

Psychology for Social Scientists: Outline and readings

Jana Bašňáková

Institute of Experimental Psychology, Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences SASc

1. The Social Self and Social Cognition

Thinking about people and situations; the power of the situation; attribution biases, the fundamental attribution error. Theory of Mind. The accuracy of self-concept and presenting the Self online.

Readings:

Chapter 1 from Social Psychology (4th Edition). Authors: Gilovich, Keltner, Chen & Nisbett.

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Chapter 4 from The Social Animal (2011, 11th edition). Elliot Aronson. Worth Publishers.

2. Attitudes and Behavior

Components of attitudes. Do attitudes predict behavior or is it the other way around? Cognitive dissonance. Measuring attitudes.

Readings:

Chapter 7 from Social Psychology (4th Edition). Authors: Gilovich, Keltner, Chen & Nisbett.

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

3. Stereotyping, Prejudice and Discrimination

Why are we biased against certain groups and how can we minimize our prejudice? Schemas and stereotypes. Intergroup bias. Social identity theory. Contact theory of prejudice. Combatting racism.

Readings:

Chapter 11 from Social Psychology (4th Edition). Authors: Gilovich, Keltner, Chen & Nisbett.

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Chapter 7 from The Social Animal (2011, 11th edition). Elliot Aronson. Worth Publishers.

4. Aggression, Altruism and Cooperation

Why, and under what circumstances, do people behave aggressively? What can be done to mitigate it? Conflict and peacemaking. Why do people help others? Situational determinants of cooperation.

Readings:

Chapters 13 and 14 from Social Psychology (4th Edition). Authors: Gilovich, Keltner, Chen & Nisbett. Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Chapter 6 from The Social Animal (2011, 11th edition). Elliot Aronson. Worth Publishers.

5. Groups and Social Influence

The Minimal group paradigm. Group decision-making, leadership and power. The psychology of crowds. Conformity and obedience.

Readings:

Chapter 12 from Social Psychology (4th Edition). Authors: Gilovich, Keltner, Chen & Nisbett.

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Chapter 2 from The Social Animal (2011, 11th edition). Elliot Aronson. Worth Publishers.

6. Language of Propaganda

We will review some of the ways that language is used to manipulate and alter reality, both for commercial and political purposes. What properties of language and our thinking enable such manipulative uses? Includes practical exercises.

Readings:

Aronson, E. (2011). Mass Communication, Propaganda and Persuasion. In: The Social Animal. Worth Publishers.

Gula, R. J. (2007). *Nonsense: red herrings, straw men and sacred cows: how we abuse logic in our everyday language*. Axios Press.

7. Decision-making

Cognitive biases that affect decisions. System I and system II: the difference between feeling and thinking.

Readings:

Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, fast and slow. Macmillan.

Čavojsková, V. et al. (2016). Rozum: návod na použitie. IRIS.

Ariely, D., & Jones, S. (2010). The upside of irrationality (p. 352). New York: HarperCollins.

8. The science of critical thinking.

What is scientific literacy and why you need it. Components of critical thinking.

Readings:

Lodge, J. M., O'Connor, E., Shaw, R., & Burton, L. (2015). Applying cognitive science to critical thinking among higher education students. In The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Thinking in Higher Education (pp. 391-407). Palgrave Macmillan US.

Holmes, N. G., Wieman, C. E., & Bonn, D. A. (2015). Teaching critical thinking. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 112(36), 11199-11204.

9. Emotions.

The nature and function of emotions. Cultural universality (?) of basic emotional expressions. Emotional contagion, empathy, compassion. Emotional intelligence.

Readings:

Bloom, P. (2017). *Against empathy: The case for rational compassion*. Random House.

Barrett, L. F. (2017). *How emotions are made: The secret life of the brain*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

10. Brain (the basics) and social neuroscience.

How does the brain work – neurons, synapses and networks. Dispelling myths: are you a left- or a right-brain person, and should you even care? How do we learn and what is brain plasticity. Basics of social neuroscience.

Readings: to be determined

11. Presentations of experiments

Students will present their experimental design and results in class (about 15 minutes each) + discussion.

Requirements:

Active attendance of lectures, readings, designing and implementing a simple experiment of your own choice, and presenting the results in class.

General readings:

Social Psychology (4th Edition). Authors: Gilovich, Keltner, Chen & Nisbett

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

The Social Animal (2011, 11th edition). Elliot Aronson. Worth Publishers.

Enfield, N. J., & Levinson, S. C. (2006). *Roots of human sociality*. New York: Berg.

Reading list will be updated before the beginning of the semester.