

# Psychology 3630: Seminar in Social Cognition

Fall 2007

Tuesday 12:10-2:00pm

405 Schermerhorn Hall

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday/Thursday 2-3pm or by appointment

## OVERVIEW

Human beings are a unique animal when taking into consideration the complex nature of our social interactions. How do we understand the minds of others? For that matter, how do we infer the beliefs and desires that underlie the bases for our own behavior? How does the way we think about ourselves inform the way we think about others, and vice versa? How do we navigate our social world? In this course we will attempt to answer these questions through an examination of a range of topics, including research on the self, how we understand others, the process of judgment and decision making, the role of emotion in cognition, moral reasoning, the social brain, and the development of social cognition.

## REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation. This seminar is a discussion during which we engage each other in an attempt to puzzle through the complexities involved in social cognition. You are expected to contribute to the discourse at every class meeting. Your discussion, questions, and comments in class will account for 40% of your course grade. Late arrival and/or absence from class are considered lapses in participation.

Thought Papers. Each week there will be main readings for the class. Your assignment is to do the reading and then turn in a page (or so) of comments on the reading. Your write-up can take one of several forms. First, you can write a critique of one of the papers, or even one of the ideas contained in one of the papers. Part of your critique should include alternative ways to think about the problem. Second, you can integrate the ideas of several of the papers and discuss how they relate to each other (this can be either other papers from this week, or from other weeks). Third, you can develop a research idea to further explore an idea raised by the topic for the week. Thought papers should be emailed to me by Sunday evening at 10pm. This requirement accounts for 25% of your course grade.

Term paper. Consider one of the controversies or ambiguities we discussed or about which you read, and propose an experiment that would help serve to clarify the issue. The paper should begin by describing existing research and the specific controversy and then detail a proposed experiment that would help resolve it. The paper length should be approximately 10-12 pages, written in APA style. Papers are due the last day of class (12/4) and a brief oral presentation (5 minutes or so) of your paper will be given that day. This requirement accounts for 35% of your course grade.

## READINGS AND OUTLINE

### 1. 9/4            **Organizational Meeting**

### 2. 9/11           **Introduction**

- Wegner, D. M. & Gilbert, D. T. (2000). Social psychology: The science of human experience. In H. Bless and J. P. Forgas (Eds.), *Subjective experience in social cognition and social behavior*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press. pp. 1-8.
- Gilovich, T. (1991). Seeing what we expect to see: The biased evaluation of ambiguous and inconsistent data. *How we know what isn't so: The fallibility of human reason in everyday life*. New York: Free Press. pp. 49-72.
- Smith, E. R., & DeCoster, J. (2000). Dual-process models in social and cognitive psychology: Conceptual intergration and links to underlying memory systems. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4, 108-131.

### 3. 9/18           **Automaticity and Control**

- Griffin, D. W., & Ross, L. (1991). Subject construal, social inference, and human misunderstanding. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 24). San Diego: Academic Press. pp. 319-359
- Wegner, D. M., & Bargh, J. A. (1998). Control and automaticity in social life. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Ed.), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th edition). 446-496. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sparrow, B., & Wegner, D.M. (2006). Unpriming: The deactivation of thoughts through expression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91: 1009-1019.

### 4. 9/25           **Thinking about the Self**

- Ross, L., Greene, D., & House, P. (1977). The "false consensus effect": An egocentric bias in social perception and attribution processes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13, 279-301.
- Nisbett, R. E., & Wilson, T. D. (1977). Telling more than we can know: Verbal reports on mental processes. *Psychological Review*, 84, 231-259.
- Wicklund, R. A. (1975). Objective self-awareness. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 8). New York: Academic Press. 233-275
- 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.
- Gillihan, S. J., & Farah, M. J. (2005). Is self special? A critical review of evidence from experimental psychology and cognitive neuroscience. *Psychological Bulletin*, 131(1), 76-97.

### 5. 10/2           **Understanding Others**

- Gilbert, D. T. (1998). Ordinary personology. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T., Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., Vol. 2, pp. 89-150). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Ames, D. R. (2004). Inside the mind reader's tool kit: Projection and stereotyping in mental state inference. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 340-353.

Gray, H. M., Gray, K., & Wegner, D. M. (2007). Dimensions of mind perception. *Science*, 315, 619

## 6. 10/9 Stereotyping and Implicit Attitudes

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Co. [Chapter 1: “What Is The Problem?” pp. 3-16; Chapter 2: “The Normality of Prejudice” pp. 17-28].

Devine, P. G. (1995). Prejudice and out-group perception. In A. Tesser (Ed.), *Advanced Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill. pp. 467-512.

Macrae, C. N., Bodenhausen, G. V., Milne, A. B., & Jetten, J. (1994). Out of mind but back in sight: Stereotypes on the rebound. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 808-817.

Higgins, E. T., Rholes, W. S., & Jones, C. R. (1977). Category accessibility and impression formation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13, 141-154.

Olsson, A., Ebert, J. P., Banaji, M. R., & Phelps, E. A. (2006). The role of social groups in the persistence of learned fear. *Science*, 309, 785-787.

## 7. 10/16 Attitude Change

Cooper, J. & Fazio, R. H. (1984). A new look at dissonance theory. (In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 17, pp. 229—266). New York: Academic Press.)

Wilson, T. D., Lindsey, S., & Schooler, T. Y. (2000). A model of dual attitudes. *Psychological Review*, 107, 101-126.

Gilbert, D. T. (1991). How mental systems believe. *American Psychologist*, 46, 107-119.

Petty, R. A., & Wegener, D. T. (1999). The elaboration likelihood model: Current status and controversies. In S. Chaiken & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual-process theories in social psychology*. New York: Guilford Press. pp. 41-72.

## 8. 10/23 Judgment and Decision Making

Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. (1984). Choices, values, and frames. *American Psychologist*, 39, 341-350.

Hawkins, S. A. & Hastie, R. (1990). Hindsight: Biased judgments of past events after the outcomes are known. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107, 311-327.

Liberman, N. & Trope, Y. (1998). The role of feasibility and desirability considerations in near and distant future decisions: A test of temporal construal theory. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 75, 5-18.

Gilbert, D. T. & Wilson, T. D. (2000). Miswanting: Some problems in the forecasting of future affective states. In J. P. Forgas (Ed.), *Feeling and thinking: The role of affect in social cognition*. New York: Cambridge University Press pp. 178-197

## 9. 10/30 Emotions

Schwarz, N., & Clore, G. L. (1996). Feelings and phenomenal experiences. In E. T. Higgins & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 433-465). New York: Guilford.

Zajonc, Robert B. (1998) Emotions. in Gilbert, D. T., Fiske, S. T. (Eds.). *The handbook of social psychology*, Vol. 2 (4th ed.). Boston, MA, USA: Mcgraw-Hill. [selection:pp. 591-632].

Barsalou, L.W., Niedenthal, P.M., Barbey, A., & Ruppert, J. (2003). Social embodiment. In B. Ross (Ed.), *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, Vol. 43 (pp. 43-92). San Diego: Academic Press.

### **(11/6 University Holiday, Election Day)**

#### **10. 11/13 Moral Reasoning**

- Lerner, M. J., & Miller, D. T. (1978). Just world research and the attribution process: Looking back and ahead. *Psychological Bulletin*, 85, 1030-1051.
- Rozin, P., Markwith, M., & Stoess, C. (1997). Moralization and becoming a vegetarian: The transformation of preferences into values and the recruitment of disgust. *Psychological Science*, 8, 67-73.
- Tetlock, P. (2003). Thinking the unthinkable: Sacred values and taboo cognitions. *Trends in Cognitive Science* 7, 320-324.
- Greene, J.D., Sommerville, R.B., Nystrom, L.E., Darley, J.M., & Cohen, J.D. (2001). An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment. *Science*, Vol. 293, Sept. 14, 2001, 2105-2108.
- Haidt, J. (2001) The emotional dog and its rational tail: a social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*. 108, 814–834.

#### **11. 11/20 The Development of Social Cognition**

- Leslie, A. M. (1992). Pretense, autism, and the theory-of-mind module. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 1(1), 18-21.
- Flavell, J. H., Green, F. L., & Flavell, E. R. (1995). The development of children's knowledge about attentional focus. *Developmental Psychology*, 31, 706-712.
- Royzman, E. B., Cassidy, K. W., & Baron, J. (2003). "I know, you know": Epistemic egocentrism in children and adults. *Review of General Psychology*, 7, 38-65.
- Woodward, A. (1999). Infants' ability to distinguish between purposeful and nonpurposeful behaviors. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 22, 145-160.
- Baron, A.S., Banaji, M.R. (2006). The development of implicit attitudes: Evidence of race evaluations from ages 6, 10 & adulthood. *Psychological Science*, 17 (1), 53-58.

#### **12. 11/27 The Social Brain**

- Gallagher, H. L., & Frith, C. D. (2003). Functional imaging of 'theory of mind.' *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7, 77-83.
- Amodio, D. M., & Frith, C. D. (2006). Meeting of minds: the medial frontal cortex and social cognition. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 6, 268-277.
- Blakemore, S. J., & Decety, J. (2001). From the perception of action to the understanding of intention. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 2(8), 561-567.
- Adolphs, R. (1999). Social cognition and the human brain. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 3(12), 469-479.
- Lieberman, M. D., Ochsner, K. N., Gilbert, D. T., & Schacter, D. L. (2001). Do amnesics exhibit cognitive dissonance reduction? The role of explicit memory and attention in attitude change. *Psychological Science*, 12, 135-140.

#### **13. 12/4 Paper Presentations**