

PSYCHOLOGY D15-F, 2000
Dr. John Bassili (room S-550)
Office Hours: bassili@scar.utoronto.ca

Required Texts: *Social Cognition: Making sense of people*
By: Ziva Kunda

Marking Theme: There will be two exams and a term paper. Each exam, which will have a short-answer format, will count for 35% of the total mark. The exams will cover material from the readings and lectures and will not be cumulative. The term paper will consist of a review of experimental literature on any topic discussed in lecture or the textbook (more on this in class) and will count for 30% of the total grade. The paper is due on December 11. You will lose 2 marks out of 30 for each day of tardiness.

1) September 15 Chpt 1: Introduction

The book and the lecture will each provide a distinctive orientation towards the subject matter of the course.

2) September 22 Chpt 2: Concepts: Representing Social Knowledge

Cognition as a whole, and social cognition in particular, involve processes that often act on representations of information. Understanding the nature of these representation is, therefore, of fundamental importance. In lecture we will focus in particular on the representation of category information.

3) September 29 Chpt 3: Heuristics: Rules of Thumb for Reasoning

I you want to know why social psychologists once referred to human beings as mental cripples, this chapter will give you the answer. In lecture I will discuss Attribution Theory, which is regarded by many as the first clearly cognitive perspective on processes of person perception.

4) October 6 Chpt4: Determining What Is, Was, Might Have

Inferential processes will be discussed from a variety of perspectives in the book and in lecture. The emphasis in lecture will shift from looking at the basic models of attribution to looking at ideas and discoveries that were stimulated by these models.

5) October 13 Chpt 10: The self

The chapter covers "the self", a topic that is receiving a lot of attention in the field today, while in lecture I will focus on memory for self-relevant information and on the representation of self knowledge in memory.

October 20 MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm exam will be held in class. It will last an hour and a half and will cover representatively material from the book and lectures.

6) October 27 Chpt 9: Knowledge of Others' Attitudes etc.
Chapter 7 as well as the lecture will focus on processes that have to do with the encoding of social information. There will be a special emphasis on the role of automatic processes in social information processing. I will be reviewing classical work in a topic that is known as "impression formation". Along with attribution theory, research on impression formation forms the foundation of modern social cognition. I will also cover research on the spontaneity of trait inferences.

7) November 3 Chpt 5: Memory: Reconstructing the Past
One of the most important contributions of research in social cognition has been to our understanding of how people organise information about others in memory. Chapter 5 reviews this work, and we will start an extensive discussion of this research in lecture.

8) November 10 Chpt 6: Hot Cognition: Impact of Motivation
Social cognition has not been embraced by all social psychologists (to put it mildly). Detractors of the field usually argue that not enough attention is given to affect and emotions. Chapter 6 will help set the record straight. In lecture we will continue our coverage of person memory.

9) November 17 Chpt 11: Culture
The book presents an interesting analysis of how elements of social cognition can be influenced by culture. In lecture we will discuss one of the most important phenomena of social cognition: cognitive structure activation.

10) November 24 Chpt 7: Automatic Processes
Although most of our review of social cognition has been in the domain of person perception (where most of the research has focused) important contributions have also been made in the domain of attitudes. The focus of chapter 7 and in lecture will be on automatic processes.

11) December 1 Chpt 8: Stereotypes
Our meeting will consist of a discussion of stereotypes. One particularly important question that we will touch on is whether stereotypes are accurate.