GMTTHEORIES IN SOCIAL AND PERSONALITY
PSYC GU4670Y/MGMT B9710
SPRING TERM 2020

INSTRUCTOR: **E. Tory Higgins**, Office 401-C, Schermerhorn Hall
Wednesday 2:10-4:00, Schermerhorn Room 405

DESCRIPTION: Open to graduate students and advanced undergraduates *with the instructor's permission [limited enrollment]*. The purpose of the course is two-fold: to compare the contributions and limitations of major theoretical perspectives on social behavior, and to learn about the nature of theory construction and theory-testing in psychology generally. Both general models and middle-level models of social behavior are reviewed. The advantages and disadvantages of different models for different levels and different kinds of social-personality phenomena are highlighted. Exercises comparing the predictions of different theories for the same study are designed to acquire an appreciation of how to operationalize theories and an understanding of the various features of a "good" theory. How to design research in social-personality that actually tests alternative theories is emphasized.

ASSIGNMENTS:

(A) Class preparation and participation. Preparation for and participation during class will receive 20% of the total grade. Each week there will be preparation questions. You are to study and prepare for **all of them** because you can be called in class to answer any of them.

(B) Take-home exercises. There are four take-home exercises, each worth 20%. For each of the first three exercises, you will be given a method section from an experimental study. You will be given two different theories to apply to the study. For each theory, your task will be to use the theory as the basis for making predictions about what the results of the study should be according to the party-line theory. At the beginning of each exercise, the assumptions, axioms and postulates of each theory relevant to making predictions for the study must be described. For each theory, any additional assumptions that you believe need to be made in order to make predictions must be clearly identified as your additional assumptions (as distinct from the theory). Do not make assumptions that simply allow you to avoid having to make any predictions at all, although there are times when a theory itself is silent for some manipulation. For each theory, include a Figure or Table that *illustrates your predictions*.
The final exercise consists of taking any one of the three studies in the previous exercises and modifying it in order to make it a more adequate test of the predictive power of any two competing theories you choose. Alternatively, you can design a totally new experiment testing the predictive power of any two competing theories you like, even if they were not covered in the course, as long as you use the theories to predict social behavior. Your answers to the exercises **MUST** be handed in on the day that the exercise will be discussed. [The deadline for each will be given when the exercise in handed out.] Each take-home exercise answer should not be longer than a maximum of *FIVE DOUBLE-SPACED PAGES [excluding the space needed to illustrate your predictions].*

PART I: GENERAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

DATES	*TOPICS*	*READINGS*
January 22	*Introduction and Overview*	
January 29	*Conditioning Theories*	**Heidbreder [7]** **Deutsch & Krauss [4]** **Watson; Miller; Skinner**
February 5	*Psychodynamic Theories*	**Heidbreder [10]** **Deutsch & Krauss [5]** **Kohut & Seitz; Erikson**
February 12	*Gestalt/Field Theories*	**Heidbreder [9]** **Deutsch & Krauss [2&3]**
February 19	*Symbolic Interactionism*	**Deutsch & Krauss [6]** **Stryker & Statham** **Goffman**

PART II: MIDDLE LEVEL THEORIES

February 26	*Cognitive Consistency*	**Festinger** **Festinger&Carlsmith;** **Heider; Aronson**
March 4	**MIDTERM NO CLASS**	
March 11	*Social Perception & Attribution* **Exercise 1 Due & Discussed**	**Jones&Davis; Trope;** **Bem; Schachter&Singer**
March 18	**SPRING RECESS**	

DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
March 25	*Social Information Processing*	**Ross; Bargh; Higgins (A)**
	Exercise 2 Due & Discussed	
April 1	*Attitudes & Persuasion*	**Kelman; Chaiken et al. Hovland, Harvey, & Sherif**
April 8	*Motivation*	**Higgins (B); Tesser Kruglanski & Webster (1996)**
	Exercise 3 Due & Discussed	
April 15	*Shared Reality*	**Echterhoff, Higgins & Levine; Higgins (D)**
April 22	*Personality*	**Mischel & Shoda; Higgins (C); Higgins, Kruglanski & Pierro;**
April 29	*Theory Development as Good Parenting*	
	Exercise 4 Due & Discussed	

PREPARATION QUESTIONS

PART I: GENERAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

1. Conditioning Theories

A.

According to conditioning theories, what motivates people?

According to conditioning theories, what is the nature of learning?

What is a stimulus? What is a response? What is the relation between them?

B.

What psychological principles or mechanisms represented in conditioning theories are part of modern social-personality psychology?

C.

Think about the pros (strengths) and the cons (weaknesses) of conditioning theories? On balance, do you think there are more pros or cons? If your answer is "more pros", describe just the pros. If your answer is "more cons", describe just the cons. Be prepared to defend your position.

2. Psychodynamic Theories

A.

According to psychodynamic theories, what motivates people?

According to psychodynamic theories, what is the nature of learning?

What is the role of conflict in motivating people?

What is meant by the unconsciousness, the preconscious, and the conscious?

B.

What psychological principles or mechanisms represented in psychodynamic theories are part of modern social-personality psychology?

C.

Think about the pros (strengths) and cons (weaknesses) of psychodynamic theories relative to conditioning theories. On balance, do you think there are more pros or cons? If your answer is "more pros", describe just the pros. If your answer is "more cons", describe just the cons. Be prepared to defend your position.

3. Gestalt/Field Theories

A.

How are the scientific assumptions of gestalt/field theories more like psychodynamic theories than conditioning theories? How are they more like conditioning than psychodynamic theories?

B.

According to gestalt/field theories, what motivates people?

According to gestalt/field theories, what is the nature of learning?

What is a gestalt? What is a field of forces? How do they differ from stimulus-response in conditioning theories?

What is the role of tension in gestalt/field theories? Compare and contrast the psychological nature and consequences of tension in gestalt/field versus psychodynamic theories.

C.

Think about the pros (strengths) and cons (weaknesses) of gestalt/field theories relative to psychodynamic theories. On balance, do you think there are more pros or cons? If your answer is "more pros", describe just the pros. If your answer is "more cons", describe just the cons. Be prepared to defend your position.

Note. When does Gestalt theory make unique predictions [different from elementistic associationism] and when is it just a metaphor. The case of ***Change-of-Meaning*** as a function of contextual relations.

(1) Psycholinguistic change-of-meaning from a minimal change of one letter element is a sentence:

"Sitting"….. "the bank"   **i**n versus **o**n

(2) Asch's classic change-of-meaning from central traits.

intelligent………industrious   **warm** versus **cold**

There is NO change-of-meaning, just change in implications for self given how a trait [intelligent; industrious] would intensify the negative consequences of a person working for you or against you. Warm and cold define positive and negative value for you, and intelligent and industrious define strong control of the effects of that value.

SPECIAL EXERCISE ON:
DRIVE METAPHORS OF MOTIVATION

Conditioning theories (e.g., Hull-Spence), psychodynamic theories (e.g., Freud), and Gestalt theories (e.g., Lewin) all posit **DRIVE** as a motivational force. What has not received enough attention is that there are two *Different* drive metaphors:

(A) **The Water Pressure "Hydraulic" Metaphor**: Drive as energy or tension that builds up pressure which needs release or it will explode. [Drive from too much of something]

(B) **The Empty Gas Tank Metaphor**: Drive to refill the resources to satisfy a need that has dropped too low from deprivation. [Drive from too little of something]

So Which Is It!

(1) What are the psychological implications of these two different metaphors? What is drive and how does it work?

(2) What are the practical implications for a motivational intervention when performance is poor? Given that things are not working, what do you do to make motivation more effective?

(3) Design a "thought experiment" that would distinguish between these models by making different predictions for each model.

Note For Class. Manipulate hours since last meal: (a) more and more hungry [*increasing tension*] which eating food reduces/decreases versus (b) less and less food in stomach [*energy depletion*] which eating food restores/increases

SAME MANIPULATION BUT DIFFERENT DESCRIPTIONS

One perspective frames what happens as (a) the presence of a negative (hunger); and the other perspective frames it as (b) the absence of a positive (food). (a) is a prevention framing [Austrian-German prevention], want to remove "-1" hunger. (b) is a promotion framing [New world American promotion], want to gain food. Both are negative states want to avoid, but would (a) feel agitation [feel tense] whereas (b) would feel dejection [feel weak]?

4. Symbolic Interactionism

A.

According to symbolic interactionism theories, what motivates people?

According to symbolic interactionism theories, what is the nature of learning?

What is symbolic about symbolic interactionism? How does this kind of symbolism differ from symbolism in psychodynamic theories?

What is the nature of the relation between self and others in symbolic interactionism? How does the nature of this relation in symbolic interactionism differ from either gestalt/field or psychodynamic theories?

B.

What psychological principles or mechanisms represented in symbolic interactionism are part of modern social-personality psychology?

C.

Think about the pros (strengths) and cons (weaknesses) of symbolic interactionism theory relative to gestalt/field theories? On balance, do you think there are more pros or cons? If your answer is "more pros", describe just the pros. If your answer is "more cons", describe just the cons. Be prepared to defend your position.

Notes. Self concept is not only "me" object from others' responses to self but also "me" object from own response to self ["own" perspective]. We all have episodic memories, including personal secrets, that are part of our self concept.

Example of identity versus role. For role to become a self identity it needs to be embraced. But what determines if it is embraced? Could think of this in terms of whether role supports or impedes other roles. Think of first born girl who has a younger brother born. Suddenly she has the role of "older sister" and loses "only child". She may not embrace this new role and identify with being the "older sister".

PART II: MIDDLE LEVEL THEORIES

1. Cognitive Consistency

A.

According to cognitive consistency theories, what motivates people?

According to cognitive consistency theories, what is the nature of learning?

What is meant by "consistency" in cognitive consistency theories?

Why is meant by "cognitive" in cognitive consistency theories?

B.

What psychological principles or mechanisms represented in cognitive consistency theories are part of modern social-personality psychology?

C.

Compare and contrast Cognitive Dissonance theory and Balance theory regarding the motivation for cognitive consistency and the manner of achieving it. What are the distinct contributions and strengths of each theory?   What are the limitations of each?

2. Social Perception & Attribution

A.

What is the function of social perception? What is the function of self-perception? Compare and contrast the motivational/functional underpinnings of perception of *self* versus perception of *others*.

B.

What psychological principles or mechanisms represented in perception/attribution theories are part of modern social-personality psychology?

C.

What mechanisms are used in the perception of *self* that differ from those used in the perception of *others*, if any?

How does the role of expectancy in perception of *self* differ from the role of expectancy in perception of *others*? Are the sources of expectancy in self versus other perception different?

3. Social Information Processing

A.

According to social information processing theories, what is the nature of learning?

What are the costs and benefits of each of the psychological mechanisms discussed by the information processing theories?

Can errors from information processing mechanisms be corrected?

What does it mean to *control* or not control information processing?

B.

How do information processing theories provide a non-motivational account of biases in social perception?

C.

Compare and contrast Higgins' theory and Ross' theory regarding the mechanisms underlying how information is used to make judgments and inferences. What are the distinct contributions and strengths of each theory?   What are the limitations of each?

4. Attitudes & Persuasion

A.

According to atttitudes & persuasion theories, what motivates people?

According to atttitudes & persuasion theories, what is the nature of learning?

What is the function of holding attitudes?

What motivates people to be persuaded or yield to social influence?

B.

Message quality, source expertise, source attractiveness, source trustworthiness have been treated historically as separate factors in persuasion. To what extent are they? What is their independent, interdependent, and substitutable status in different attitudes & persuasion theories? Do these influence factors vary in the quality of *accurate* information that they provide, in the extent to which they *should* have influence on the message recipient?

C.

Compare and contrast Chaiken's theory and Kelman's theory regarding the mechanisms underlying social persuasion. What are the distinct contributions and strengths of each theory?   What are the limitations of each?

5. Motivation

A.

Are there basic cognitive operations that are not influenced by motivation?

B.

If there were cross-cultural differences in social motivation, what would they look like?

C.

6. Shared Reality

A.

What are the necessary conditions to create a shared reality with someone else? How does creating a shared reality with others affect us?

B.

What motivates creating shared realities with others? Are we the only animal that has those motives? Do other animals create shared realities with others? If so, is there any difference between how they do it and how humans do it?

C.

After childhood, are there any qualitatively new modes of shared reality that emerge? How about in human evolution; after the *Agricultural Revolution* 10,000 years ago, have any qualitatively new modes of shared reality emerged?

7. Personality

A.

Are there psychological mechanisms or principles that are unique to personality (e.g., distinct from social psychological mechanisms or principles)?

B.

How can the person X situation interactive effect on behavior be conceptualized?
What does it mean to have a personality? When is personality revealed?

C.

What ways of being effective relate to strong promotion, prevention, locomotion, or assessment? Are these ways of being effective independent of one another or are they related in distinct meaningful ways?

EXERCISE 1

Conditioning (Classical or Operant or Both)

Versus

"Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance"

Students were induced to write essays taking a very unpopular position – that controversial speakers should be banned from the university. Half of the students were <u>required</u> to write their attitude-discrepant essays, and they were paid unexpectedly either a small or a large amount of money for their participation immediately <u>after</u> they wrote the essay.

The other half of the students were <u>asked</u> whether they would be willing to write their essays and were promised either the small or the large amount of money as an incentive for their efforts. It was emphasized that the decision to write the essay was completely up to the students. They all agreed to write the essay. These students were paid the amount of money promised them <u>before</u> they wrote the essay.

After writing the essay, the subjects were asked how much they agreed or disagreed that controversial speakers should be banned from the university. The subjects had been previously asked this question as part of an opinion survey they answered a week before the experimental session. The dependent measure was attitude change.

EXERCISE 2

"Festinger's Dissonance & Schachter's Misattribution"

Versus

"Bem's Self-perception"

As part of a study on "ways to improve memory," undergraduates took a "drug" that was supposed to improve memory. The "drug" was actually a placebo capsule filled with flour. Some were told that the drug had "no side effects," while others were told either that it would make them feel "tense" or that it would make them feel "relaxed." While the subjects were waiting for the "drug" to take full effect, they agreed to participate in "another study" for which they wrote a counter-attitudinal essay supporting the military draft. To be clear, all participants wrote the counter-attitudinal essay, but under different conditions. On an opinion survey taken a week before, all subjects had opposed the military draft.

Subjects in the "no side effects" condition agreed to participate in the second, counter-attitudinal essay, study under either high or low choice. Subjects in all other conditions agreed under high choice. Subjects were asked their attitude toward the military draft at the end of the first session.

Subjects returned for a "second set of memory tests" 2 weeks later when they were asked to recall verbatim the essay they had previously written. After subjects had recalled the essay they had previously written, they were all reminded of all the circumstances under which they had previously written the essay (i.e., the "drug" side effect and their choice to write the essay). After this reminder of the circumstances, they were given the attitude measure again.

The variables, therefore, are "drug" side effects, choice to write the essay, temporal delay, reinstatement of writing the essay (all subjects were in this condition), and reinstatement of the circumstances of writing the essay (all subjects were in this condition). You are to predict subjects' attitude change (i.e, change from opinion survey attitude to current attitude) *at the end of the first session* (after writing the essay) and *at end of the second session* after recalling the essay they had previously written and being reminded of the circumstances of writing the essay.

Because Festinger was not completely clear, assume that the state of dissonance is an unpleasant state with physiological arousal.

EXERCISE 3

Choose Any Two Theories (Covered in the Course) Relevant to Social Influence
And Make Separate Predictions for Each Theory

Overview.   All subjects were randomly assigned to read a statement advocating reduced sleep supposedly written by either an attractive or an expert source. For half of the subjects within each source condition the message consisted of a simple statement of opinion that people generally sleep too much, without supporting arguments; for the other subjects the same statement of opinion was accompanied by six separate supporting arguments. After exposure to the experimental materials, subjects' agreement with the source's opinion was measured.

Subjects were female students in introductory psychology courses who participated in the experiment for research credit. At the beginning of the experimental session, subjects were told that the study concerned "sex differences in empathy." They were informed that the research was endeavoring to find out whether men and women differed in their ability to make accurate attributions about another person's personality and character on the basis of relatively little information. The experimenter explained that each subject would be presented with information about a particular real target person. This information would consist of a picture of the person, some facts about the individual (age, occupation, hobbies, etc.) and also a statement made by the individual in response to the request that they write about something concerning which they had strong feelings.

The stimulus material consisted of two parts. The first was a short information sheet, which contained the target person's picture and some personal information. In the attractive source condition, the picture was of a smiling, physically attractive young man. He was described as a 20-year-old undergraduate in a general arts program at a large Canadian University. His hobbies were athletics and music and he had recently been elected to the student government council at his University. In the expert condition, subjects were presented with a picture of an unattractive middle-aged man. He was described as a 43-year-old professor of physiological psychology at a large Canadian University, who had recently co-authored a book on the functions of sleep.

Following the information sheet, the target person's statement was presented. In the no arguments condition, the essay was approximately one-third page in length. It simply stated that in the target person's opinion people sleep too much, and they would be better off if they cut down the amount they sleep to less than the typical 8 hours. In the arguments condition, a 3 1/2 page statement was provided which included not only the statement of opinion given in the no arguments condition, but also six separate arguments designed to support the overall position. Finally subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with what the target person had said in his statement.

EXERCISE 4

FREEDOM!!

For Exercise 4 you have the following options:

(1) Choose one of your previous exercises. Revise the Methods & Procedures in order to make the study a more appropriate test of the competing theories. Explain why your revisions are more appropriate to the theories. Given your new Methods & Procedures, predict the results of your study for each theory as you have done in the previous exercises.

(2) Choose the two theories tested in one of your previous exercises. Create a new study that you believe would be a more appropriate test of the competing theories. Explain why your study would be a more appropriate test of the theories than the original study. Given your new study, predict the results of your study for each theory as you have done in the previous exercises.

(3) Choose any two competing theories in social-personality psychology, including ones not covered in the course. Create a new study that you believe would be an appropriate test of the competing theories. Explain why your study would be an appropriate test of the theories. Given your new study, predict the results of your study for each theory as you have done in the previous exercises.

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The Columbia College Student Council, on behalf of the whole student body, has resolved that maintaining academic integrity is the preserve of all members of our intellectual community – including and especially students.

As a consequence, all Columbia College students will now make the following pledge:

We, the undergraduate students of Columbia University, hereby pledge to value the integrity of our ideas and the ideas of others by honestly presenting our work, respecting authorship, and striving not simply for answers but for understanding in the pursuit of our common scholastic goals. In this way, we seek to build an academic community governed by our collective efforts, diligence, and Code of Honor.

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I affirm that I will not plagiarize, use unauthorized materials, or give or receive illegitimate help on assignments, papers, or examinations. I will also uphold equity and honesty in the evaluation of my work and the work of others. I do so to sustain a community built around this Code of Honor.