Social Psychology: Meeting of the Minds

Chapter 13
Social Cognition

How we perceive our social worlds and how we attend to, store, remember, and use information about other people and the social world
Attitudes and Behavior

- **Attitude**
  - Includes personality, temperament, and learning
  - Three components: ABC
    - Affective (feeling)
    - Behavioral
    - Cognitive

- **Behavior affects attitudes**
Attitudes and Behavior

When does an attitude influence behavior?

- The attitude is strong.
- It is relatively stable
- It is directly relevant to the behavior.
- It is important to us.
- It is easily accessed from memory.
Cognitive Dissonance

Boring task

Receive

$1 → “Did you enjoy the task?” → “Yes”

$20 → “No”

Reducing mismatch between behaviors and feelings
Cognitive Dissonance

- Dissonance theory
  - Reducing mismatch between behaviors and feelings

- In some cases, attempts to reduce cognitive dissonance when people who are not generally immoral act immorally. They can:
  - Change how they understand their immoral act
  - Minimize their responsibility for it
  - Disregard the negative consequences
  - Blame and dehumanize the victims
Persuasion

- **Elaboration likelihood model**
  - Central route
    - Focuses on the content of an argument.
  - Peripheral route
    - Focuses on the attractiveness, expertise or source of the information. (Think celebrity endorsement.)

- **Obstacles to persuasion**
  - Strong attitude
  - Reactance
  - Forewarning
  - Selective avoidance
Persuasion

- Certain perceived characteristics of a person who tries to persuade us through the peripheral route are most effective.
  - Fast talkers
  - Those perceived as honest
  - Those who arouse strong emotions especially fear.
Stereotypes

- Stereotypes are negative, positive, or neutral sets of beliefs about members of particular groups.
- Stereotypes reduce the amount of information that must be processed.
- Stereotypes are very resistant to change because we tend selectively to notice behaviors that confirm our stereotypes and ignore behaviors that refute it.
Understanding Stereotypes

- Social Identity Theory
  - Ingroup (us) -- favorable
  - Outgroup (them) -- unfavorable

- Illusory correlation

- Illusion of outgroup homogeneity
  - Ingroup differentiation
Prejudices are usually negative attitudes about a particular group.
Understanding Prejudice

- Realistic conflict theory
  - Competition for scarce resources
- Social categorization theory
- Self-fulfilling prophecy
- Social learning theory
Discrimination

- While stereotyping is a belief, *discrimination* is acting on that belief and consists of behaviors directed at members of a particular group that affect them adversely.
Attribution

An explanation for the cause of an event or behavior

What caused that behavior?

- Internal attributions
  - Dispositional attributions
- External attributions
  - Situational attributions
Attributional Biases

- **Fundamental attribution error**
  - is a tendency to interpret other's behavior as due to internal rather than external causes

- **Self-serving bias**
  - is an inclination to attribute one's own failures to external causes and successes to internal causes, but to attribute other's failures to internal causes and their successes to external causes.

- **Belief in a just world**
  - Blaming the victim: “They got what they deserved.”
Relationships: Liking

- Repeated contact
- Similarity
- Physical attraction
  - “Average” faces
  - Symmetry
  - Feminized faces
Relationships: Loving

- **Passionate love** is characterized by strong emotional reactions, sexual desire, and fantasies.
- **Companionate love** is characterized by a long-term relationship and commitment.
- Several other types of love have been proposed.
- Sex roles can influence the love relationship.
Relationships: Loving

- Passionate love
- Compassionate love
- Sternberg’s triangular model of love
  - Passion
  - Intimacy
  - Commitment
- Attachment style
- Mating preferences
  - Evolutionary theory
  - Social exchange theory
Social Organizations

- **Deindividuation**
  - is the feeling of being lost in a crowd; it may lead to uninhibited behavior that is often unauthorized and destructive.

- **Norms**
  - Perceived norms

- **Roles**
The Stanford Prison Experiment

How does this study relate to the Abu Ghraib prison incident?
Yielding to Others

- Go along to get along?
- Conformity
  - **Informational social influence**
    - When we want to be right and believe the other individuals are correct or more informed than we are.
  - **Normative social influence**
    - When we conform because we want to be liked or thought of positively.
  - **Social Comparison Theory**
    - The argument that all people are driven to evaluate their opinions and actions in comparison to others.
Compliance

- Six principles
  - Friendship/liking
  - Commitment/consistency
  - Scarcity
  - Reciprocity
  - Social validation
  - Authority
Compliance

- Foot-in-the-door technique
- Lowball technique
- Door-in-the-face technique
The Milgram Studies

Teacher and Learner
The Milgram Studies

- Psychiatrists predicted
  - 2% would go to maximum level

- Actual results
  - 65% of teachers went to the maximum level

- Other factors
  - Lab coat
  - Proximity

- Ethical issues
Decision Making in Groups

- Majority-win rule
- Group polarization
- Groupthink
  - Is the process of making group decisions that promote group harmony
Performance in Groups

- **Social loafing**
  - Occurs when people working on a group task that lacks individual evaluation perform at a lower level than they would if they worked alone.

- **Social facilitation**
  - Is the presence of other people increases arousal, which may result in enhanced ability to perform a desired response.
Helping Others

- Altruism
- Prosocial behavior
- Bystander intervention
  - Bystander effect
    - refers to the fact that people are less likely to provide assistance in an emergency when others are present than when they are alone.
  - Evaluation apprehension
  - Diffusion of responsibility
5 Steps to overcoming the Bystander Effect

- **Step 1**
  - The emergency must actually be noticed by the bystander.

- **Step 2**
  - The bystander must correctly perceive the event as an emergency.

- **Step 3**
  - The bystander must assume responsibility to intervene.

- **Step 4**
  - The bystander needs to know what to do, how to be helpful.

- **Step 5**
  - The bystander must be motivated enough to help, despite possible negative consequences.
Aggression

- Aggression is any behavior that is performed with the intent of doing harm.
- **Hostile aggression** occurs when the goal is specifically to harm another individual.
- **Instrumental aggression** occurs when someone hurts another person in the pursuit of another goal—for example, during a robbery.
- **Biological** views stress the inherited nature of aggressive behaviors.
Aggression

- The frustration-aggression hypothesis predicts that frustration, or being blocked from attaining a goal, results in aggression.
- In addition to frustration, the presence of anger and certain cues may be necessary for aggression to occur.