

Psychology

PSYC G4635y The Unconscious Mind 4 pts. Spring 2009

T 4:10-6. Room: 405 Schermerhorn

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- II. Rationale for giving the course
- III. Full description of the content
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I. Bulletin description

PSYC G4635y The Unconscious Mind

4 pts. B. Sparrow. T 4:10-6. Room: 405 Schermerhorn

Prerequisites: The instructor's permission. Some basic knowledge of social psychology is desirable.

Discussion of the unconscious mind from the perspective of social cognition, with an emphasis on both theoretical and empirical background, as well as current issues in measuring automatic processing. Topics include: implicit memory systems; unconscious attitudes, goals and behavior, emotions, and decision making; the activation and deactivation of knowledge systems; and priming.

II. The rationale for giving the course

This advanced seminar course will complement our present curriculum in a number of important ways. The role that unconscious cognitive processes play in social behavior is currently a major topic in the study of social psychology, and has been for the last 30 odd years. It is relevant to other courses currently being offered in the curriculum. Specifically, the study of unconscious cognition will compliment G4685 Social Cognitive Neuroscience and G4450 Evolution of Intelligence and Consciousness by offering a more comprehensive and detailed treatment of the contribution of automatic and unconscious processes to the study of social cognition, and the unique ways conscious and unconscious systems function in a dual process model.

PSYC G4680 is an advanced seminar, designed particularly for graduate students, for advanced undergraduates who are majoring in Psychology or in Neuroscience and Behavior, and for students participating in the Postbac Psychology Program. It fulfills the following degree requirements:

- For Psychology Graduate Students, PSYC G4680 will apply toward the “two seriously graded seminars” requirement of the Master’s degree.
- For the Psychology major or concentration in the College and in G. S., for the

Psychology minor in Engineering, and for the Psychology Post-bac, G4680 meets the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement.

- G4680 will meet the social science requirement of GS, provided that students obtain the necessary permissions and have taken the prerequisite psychology courses.
- For the Psychology Post-bac certificate, PSYC G4680 will fulfill the advanced seminar requirement.
- For the Barnard Psychology major, PSYC G4680 will fulfill the senior seminar requirement.

III. A full description of the content of the course

The idea of thought that occurs outside of conscious awareness has been around since the fifth century BCE. Of course, the most famous theory of the unconscious comes from Freud, and his notions of the Id, Ego, Superego, Oedipal Complexes and the like, and the resulting defense mechanisms to keep unwanted thoughts out of conscious awareness. The psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious is of a disturbing, boiling cauldron that is, out of necessity, kept below the surface.

The cognitive notion of the unconscious does agree with Freud in regard to the proportion of unconscious to conscious thought, agreeing with the famous tip of the iceberg metaphor. However, the early cognitive model of the 1980s, was of a cold, efficient, and unmotivated processor, that was capable of complex activity.

Current notions of the unconscious mind build on these early cognitive theories, but include the possibility for affect, motivation, and goals. There is hardly a psychological process that cannot be seen as carried out to a greater or lesser extent unconsciously, so we may be left to wonder what is consciousness for?

The first segment of the course is devoted to an examination of the early cognitive theories of the unconscious to provide a theoretical framework for the rest of the course. Next, we will discuss unconscious processing, including implicit memory, knowledge activation, priming and, unpriming. We will then examine core themes in social psychology from a perspective of unconscious processing, affect, attitudes, goals and behavior, and the self.

IV. Course requirements (subject to minor revision)

Students will be required to submit a one page thought paper each week, based on the assigned readings, which will be used to launch discussion during the seminar. Students will be expected to participate in the discussion, and will complete a research project proposal of 2 pages at mid-semester. A research presentation and final paper of approximately 10 pages will be required at the last class meeting.

These components will contribute to the course grade as follows:

- 25% Thought papers
 - 25% Class participation
 - 10% Project proposal
 - 40% Final paper and presentation
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V. Reading list and weekly syllabus

The following is the preliminary reading list, which is subject to minor revision.

Week 1: Jan 20

Introduction

Sagan, S., & Druyan, A. (1992). What thin partitions [Ch. 5]. *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*. NY: Ballantine Books.

Wilson, T.D. (2002). The adaptive unconscious [Ch. 2]. *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Kihlstrom, J.F., Barnhardt, T.M., & Tataryn, D.J. (1992). The psychological unconscious: Found, lost, and regained. *American Psychologist*, 47, 788-791.

Week 2: Jan 27

Unconscious Cognition: Frameworks

Kihlstrom, J.F. (1987). The cognitive unconscious. *Science*, 237, 1445-1452.

Johnson-Laird, P.N. (1983). A computational analysis of consciousness. *Cognition and Brain Theory*, 6, 499-508.

Jacoby, L.L., Woloshyn, V., & Kelley, C.M. (1987). Lectures for a layperson: Methods for revealing unconscious processes. In R.F. Bornstein & T.S. Pittman (Eds.) *Perception Without Awareness* (pp. 81-120). New York: Guilford Press.

Bargh, J.A. & Ferguson, M.J. (2000): Beyond behaviorism: On the automaticity of higher mental processes. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, 925-945.

Week 3: Feb 3

Implicit Memory

Squire, L.R., & Knowlton, B.J. (2000). The medial temporal lobe, the hippocampus, and the memory system of the brain. In M. Gazzaniga (Ed.) *The New Cognitive Neurosciences*, 2nd Ed., pp. 765-779. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Schacter, D.L. (1987). Implicit memory: History and current status. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition*, 13, 501-518.

Roediger, H.L., Nairne, J.S., Neath, I., & Supernant, A.M. (2003). The nature of remembering: Essays in honor of Robert G. Crowder. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 160(2), 396.

Week 4: Feb 10

Knowledge Activation

Higgins, E.T. (1996). Knowledge activation: Accessibility, applicability, and salience. In E.T. Higgins & A.W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles* (pp. 133-168). New York: Guilford Press.

Anderson, J. R., & Pirolli, P. L. Spread of activation. (1984). *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, & Cognition*, 10, 791-799.

Week 5: Feb 17

Priming

Neely, J. H. (1977). Semantic priming and retrieval from lexical memory: Roles of inhibitionless spreading activation and limited-capacity attention. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 106, 226-254.

Bargh, J. A., Chen, M., & Burrows, L. (1996). Automaticity of social behavior: Direct effects of trait construct and stereotype priming on action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 230-244.

Bargh, J. A., & Chartrand, T. L. (2000). A practical guide to priming and automaticity research. In H. Reis & C. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in social psychology* (pp. 253-285). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schacter, D.L. & Buckner, R.L. (1998). Priming and the brain. *Neuron*, 20, 185-195.

Week 6: Feb 24

Unpriming

Graf, P. & Schacter, D.L. (1987). Selective effects of interference on implicit and explicit memory for new associations. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 13, 45-53.

Forster, J. & Lieberman, N. (2005). A motivational model of post-suppressional rebound. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 15, 1-32.

Sparrow, B., & Wegner, D.M. (2006). Unpriming: The Deactivation of Thoughts Through Expression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91, 1009-1019.

Week 7: Mar 3

Affect

Bargh, J.A., & Williams, L.E. (2007). On the nonconscious regulation of emotion. In J. Gross (Ed.), *Handbook of emotion regulation* (pp. 429-445). New York: Guilford.

Berridge, K.C., & Winkielman, P. (2003). What is an unconscious emotion? (The case for unconscious liking). *Cognition & Emotion*, 17, 181-211.

Craig, A.D. (2004). Human feelings: why are some more aware than others? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 8, 239-241.

Week 8: Mar 10

Attitudes

Greenwald, A.G., McGhee, D.E., Schwartz, J. (1998). Measuring individual differences in implicit cognition: The implicit association test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1464-1480.

Dovidio, J.F., Kawakami, K., Gaertner, S.L. (2002). Implicit and explicit prejudice and interracial interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 62-68.

Cunningham, W. A., Johnson, M. K., Raye, C. L., Gatenby, J. C., Gore, J. C., & Banaji, M. R. (2004). Separable neural components in the processing of Black and White Faces. *Psychological Science*, 15, 806-813.

Week 9: Mar 24

Project Discussion

Week 10: March 31

Goals and Behavior

Chartrand, T.L., & Bargh, J.A. (1996). Automatic activation of impression formation and memorization goals: Nonconscious goal priming reproduces effects of explicit task instructions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 464-478.

Strahan, E. J., Spencer, S. J. & Zanna, M. P. (2002). Subliminal priming and persuasion: Striking while the iron is hot. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 556-568.

Aarts, H., Gollwitzer, P.M., & Hassin, R. (2004). Goal contagion: Perceiving is for pursuing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 23-37.

Week 11: Apr 7

Decision Making

Morwitz, V.G., Johnson, E.J., & Schmittlein, D. (1993). Does measuring intent change behavior? *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20, 46-61.

Dijksterhuis, A. (2004). Think different: The merits of unconscious thought in preference development and decision making. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 586- 598.

Cioffi, D., & Garner, R. (1996). On doing the decision: The effects of active vs. passive choice on commitment and self-perception. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 133-147.

Week 12: Apr 14

The Self

Nisbett, R.E., & Wilson, T.D. (1977). Telling more than we can know: Verbal reports on mental processes. *Psychological Review*, 231-259.

Andersen, S.M., & Chen, S. (2002). The relational self: An interpersonal social-cognitive theory. *Psychological Review*, 109, 619-645.

Turk, D.J., Heatherton, T.F., Macrae, C.N., Kelley, W.M., & Gazzaniga, M.S. (2003). Out of contact, out of mind: The distributed nature of self. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1001, 65-79.

Week 13: Apr 21

Automatisms

Knuf, L., Aschersleben, G., & Prinz, W. (2001). An analysis of ideomotor action. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 130, 779-798.

Koutstaal, W. (1992). Skirting the abyss: A history of experimental explorations of automatic writing in psychology. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 28, 5-27.

Vogt, E. Z., & Hyman, R. (1959). *Water witching U.S.A.*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wegner, D. M., Ansfield, M., & Pilloff, D. (1998). The putt and the pendulum. *Psychological Science*, 9, 196-199.

Week 14: (Last day of class) Apr 28

Project Presentations

class time may be extended on this day to accommodate all presentations
