: Effects of causal uncertainty, cognitive busyness, and causal strength of situational information. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42, 87-94.
- Knowles, E. D., Morris, M. W., Chiu, C., & Hong, Y. (2001). Culture and the process of person perception: Evidence for automaticity among East Asians in correcting for situational influences on behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 1344-1356.
- Lieberman, M. D., Jarcho, J. M., & Obayashi, J. (2005). Attributional inference across cultures: Similar automatic attributions and different controlled corrections. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 889-901.
- Ratcliff, J.J., Lassiter, G.D., Schmidt, H.C., & Snyder, C.J. (2006). Camera perspective bias in videotaped confessions: Experimental evidence of its perceptual basis. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 12, 197-206.

### **Week 3 (Jan 22, 24)**

#### **Attribution II: Self-relevant attributions and their consequences**

##### **(A) Self-serving attributions**

- \*\* Miller, D. T. (1976). Ego involvement and attributions for success and failure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34, 901-906.
- \*\* Harre, N., Brandt, T., & Houkamau, C. (2004). An examination of the actor-observer effect in young drivers' attributions of their own and their friends' risky driving. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34, 806-824.
- Duval, T. S., & Silvia, P. J. (2002). Self-awareness, probability of improvement, and the self-serving bias. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 49-61.
- Caruso, E.M., Epley, N., & Bazerman, M.H. (2006). The costs and benefits of undoing egocentric responsibility assessments in groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91, 857-871.

##### **(B) Consequences**

- Sacks, C.H., & Bugental, D.P. (1987). Attributions as moderators of affective and behavioral responses to social failure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 939-947.
- Wilson, T. D., & Linville, P.W. (1985). Improving the performance of college freshmen with attributional techniques. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 287-293.
- Ruthig, J. C., Perry, R. P., Hall, N. C., Hladkyj, S. (2004). Optimism and attributional retraining: Longitudinal effects on academic achievement, test anxiety, and voluntary course withdrawal in college students. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34, 709-730.

### **Week 4 (Jan 29, 31)**

#### **Schemas I: Effects on judgment, evaluation, and impression formation**

- \*\* Rudman, L. A., & Borgida, E. (1995). The afterglow of construct accessibility: The behavioral consequences of priming men to view women as sexual objects. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 31, 493-517.
- \*\* Epley, N., & Kruger, J. (2005). When what you type isn't what they read: The perseverance of stereotypes and expectancies over e-mail. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41, 414-422.
- Strack, F., Schwarz, N., Bless, H., Kubler, A., & Wanke, M. (1993). Awareness of the influence as a determinant of assimilation versus contrast. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 23, 53-62.
- Lavine, H., Sweeney, D., & Wagner, S. (1999). Depicting women as sex objects in television advertising: Effects on body dissatisfaction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 1049-1058.
- Butz, D.A., Plant, E.A., & Doerr, C.E. (2007). Liberty and justice for all? Implications of exposure to the US flag for intergroup relations. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 523-532.
- Dijksterhuis, A., Preston, J., Wegner, D.M., & Aarts, H. (2008). Effects of subliminal priming of self and God on self-attribution of authorship for events. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 2-9.

## **Week 5 (Feb 5, 7)**

### **Schemas II: Effects on behavior**

#### **(A) Self-fulfilling prophecies**

- \*\* Stukas, A.A. Jr., & Snyder, M. (2002). Targets' awareness of expectations and behavioral confirmation in ongoing interactions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 31-40.
- Madon, S., et al. (2001). Am I as you see me or do you see me as I am? Self-fulfilling prophecies and self-verification. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 1214-1224.
- Major, B., Cozzarelli, C., Testa, M., & McFarlin, D.B. (1988). Self-verification versus expectancy confirmation in social interaction: The impact of self-focus. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 14, 346-359.
- Madon, S., Guyll, M., Spoth, R., & Willard, J. (2004). Self-fulfilling prophecies: The synergistic accumulative effect of parents' beliefs on children's drinking behavior. *Psychological Science*, 15, 837-845.

#### **(B) Automatic and nonconscious behavior**

- \*\* Dijksterhuis, A., Spears, R., Postmes, T., Stapel, D.A., Koomen, W., van Knippenberg, A., & Scheepers, D. (1998). Seeing one thing and doing another: Contrast effects in automatic behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 862-871.
- Cesario, J., Higgins, E.T., & Plaks, J.E. (2006). Automatic social behavior as motivated preparation to interact. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 893-910.
- Shariff, A.F., & Norenzayan, A. (2007). God is watching you: Priming god concepts increases prosocial behavior in an anonymous economic game. *Psychological Science*, 18, 803-809.
- Karremans, J.C., Stroebe, W., & Claus, J. (2006). Beyond Vicary's fantasies: The impact of subliminal priming and brand choice. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42, 792-798.

## **Week 6 (Feb 12, 14)**

### **Memory processes**

- \*\* Winkielman, P., & Schwarz, N. (2001). How pleasant was your childhood? Beliefs about memory shape inferences from experienced difficulty of recall. *Psychological Science*, 12, 176-179.
- \*\* Libby, L.K., & Eibach, R.P. (2002). Looking back in time: Self-concept change affects visual perspective in autobiographical memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 167-179.
- Ross, M., & Wilson, A.E. (2002). It feels like yesterday: Self-esteem, valence of personal past experiences, and judgments of subjective distance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 792-803.
- McFarland, C., Ross, M., & DeCourville, N. (1989). Women's theories of menstruation and biases in recall of menstrual symptoms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 522-531.
- Libby, L.K., Eibach, R.P., & Gilovich, T. (2005). Here's looking at me: Memory perspective and assessments of personal change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88, 50-62.
- Wildschut, T., Sedikides, C., Arndt, J., Routledge, C. (2006). Nostalgia: Content, triggers, functions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91, 975-993.

**\*\*\* READING WEEK FEB 18-22 \*\*\***

## **Week 7 (Feb 26, 28)**

### **Prediction**

#### **(A) Predicting future outcomes and behaviors**

- \*\* Griffin, D.W., Dunning, D., & Ross, L. (1990). The role of construal processes in overconfident predictions about the self and others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 1128-1139.
- MacDonald, T. K., & Ross, M. (1999). Assessing the accuracy of predictions about dating relationships: How and why do lovers' predictions differ from those made by observers? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 1417-1429.
- Koehler, D.J., & Poon, C.S.K. (2006). Self-predictions overweight strength of current intentions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42, 517-524.
- Windschitl, P. D., Kruger, J., & Simms, E. N. (2003). The influence of egocentrism and focalism on people's optimism in competitions: When what affects us equally affects me more. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 389-408.
- Nussbaum, S., Liberman, N., Trope, Y. (2006). Predicting the near and distant future. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 135, 152-161.

#### **(B) Predicting future feelings**

- \*\* Gilbert, D.T., & Wilson, T.D. (2007). Propection: Experiencing the future. *Science*, 317, 1351-1354.
- Eastwick, P.W., Finkel, E.J., Krishnamurti, T., Loewenstein, G. (2007). Mispredicting distress following romantic breakup: Revealing the time course of the affective forecasting error. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.
- Morewedge, C.K., Gilbert, D.T., & Wilson, T.D. (2005). The least likely of times: How remembering the past biases forecasts of the future. *Psychological Science*, 16, 626-629.
- Lam K., Buehler, R., McFarland, C., Ross, M., & Cheung, I. (2005). Cultural differences in affective forecasting: The role of focalism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 1296-1309.
- Dunn, E., Brackett, M.A., Ashton-James, C., Schneiderman, E., & Salovey, P. (2007). On emotionally intelligent time travel: Individual differences in affective forecasting ability. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 85-93.

## **Week 8 (Mar 4, 6)**

### **Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination**

- \*\* Kunda, Z., & Sinclair, L. (1999). Motivated reasoning with stereotypes: Activation, application, and inhibition. *Psychological Inquiry*, 10, 12-22.
- \*\* Galinsky, A. D., & Moskowitz, G. B. (2000). Perspective-taking: Decreasing stereotype expression, stereotype accessibility, and in-group favoritism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 708-724.
- Sassenberg, Kai, & Moskowitz, G.B. (2004). Don't stereotype, think different! Overcoming automatic stereotype activation by mindset priming. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41, 506-514.
- Wyer, N.A., Sherman, J.A., & Stroessner, S.J. (2000). The roles of motivation and ability in controlling the consequences of stereotype suppression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 13-25.
- Henry, P.J., & Hardin, C.D. (2006). The contact hypothesis revisited: Status bias in the reduction of

implicit prejudice in the United States and Lebanon. *Psychological Science*, 17, 862-868.  
Czopp, A.M. (2006). Standing up for a change: Reducing bias through interpersonal confrontation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 784-803.

### **Week 9 (Mar 11, 13)**

#### **The Self I: Self-perception and self-evaluation**

- \*\* Gilovich, T., Medvec, V. H., & Savitsky, K. (2000). The spotlight effect in social judgment: An egocentric bias in estimates of the salience of one's own actions and appearance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 211-222.
- \*\* Baldwin, M.W. (2001). Relational schema activation: Does Bob Zajonc ever scowl at you from the back of your mind? In J. Bargh & D.K. Apsley (Eds.), *Unraveling the complexities of social life: A festschrift in honor of Robert B. Zajonc* (pp. 55-67). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Kruger, J., & Gilovich, T. (2004). Actions, intentions, and self-assessment: The road to self-enhancement is paved with good intentions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 328-339.
- Zuckerman, M., & O'Loughlin, R.E. (2006). Self-enhancement by social comparison: A prospective analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 751-760.
- Pelham, B.W., Mirenberg, M.C., & Jones, J.T. (2002). Why Susie sells seashells by the seashore: Implicit egotism and major life decisions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 469-487.
- Gabriel, S., Renaud, J.M., & Tippin, B. (2007). When I think of you I feel more confident about me: The relational self and self-confidence. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43, 772-779.
- Landau, M.J., & Greenberg, J. (2006). Play it safe or go for the gold: A terror management perspective on self-enhancement and self-protective motives in risky decision making. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 1633-1645.

### **Week 10 (Mar 18, 20)**

#### **The Self II: Self-regulation and goal pursuit**

- \*\* Baumeister, R.F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M. & Tice, D.M. (1998). Ego depletion: Is the active self a limited resource? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1252-1265.
- \*\* Koestner, R. et al. (2006). Bolstering implementation plans for the long haul: The benefits of simultaneously boosting self-concordance or self-efficacy. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 1547-1558.
- Webb, T., & Sheeran, P. (2007). How do implementation intentions promote goal attainment? A test of component processes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43, 295-302.
- Lockwood, P., Jordan, C.H., & Kunda, Z. (2002). Motivation by positive or negative role models: Regulatory focus determines who will best inspire us. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 854-864.
- Oettingen, G., & Mayer, D. (2002). The motivating function of thinking about the future: Expectations versus fantasies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 1198-1212.
- Fujita, K., Trope, Y., Liberman, N. & Levin-Sagi, M. (2006). Construal levels and self-control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 351-367.
- Vasquez, N.A., & Buehler, R. (2007). Seeing future success: Does imagery perspective influence achievement motivation? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 1392-1405.

## **Week 11 (Mar 25, 27)**

### **Social justice and victimization**

- \*\* Hafer, C. L. (2000). Do innocent victims threaten the belief in a just world? Evidence from a modified stroop task. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79, 165-173.
- \*\* Kay, A.C., Jost, J.T., & Young, S. (2005). Victim derogation and victim enhancement as alternate routes to system justification. *Psychological Science*, 16, 240-246.
- Carli, L. L. (1999). Cognitive reconstruction, hindsight, and reactions to victims and perpetrators. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 966-979.
- Correia, I., Vala, J., & Aguiar, P. (2007). Victim's innocence, social categorization, and the threat to the belief in a just world. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43, 31-38.
- Westmaas, J.L., & Cohen Silver, R. (2006). The role of perceived similarity in supportive responses to victims of negative life events. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 1537-1546.
- Callan, M.J., Ellard, J.H., & Nicol, J.E. (2006). The belief in a just world and immanent justice reasoning in adults. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 1646-1658.

## **Week 12 (April 1, 3)**

### **Coping, adjustment, and well-being**

- \*\* Van Boven, L. (2005). Experientialism, materialism, and the pursuit of happiness. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 132-142.
- \*\* McConnell, A.R. et al. (2005). Whose self is it anyway? Self-aspect control moderates the relation between self-complexity and well-being. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41, 1-18.
- Wohl, M.A., & McGrath, A.L. (2007). The perception of time heals all wounds: Temporal distance affects willingness to forgive following an interpersonal transgression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 1023-1035.
- King, L.A. (2001). The health benefits of writing about life goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 798-807.
- Zuckerman, M. Kieffer, S.C., & Knee, C.R. (1998). Consequences of self-handicapping: Effects on coping, academic performance, and adjustment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1619-1628.
- Gable, S.L., Reis, H.T., Impett, E.A., & Asher, E.R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 228-245.