

**PSYC UN2640: Introduction to Social Cognition  
Summer Session A, 2021**

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**I. Bulletin description**

PSYC UN2640: Introduction to Social Cognition (3 points). Summer Session A, 2021.

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 10:45 a.m. - 12:20 p.m. Eastern time, online via Zoom.

Prerequisite: An introductory psychology course.

An introduction to basic concepts in social cognition, an approach to understanding social judgment and behavior by investigating the underlying mental processes. Topics include attitudes, identity, and prejudice, among others.

Instructor: Larisa Heiphetz

lah2201@columbia.edu

212-854-1348

355C Schermerhorn Extension

Office hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., online via Zoom (same link as our regular course sessions). If you have another class during both sets of office hours, please e-mail me to set up a meeting at another time. Please also let me know which of your classes conflicts with my office hours so that I can consider how best to arrange my office hours around popular courses in future semesters. I am happy to meet with you throughout the semester to discuss anything related to the course.

I typically reply to e-mails within 48 hours, although I don't check my e-mail on Sundays. The TAs and I are happy to meet with you throughout the course of the semester to discuss the course material. **If you have questions about course policies and logistics (like when something is due or how to submit an assignment), please e-mail one of the TAs or come to their office hours.** Questions about course content or psychology more broadly can be directed toward any of the TAs or me.

Teaching Assistants:

**TBD.**

## **II. A full description of the content of the course.**

How do we understand the social worlds we inhabit? This is the guiding question of this course, which focuses on understanding the mental processes that underlie social judgments and behaviors. This class will include a discussion of the theoretical frameworks psychologists use to understand social cognition. We will also explore classic and recent experiments on topics including (but not limited to) attitudes, identity, and prejudice.

This course consists of lectures (four days a week during Summer Session A) that will include time for student participation. Evaluations include reading quizzes, small in-class assignments, a midterm project, and a final project.

## **III. The rationale for giving the course**

This is an introductory class designed for undergraduates who have passed an introductory psychology course and who wish to learn more about the mental processes underlying social judgments and behaviors. It fulfills the following requirements:

- For the psychology major or concentration in the College and in the School of General Studies, for the psychology minor in Engineering, and for the psychology postbac certificate, this course will fulfill the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement.
- For other undergraduate students, this course will fulfill one term of the social science requirement of the School of General Studies.

This course complements several courses that are already offered in the psychology department at Columbia. Social Cognition builds on the foundation that students acquired in their introductory psychology course and sets the stage for more in-depth study of topics within social psychology (e.g., the material in this course can prepare students for courses such as Cultural Psychology, Moral Psychology, Psychology of Stereotyping and Prejudice, etc.). This course also dovetails with Social Psychology, providing a more in-depth look at the mental processes underlying some of the topics typically covered in that course (e.g., stereotyping, emotion).

## **IV. The reading list and weekly syllabus**

A few notes to keep in mind:

- The schedule below is subject to change.
- The first part of the course will focus on *intrapersonal* social cognitive processes. During these class periods, we will examine how people think about themselves. The second part of the course will focus on *interpersonal* social cognitive processes and will examine how people think about other individuals.
- Please read the required article(s) for each day before coming to class on that day. Articles are available on the course website; please e-mail me immediately if you cannot access them.
- We will read a combination of classic and newer articles. Many required readings are somewhat older, since it is difficult to understand what is happening in psychology currently without a firm understanding of the basis of newer work. Some of the older studies we discuss may have been included in your introductory psychology textbook; in this class, you will have a chance to delve more deeply into some of that primary literature. Material published over the past few years is available as optional readings for interested students and may sometimes be incorporated into lectures.
- We will read some empirical articles (articles that present data from new studies) and some review articles (articles that describe a theory or provide an overview of a body of research). One way to think about the relation between readings and lectures is that in any given week, one of these usually provides breadth while the other provides depth. For example, in some weeks, you

may read a review article summarizing the results of many studies (breadth), and lecture will describe 1-2 studies in detail (depth). Other weeks, you will read an empirical paper detailing 1-3 studies, and lecture will provide a broader view of the research area.

- Because the summer session is condensed compared to a regular semester, the course will move quickly! The workload is the same as it would be during a regular semester, but we will be doing that work twice as fast (i.e., we will have four course sessions per week, each with their own readings and assignments, whereas normally we would have only two course sessions per week for a larger number of weeks). Please keep this in mind when deciding how many courses to take this term and whether this is the right time for you to take this course. If a longer semester is a better fit for you, I expect to offer this course again during Spring 2022.

## **Introduction and Foundational Material**

Monday, May 3rd: Introduction to the course

Please read the syllabus before coming to class.

*[Optional reading that may be helpful if you do not have much experience reading psychology articles: 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, PA: Psychology Press.]*

Tuesday, May 4th: Methods

Gilovich, T., Keltner, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (2011). The methods of social psychology. In T. Gilovich, D. Keltner, & R. E. Nisbett, *Social psychology* (pp. 42-63). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Wednesday, May 5th: Methods

No new reading.

## **Part I: Within Ourselves**

Thursday, May 6th: The self and identity

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224

Monday, May 10th: The self and identity

Oyserman, D., Lewis, N. A., Jr., Yan, V. X., Fisher, O., O'Donnell, S. C., & Horowitz, E. (2017). An identity-based motivation framework for self-regulation. *Psychological Inquiry*, 28, 139-147. doi: 10.1080/1047840X.2017.1337406

*[Optional reading on regulatory focus theory and consequences of prevention and promotion orientations: Kanze, D., Huang, L., Conley, M. A., & Higgins, E. T. (2018). We ask men to win and women not to lose: Closing the gender gap in start-up funding. Academy of Management Journal, 61, 586-614. doi: 10.5465/amj.2016.1215]*

Tuesday, May 11th: Attitudes and attitude change

Lai, C. K., Marini, M., Lehr, S. A., Cerruti, C., Shin, J. L., Joy-Gaba, J. A., Ho, A. K., Teachman, B. A., Wojcik, S. P., Koleva, S. P., Frazier, R. S., Heiphetz, L., Chen, E., Turner, R. N., Haidt, J., Kesebir, S., Hawkins, C. B., Schaefer, H. S., Rubichi, S., Sartori, G., Dial, C. M., Sriram, N., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2014). Reducing implicit racial preferences: I. A comparative investigation of 17 interventions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 143, 1765-1785. doi: 10.1037/a0036260

Wednesday, May 12th: Attitudes and attitude change

Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 58, 203-210. doi: 10.1037/h0041593

[Optional reading on changes in attitudes over time: Charlesworth, T. E. S., & Banaji, M. R. (2019). Patterns of implicit and explicit attitudes: I. Long-term change and stability from 2007 to 2016. *Psychological Science*, 30, 174-192. doi: 10.1177/0956797618813087]

Thursday, May 13th: Affect and cognition

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (2013). From affect to social cognition. In S. T. Fiske & S. E. Taylor, *Social cognition: From brains to culture* (pp. 370-385). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Monday, May 17th: Affect and cognition

Lyubomirsky, S. (2001). Why are some people happier than others? The role of cognitive and motivational processes in well-being. *American Psychologist*, 56, 239-249. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.239

[Optional reading about affect and cognition focusing on the extent to which emotion perception is universal: Gendron, M., Crivelli, C., & Barrett, L. F. (2018). Universality reconsidered: Diversity in meaning making of facial expressions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27, 211-219. doi: 10.1177/0963721417746794]

[Optional reading about affect and cognition focusing on increasing happiness: Lee, J. C., Hall, D. L., & Wood, W. (2018). Experiential or material purchases? Social class determines purchase happiness. *Psychological Science*, 29, 1031-1039. doi: 10.1177/0956797617736386]

Tuesday, May 18th: Judgment and decision-making

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, 185, 1124-1131. doi: 10.1126/science.185.4157.1124

Wednesday, May 19th: Judgment and decision-making

Guest speaker, no reading

[Optional reading about judgment and decision-making: Shafir, E. (2017). Decisions in poverty contexts. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 18, 131-136. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.08.026]

Thursday, May 20th: Mid-Term Project Activity

## Part II: With Other People

Monday, May 24th: Person perception—Schemas

Markus, H. (1977). Self-schemata and processing information about the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35, 63-78. doi: 10.1037/0022-2514.35.2.63

Tuesday, May 25th: Person perception—Attribution

Gilbert, D. T. (1998). Speeding with Ned: A personal view of the correspondence bias. In J. M. Darley & J. Cooper (Eds.), *Attribution and social interaction: The legacy of E. E. Jones* (pp. 5-36). Washington, DC: APA Press.

Wednesday, May 26th: Person perception—Mind-reading (Note: There are two required readings for today.)

Baillargeon, R., Scott, R. M., & He, Z. (2010). False-belief understanding in infants. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *14*, 110-118. doi: 10.1016/j.tics.2009.12.006

Waytz, A., Epley, N., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2010). Social cognition unbound: Insights into anthropomorphism and dehumanization. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *19*, 58-62. doi: 10.1177/0963721409359302

[Optional reading about person perception focusing on essentialist attributions for human characteristics: Mandalaywala, T. M., Amodio, D. M., & Rhodes, M. (2018). Essentialism promotes racial prejudice by increasing endorsement of social hierarchies. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *9*, 461-469. doi: 10.1177/1948550617707020]

[Optional reading about person perception focusing on self-perceptions and dehumanization: Kouchaki, M., Dobson, K. S. H., Waytz, A., & Kteily, N. S. (2018). The link between self-dehumanization and immoral behavior. *Psychological Science*, *29*, 1234-1246. doi: 10.1177/0956797618760784]

Thursday, May 27th: Relationships—Platonic relationships

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., Tudor, M., & Nelson, G. (1991). Close relationships as including other in the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *60*, 241-253. doi: 10.1037//0022-3514.60.2.241

Monday, May 31st: **MEMORIAL DAY - NO CLASS**

Tuesday, June 1st: Relationships—Romantic relationships

Driver, J., Tabares, A., Shapiro, A. F., & Gottman, J. M. (2012). Couple interaction in happy and unhappy marriages: Gottman laboratory studies. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity* (pp. 57-77). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

[Optional reading about relationships: Finkel, E. J., Cheung, E. O., Emery, L. F., Carswell, K. L., & Larson, G. M. (2015). The suffocation model: Why marriage in America is becoming an all-or-nothing institution. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *24*, 238-244. doi: 10.1177/0963721415569274]

Wednesday, June 2nd: Moral cognition

Van de Vondervoort, J. W., & Hamlin, J. K. (2018). The early emergence of sociomoral evaluation: Infants prefer prosocial others. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *20*, 77-81. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.08.014

Thursday, June 3rd: Moral cognition

Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*, *108*, 814-834. doi: 10.1037//0033-295X.108.4.814

[Optional reading about moral cognition: Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B. A. (2009). Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *96*, 1029-1046. doi: 10.1037/a0015141]

Monday, June 7th: Group processes—Small groups

Ellsworth, P. C. (1989). Are twelve heads better than one? *Law and Contemporary Problems*, *52*, 205-224. doi: 10.2307/1191911

Tuesday, June 8th: Group processes—Stereotyping and prejudice

Salter, P. S., Adams, G., & Perez, M. J. (2018). Racism in the structure of everyday worlds: A cultural-psychological perspective. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27, 150-155. doi: 10.1177/0963721417724239

Wednesday, June 9th: Group processes: Stereotyping and prejudice

Guest speaker, no reading

Thursday, June 10th: Group processes: Ideology

Osborne, D., Sengupta, N. K., & Sibley, C. G. (2019). System justification theory at 25: Evaluating a paradigm shift in psychology and looking towards the future. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 58, 340-361. doi: 10.1111/bjso.12302

[Optional reading about group processes focusing on minimal groups: Over, H., Eggleston, A., Bell, J., & Dunham, Y. (2018). Young children seek out biased information about social groups. *Developmental Science*, 21, e12580. doi: 10.1111/desc.12580]

[Optional reading about group processes focusing on ideology: Frimer, J. A., Skitka, L. J., & Motyl, M. (2017). Liberals and conservatives are similarly motivated to avoid exposure to one another's opinions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 72, 1-12. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2017.04.003]

Monday, June 14th: Final Project Activity

## **V. Course requirements**

Given the online format of this class and pandemic-related difficulties that may make it challenging to complete regular exams, this course will include multiple relatively lower-stakes requirements rather than one or two high-stakes requirements. These requirements are as follows:

### Reading quizzes (15%)

In any class—but especially in a condensed class such as this one—it is important to keep up with the reading. Each assigned reading will include a reading quiz on the course website. These quizzes can be completed until 10:30 a.m. Eastern time on the day when that reading will be discussed in class (e.g., the quiz for the reading on methods must be completed by 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 4th). Over the course of the semester, 18 quizzes will be available (the two required readings for May 26th will be included on one quiz). Each quiz will include three questions. Please feel free to refer back to the reading as you answer the questions, but do not discuss your answers with other people. Your top 12 scores will count toward your grade. Make-up quizzes will not be available, but missed quizzes can count toward your dropped scores.

### In-class assignments (15%)

Occasionally, in class, I will provide a link to an online survey asking you to answer a short question. These questions may ask you to reflect on the readings assigned for that day, to connect the day's topic to your own experiences, or to do another task related to that day's lecture topic. Responses are graded as follows:

3 points: answers question accurately; if asked for an example, provides one that shows understanding of the concept

2 points: makes an attempt to answer the question but does not provide an accurate/complete response

1 point: does not answer the question, but student submitted something with their name on it

0 points: student did not submit anything/was not in class that day

Throughout the semester, there will be at least 8 opportunities to complete an in-class assignment, and I will only count your top 5 scores. If you are not in class during the in-class assignment, you cannot receive credit; there are no make-ups. I may provide bonus in-class assignments (e.g., a 9th or 10th opportunity to complete an in-class assignment). Bonus assignments do not change how many assignments are counted in your grade; I will still only count your top 5 scores. They are just an extra opportunity for you to earn the points.

### Midterm project (30%)

The midterm project will ask you to apply material from the first part of the course to a current event. The course website contains a Word file with specific instructions and questions for you to answer as part of the assignment. The midterm project is due on **Friday, May 21st, at noon Eastern time**. To submit your assignment, upload it to the course website. Late assignments will be accepted with a 2-point deduction for every 24 hours late or portion thereof. For instance, if you were going to receive 40 points and you turned in your assignment on May 21st at 1:00 p.m. you would receive 38 points; if you turned in your assignment on May 22nd at 1:00 p.m. you would receive 36 points; and so on. To provide an opportunity to interact with your classmates, we will discuss your projects in break-out rooms during class time on Thursday, May 20th. You can incorporate feedback from these discussions into your work before submitting it.

### Final project (40%)

The final project will ask you to apply the research methods we covered in the first part of class to a topic covered in the second part of class. Using these research methods, you will design a study that could expand scientific understanding of topics covered during the second part of the semester. The written portion of your assignment is due on **[TBD - DURING ASSIGNED FINAL EXAM TIME FOR THIS COURSE]**. Late assignments will be accepted until **DATE DETERMINED BY FINAL EXAM TIME AND GRADE SUBMISSION DEADLINE**, with a 2-point deduction for every 24 hours late or portion thereof. To submit your assignment, upload it to the course website. We will have a second opportunity for a discussion in break-out rooms on Monday, June 14th, with a conversation focusing on these projects.

## **VI. Plagiarism and academic integrity.**

*Severe plagiarism* (a.k.a. “copying”) is the most overt and deceptive form of plagiarism. This involves deliberately misrepresenting all or part of another person’s work as one’s own. For example, a student might copy writing from another student’s assignment. Another common example is writing containing chunks of “copy-and-paste” from published articles or online sources such as Wikipedia.

*Irresponsible plagiarism* (a.k.a. “omission”) is the act of paraphrasing or quoting from a source without giving proper credit to the source. The author does not necessarily explicitly take credit for the idea or materials, but this is nevertheless implied.

*Self-plagiarism* (a.k.a. “recycling”) is the act of representing one’s own previous ideas or materials as new and original. For example, a student might turn in all or part of the same paper for more than one course. This may not seem as bad as stealing another person’s work, but it is *deceptive*, and therefore unacceptable.

### *Should I plagiarize?*

No. You will be caught, and then you will be sad. Assignments that show evidence of academic dishonesty will receive a zero, and any student who submits such an assignment may be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

For more information about academic integrity at Columbia, please see the following sources:  
<https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity-statement>  
<https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity>

**VII. Students with disabilities.**

Students with special needs who may require classroom and/or test accommodations should let me know as soon as possible. ODS often requires a few weeks to process an application, so please contact them as soon as you can. The procedures for registering with ODS can be found at <http://health.columbia.edu/services/ods> or by calling (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY).

*Thanks for reading this far! I am very much looking forward to getting to know you and learning about social cognition together.*