

Social Psychology 1.

Aim of the course

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The first part of the course provides an introduction to the history, the main topics and the methods of social psychology, then it proceeds to a detailed discussion of social psychological knowledge, following the structure of intra-individual-, interpersonal-, intragroup- and intergroup-level phenomena. Of these, Social Psychology 1. concentrates on the intra-individual level, discussing social cognition and the cognitive approach in social psychology. Students shall learn about social psychological phenomena from social perception (including attributions, impression formation, stereotypes and prejudice) to social aspects of the self (including the self-concept and self-esteem) to attitudes (including their origins and functions as well as their change due to persuasion or consistency/dissonance). Besides attending lectures, students shall participate in seminars to develop their skills of reading, interpreting, and analysing professional literature. Topics of interpersonal-, intragroup- and intergroup-level phenomena will be left to Social Psychology 2.

Learning outcome, competences

knowledge:

- Knowledge of basic axioms and principles of social psychology (esp. situationism), as well as the history and methods of the field
- Knowledge of important concepts and studies in the following topics: attributions, person perception, impression formation, group perception, self, attitudes, persuasion, motives for cognitive consistency and cognitive dissonance

attitude:

- A balanced application of the situationist approach to explain human behavior and mental processes
- A critical approach to psychological research, especially regarding methodology, statistics, and replicability

skills:

- Application of social psychological knowledge to explain human behavior and mental processes
- Methodologically critical interpretation of research in psychology

Content of the course

Topics of the course

- The notion and history of social psychology
- Thinking social psychology
- Research methods in social psychology
- Attributions
- Perception of individuals
- Self-concept and self-esteem
- The role of self in behavior; ego-defense
- Perception of groups
- How people use stereotypes and whether they can be changed
- Attitudes
- Persuasion

- Attitudes and behavior; cognitive dissonance

Learning activities, learning methods

- lectures
- seminars, in which students will have to do homework, prepare presentations, read and process professional literature

Evaluation of outcomes

Learning requirements, mode of evaluation, criteria of evaluation:

requirements

- written exam
- tasks at the seminars (homework, presentation, reading and processing literature)

mode of evaluation: grade on a scale from 1 to 5, in which the exam and the seminar part have the same weight; however, lecturers may set minimum requirements in both the exam and the seminar parts separately to get a passing grade for the entire course

criteria of evaluation:

- the extent to which students have learned the material, as reflected by their exam score
- the amount and quality of their work at the seminar

Reading list

Compulsory reading list

- Smith, E.R., Mackie, D.M., Claypool, H.M. (2014): Social Psychology (4th Edition). Psychology Press.
- Further literature listed in the semester-specific course descriptions

Recommended reading list

- If any, listed in the semester-specific course descriptions