

PSYC0020 Fundamentals of Social Psychology
(First Semester, 2007-2008)

Teaching Staff

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Learning Objectives

- To acquire basic knowledge of how an individual is affected by and affects the social environment
- To apply social psychological concepts in the understanding of problems we encounter on a day-to-day basis
- To articulate and present, both orally and in writing, one's understanding and application of social psychology

Assessment

You will be continuously assessed against the above learning objectives:

1. Coursework (70%)

- Tutorial participation (5%)
- Tutorial admission tickets (10%): You will be required to have an “admission ticket” (which is a short written assignment) for four of the tutorials. Keep your admission ticket under 500 words. You may write beyond that word limit, and your tutor will still make comments on them. However, for fairness reason, marks for the admission ticket will be based on the first 500 words only. Deadlines for admission tickets are 11:59 pm on the calendar day before your tutorial. Bring to the tutorial a hardcopy of the admission ticket, which will be useful for class discussion.
- Quiz (30%): Short-notes
- Group Project (25%): In small groups of 3-5 persons you will review the literature on one of four topics, and to produce a paper under 2,500 words. Group members do not have to come from the same tutorial, although it will be more convenient if they are. Give your group a name. Submit group members' names

(as well as the group's name) to your tutor by Oct 5. Marks will be reduced by 10% if this project is not done by a group of the prescribed size.

A. Psychological processes affecting individual performance in group tasks include social loafing and social facilitation. Social loafing refers to the tendency of individuals to reduce their own effort when performing a task in a group, due to motivation loss (Latane, William & Harkins, 1979), while social facilitation refers to a somewhat opposite trend. Briefly discuss the most recent research findings as well as your real life experience that illustrate social loafing and social facilitation. Then, on the basis of what you have discussed, examine in which situation social loafing is more likely, and in which situation social facilitation is more likely. Finally, propose some strategies to strengthen the factors that can enhance social facilitation and weaken the factors that can inhibit social loafing, so that group performance can be maximized.

B. "Personal fable" is a belief held by adolescents that they are special and are immune from danger, diseases and other life problems. To what extent do you agree such perceived invulnerability has to do with some adolescents' risk-taking sexual behaviors (e.g., low intentions regarding condom use and HIV/STD prevention etc.)? Explain your position in term of research evidence. Why do you think adolescents are more prone to "personal fable" than adults? You may discuss in term of theories regarding social identities and self concept.

C. Some Hong Kong people use pirated copies and make illegal downloads. This is sometimes called "softlifting." Using Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of planned behavior, examine the underlying causes of this unethical behavior. Then, on the basis of this theory and relevant research, propose three to four ways to deter software piracy in Hong Kong. Lastly, critically comment if behavior-specific attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (PBC) are sufficient for predicting softlifting behavior.

D. Currently there are two major motivational models on the motives for accuracy versus enhancement in close relationships: (1) The "love is blind" thesis claims that love generates positively biased views on close partners, which in turn motivate us to make decisions that involve serious long-term commitments or the maintenance of relationship happiness (Murray, 2001). (2) The "accuracy" model suggests that individuals are motivated to seek an accurate understanding of their partners; a realistic grasp then dictates positive personal and relationship functioning (Simpson, Fletcher, & Campbell, 2001). Summarize and discuss empirical evidence in support of the two models. If love seems to be blind as well as to possess a firm grasp of reality, to what extent are our relationship judgments influenced by positivity bias on one hand, and by truth-seeking motive on the other?

Your project will have to be submitted in two phases:

Phase 1, due 11:59 pm, Oct 20, 2007: This will be an annotated bibliography of no less than five journal articles and books that you propose to read for the project. At least three of them must be published in or after 2001. Briefly describe how they may be related to the topic. The document should be presented in APA format. You will receive feedback from us, within 10 days, on the appropriateness of the reference materials. We may be able to provide feedback sooner if you submit ahead of the deadline. (5%)

Phase 2, due 11:59 pm, Dec 5, 2007: This is a full paper of under 2,500 words, produced in APA format. (20%)

After submitting your project, you will rate, in strict confidence, your group members on the significance and amount of contribution. This is done by distributing 100 percentage points among the other group members. Your own project score is the product of the score given to your group project and the total percentage points (adjusted to be within the range of 70% to 130%) you receive from your group members.

Submission of assignments. Your admission tickets and group project must be submitted at the turnitin.com. (Details on electronic submission are described on a separate handout.) Late submissions (for whatever reasons) will be marked down by 0.5% for each minute late. Deadlines for group projects are stated above. As the group project is to be done by a group, any single member's medical condition does not warrant an extension of the deadline.

Absence. Students who are 10 or more minutes late to a tutorial will be recorded as absent. A student absent from a tutorial receives no mark for the admission ticket (even if submitted on time) or any participation. Seek prior approval from your tutor if you need to attend tutorial at another timeslot. (Strong justification must be provided.) No make-up will be given for any tutorial, admission ticket, and/or quiz missed. You will automatically receive a score that the worst-performing student in the whole course gets for that activity. However, if a medical certificate is produced for the absence, we shall estimate your mark for that activity, using an empirically derived formula, from marks you obtain in other parts of your coursework.

Marks appeal. Any dispute on marks you receive on a written assignment/quiz must be made within one week after receipt of the feedback. Another member of the teaching team will re-grade the material (without seeing the comments and marks assigned by the original grader). The average of the two marks will be final.

2. Examination (30%): Multiple-choice items; date to be announced.
3. Bonus points. Occasionally we shall offer bonus points for classroom activities well performed.

Reading Assignment

Myers, D.G. (2005/2007). *Social Psychology* (8th or 9th edition). NY: McGraw-Hill.

You are expected to read extensively to prepare for tutorials.

Website

You can initiate and conduct web-based discussion with your classmates by following the link to this course from <http://www.hku.hk/cc/ecourse/ce6/> (Choose “HKU Portal”, login and then choose “MyWebCT”). This discussion board is unmoderated, although from time to time we may check and remove inappropriate postings. Neither the university nor the teaching team is responsible for contents posted here. If you have specific questions for the teaching team, please use email instead of posting on the discussion board.

Codes of Conduct

By taking this course you agree to abide by the following codes of conduct.

As preparation (in the form of admission tickets) is essential for learning in tutorials, students who cannot submit the required material will not be allowed into the tutorial; an absence will also be recorded.

You will contribute \$50 towards a “snack fund” to buy snacks for your classmates, if your pager or mobile phone rings in class, or if you talk on the mobile phone.

We cherish academic honesty. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. (To learn how to avoid this, visit <http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism>.) The availability of large amounts of materials on the Internet may be tempting. However, use the materials only with proper acknowledgement and referencing. Follow the APA Publication Manual for formats of citation and references. You take individual and collective responsibility for your group’s submission. If you suspect that your Group Project contains plagiarized materials, consult in confidence any one of us in the teaching team for advice, **BEFORE THE MISBEHAVIOR IS DISCOVERED** by us. Silent group members who do not whistle-blow will receive the same penalty as that imposed on the “primary” transgressor.

Your project will be electronically scanned for plagiarized materials against a database of articles, books, webpages, and student assignments. The minimum penalty imposed on all members of the project group that plagiarizes in any group work will be a zero for the entire project, plus further mark deduction. The minimum penalty imposed on a student who plagiarizes in any individual admission ticket will likewise be a zero for all admission tickets, plus further mark deduction. The case will also be reported to your Faculty for consideration of further disciplinary action.

Tentative Learning Plan

Lecture				Tutorial	
Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Date	Topic
1.	Sept 7	Social psychology – Science or intuition?	Myers 1		
2.	Sept 14	Knowing about ourselves and others	Myers 2		
3.	Sept 21	Knowing about what we don't know: The psychology of fortune-telling and astrology	Myers 3	Sept 17 – Sept 21	Getting to know each other; how to do library research; APA format
4.	Sept 28	Attitudes and behaviors	Myers 4	Sept 24 – Sept 28	“Who wants to be a millionaire?”
5.	Oct 5	Persuasion	Myers 7		
6.	Oct 12	Influencing others and being influenced	Myers 6	Oct 8 – Oct 12	Meet the salesperson*
7.	Oct 19	[Reading Week]			
8.	Oct 26	Disliking someone	Myers 9, 16	Oct 22 – Oct 26	Applying social psychology to encourage an environmentally friendly lifestyle*
9.	Nov 2	Conflicts and violence	Myers 10, 13		
10.	Nov 9	Quiz; Group dynamics	Myers 8	Nov 5 – Nov 9	“Would you sign an organ donation card, please?”*
11.	Nov 16	Liking and loving someone	Myers 11		
12.	Nov 23	Pro-social behavior	Myers 12	Nov 19 – Nov 23	Day of compassion*
13.	Nov 30	Conclusion			

* Admission ticket required for the tutorial

social.psy/social outline.doc