

**PSYC UN2640: Introduction to Social Cognition
Spring 2018**

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I. Bulletin description

PSYC UN2640: Introduction to Social Cognition (3 points). Spring 2018.
Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:10 a.m. – 11:25 a.m., **LOCATION TBD**.

Prerequisites: 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.

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Office hours: **TBD**. If you have another class during this time, 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 what will be on an exam), 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 biweekly lectures that will include time for student participation. Evaluations include small in-class assignments, two in-class exams, and a cumulative final exam.

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., Cultural Psychology, Moral Psychology, Psychology of Stereotyping and Prejudice). 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 course includes three main components, going from the smallest unit of analysis (an individual person) to an intermediate unit (processes that occur between several people) to the largest unit (groups of people).
- You should read the 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 as well as empirical articles (articles that present data from new studies) and review articles (articles that describe a theory or provide an overview of a body of research). This will provide exposure to different kinds of psychological work. For example, some of the older studies we read may have been discussed in your introductory psychology textbook; in this class, you will have a chance to delve more deeply into some of that primary literature.
- 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.

January 17th: Introduction to course

January 22nd: 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.

January 24th: Methods

Finish reading the Gilovich, Keltner, & Nisbett chapter from last class if you haven't done so already.

Part I: Intrapersonal Processes

January 29th: 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

January 31st: The self and identity

Muraven, M., & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). Self-regulation and depletion of limited resources: Does self-control resemble a muscle? *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 247-259. doi: 10.1037//0033-2909.126.2.247

February 5th: Attitudes and attitude change

Nisbett, R. E., & Wilson, T. D. (1977). Telling more than we can know: Verbal reports on mental processes. *Psychological Review*, *84*, 231-259. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.84.3.231

February 7th: 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

February 12th: 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.

February 14th: 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

February 19th:

Flex day/review for Exam 1

February 21st: Exam 1

Part II: Interpersonal Processes

February 26th: Schemas and categorization

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

February 28th: Person perception: Introduction

Gladwell, M. (2005). The Warren Harding error: Why we fall for tall, dark, and handsome men. In M. Gladwell, *Blink: The power of thinking without thinking* (pp. 72-98). New York,

NY: Little, Brown and Company.

March 5th, 2018: Person perception: Attributions

Jones, E. E., & Harris, V. A. (1967). Attribution of attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 3, 1-24. doi: 10.1016/0022-1031(67)90034-0

March 7th: Person perception: Mindreading

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

March 12th and March 14th: Spring break

March 19th: 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

March 21st: 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.

March 26th: 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

March 28th: Moral cognition

No reading – guest speaker

April 2nd: Flex day/review for Exam 2

April 4th: Exam 2

Part III: Intergroup Processes

April 9th: 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

April 11th: Group processes: Stereotyping and prejudice

Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (1986). The aversive form of racism. In J. F. Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism* (pp. 61-89). New York, NY: Academic Press.

April 16th: Group processes: Ideology

Jost, J. T. (2006). The end of the end of ideology. *American Psychologist*, 61, 651-670. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.61.7.651

April 18th: Group processes
No reading – guest speaker

Tying It All Together

April 23rd: Inside Out

April 25th: Inside Out

April 30th: Flex day/review for final exam

V. Course requirements

Grades will be determined as follows:

In-class assignments (15%)

Occasionally, in class, I will ask you to provide a written answer to 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:

√+ (answers question accurately; if asked for an example, provides one that shows understanding of the concept)

√ (makes an attempt to answer the question but does not provide an accurate/complete response)

√- (does not answer the question)

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 when responses are collected, 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. **You can earn two extra credit points, to be applied to your final exam score, by completing ALL in-class assignments.**

I will announce in class when in-class assignments have been graded. Please check the course website to make sure that your grade was properly entered and let me know within **one week** if you think an error was made (e.g., you remember completing the assignment but the course website is showing a grade of 0).

Note that because in-class assignments must be written and handed in, **you must have paper and a writing utensil with you to do the in-class assignment.** The TAs and I will not have extras, and we are not able to accept e-mailed or computer generated assignments.

Exams 1 and 2 (25% each)

Exam 1 will include all class material covered prior to the exam. Exam 2 will include all class material covered after Exam 1; material that was included in Exam 1 will not be re-tested in Exam 2. The exams will include material that was only covered in lecture, material that was only covered in the reading, and material that was covered in both lecture and reading. Because some students do better with multiple choice questions while others do better with open-ended questions, exams will contain a mixture of both. More information about format will be provided prior to the first exam.

The TAs have copies of the exam and are happy to go over specific questions with you after the exams are graded. If you believe that a question on your exam was graded incorrectly, please bring this to a TA's attention. If this does not resolve your issue, please e-mail me a paragraph including all of the following

information: (a) your name; (b) which question(s) you are asking about; (c) for each question, the answer you wrote on your exam; (d) why you believe each of your answer(s) to be correct. Your response to part (d) must include at least one of the following pieces of information: (1) a citation to one of the readings posted on our course website and the page number of that reading where your answer is found or from which you derived your answer; or (2) the date of the lecture in which your answer was given, and the slide number on which your answer appears or from which you derived your answer. **To consider your argument, I must receive this paragraph no later than two weeks after the date on which exam grades are made available.**

Make-up exams will only be offered in the case of emergencies, such as a severe illness. You must provide me with a note from your dean or medical provider to excuse your absence. **Make-up exams may have a different format than regular exams.**

Final exam (35%)

The final exam will be cumulative; anything that was covered in the course is fair game. The exam will be weighted toward material covered after Exam 2 and material that requires students to synthesize information from different topics. The format of the final exam will be similar to the midterms. The final exam will include at least one open-ended question asking you to connect the movie *Inside Out* to material covered in class.

The date and time of the final exam is determined by the registrar's office. This office also sets the policy for make-up final exams, which are typically not given. For example, you will not be able to make up an exam that you miss due to travel or vacation plans. You can find more information here: <http://registrar.columbia.edu/content/exams>.

For more information on academic integrity (which pertains to all the course requirements listed above), please see <http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity-statement>. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please contact one of the TAs or me.