

Part 1

Introducing Social Psychology

Module 1

Doing Social Psychology

Brief Chapter Outline

- Forming and Testing Theories
- Correlational Research: Detecting Natural Associations
- Correlation and Causation
- Experimental Research: Searching for Cause and Effect
 - Random Assignment: The Great Equalizer
 - Control: Manipulating Variables
 - Replication: Are the Results Reproducible?
 - The Ethics of Experimentation
- Generalizing from Laboratory to Life

Lecture and Discussion Ideas

1. Encouraging Class Participation

Randolph Smith presented a technique for encouraging classroom participation that also has the added benefit of allowing instructors to monitor their class attendance efficiently. On the first day of their class, instructors should explain to students that as they enter the class every day, they will each receive a small slip of paper on which they will sign their names. They will also be able to write down any question(s) that they did not wish to raise during the class. At the end of the class, students should leave the paper on the instructor's desk. In the next class, instructors can spend the first few minutes discussing students' questions. This method gives instructors time to prepare their responses to students' questions and concerns, and it also gives them a chance to review the highlights of the previous session. Instructors will also have a good idea of how well students comprehend their lectures. Smith reports that this technique increases both the quantity and quality of students' questions and raises the general level of classroom discussion.

2. **Encouraging Voluntary Participation**

(<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2005/november-05/asking-questions-promoting-student-faculty-interchange-in-the-classroom.html>)

“Asking Questions: Promoting Student-Faculty Interchange in the Classroom,” by Judith E. Larkin and Harvey A. Pines, is an interesting article that describes some teaching strategies to encourage even reluctant contributors to voluntarily participate in the classroom discussion.

3. **Challenge Students with Case Examples of Correlational versus Experimental Research**

The chapter emphasizes the distinction between correlational and experimental research and the problems that arise when one derives cause–effect conclusions from correlational research. Emphasize the importance of making this distinction when evaluating the conclusions for research studies. Facilitate the ability of students to make this distinction by challenging them with case examples, such as the following:

- a. Researchers have consistently found that heavy cigarette smoking is associated with lung cancer. They postulate that if an individual smokes more cigarettes in a day, he or she is more likely to get lung cancer and die at an early age. Based on the reliability of this relationship between smoking and cancer, should people conclude that smoking increases an individual’s chances of getting lung cancer? (Answer: The correlation between smoking and lung cancer does not prove any cause and effect relationship between the two. In *The Causes and Effects of Smoking*, Sage, 1981, Hans Eysenck argued that the correlation may occur simply because some people have a genetic personality disposition, such as a reactive temperament, that (a) inclines them to heavy smoking and (b) makes them more vulnerable to lung cancer.) How could one study the relationship between smoking and lung cancer to prove that smoking actually increases one’s vulnerability to lung cancer? (Possible answer: One can study the relationship between smoking and lung cancer by training animals to inhale smoke with or without nicotine, by experimentally studying the health benefits of an antismoking treatment program, and by statistically extracting the influence of plausible “third factors,” such as one’s personality.)
- b. If researchers were to discover that people who jog live longer than people who do not jog, then what would this study imply about the relationship between jogging and longevity? (Answer: It would not imply anything, as there are three types of explanation for any correlation.)

- c. *Hippocrates' Good News Survey* (Tierney, 1987) found that people who often ate Frosted Flakes as children had half the cancer rate of those who never ate the cereal. Conversely, those who frequently ate oatmeal as children were four times more likely to develop cancer than those who did not. Does this mean that eating Frosted Flakes cereal prevents cancer while eating oatmeal causes it? Ask students to explain these correlations. (The answer: Cancer tends to be an illness of later life. Those who ate Frosted Flakes are younger than those who ate oatmeal. In fact, the cereal was not around when older respondents were children; they were much more likely to have eaten oatmeal.)
- d. Keith Stanovich (2004) correctly noted that the nature of the relationship between two variables influences the likelihood of interpreting a correlation in causal terms. Several years ago, a research team in Taiwan found that the best predictor of using birth-control methods was the number of electrical appliances in the home. Stanovich asked, "Does this finding suggest that the teenage pregnancy problem should be dealt with by passing out free toasters in the schools?" Obviously, that is not the solution. With the help of this example, students will quickly recognize that a correlation between two variables does not necessarily imply causation between them. It may exist because of a mediating variable. What would it be in this case? It is likely education is a mediating variable. Education is related to one's contraceptive use and one's socioeconomic status. Since families at higher socioeconomic levels tend to have more electrical appliances in their homes, the logical relationship among the variables could be considered complete.
- e. Third Variable Problem
(<http://sciencenetlinks.com/student-teacher-sheets/nearsightedness-children/>)

One reason due to which people commonly jump to a causal conclusion from correlational evidence is that they forget or do not consider the possibility of a third variable that might have a causal influence on the relationship between the first two variables. An excellent example of such a relationship is a research study in which the researchers found that infants who had night-lights in their bedrooms were more likely to become myopic when they got older. However, the presence of the night-lights apparently did not cause the myopia. Ask the students to figure out the likely third variable. Have them read the above article to know the answer.

More examples of third variable problems presented in the popular press have been collected by Jon Mueller, and they can be found on the following website:
http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/100/correlation_or_causation.htm.

4. Identifying “Good” and “Bad” Evidence

Jon Mueller assigns a paper (available online) (<http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/100/paper2.htm>) to his students in the Introductory Psychology course to assess their ability to evaluate the quality and sufficiency of evidence addressing a research question. He uses the same assignment as an in-class review activity for his students in the Social Psychology course. It works well to contrast among different types of evidence.

5. Active Learning with PowerPoint

(<http://www.d.umn.edu/~jgallian/goodPPtalk.pdf>)

Instructors may visit the website if they want to design effective slides for their presentation or lecture. It is a very informative website on the appropriate and inappropriate uses of PowerPoint.

6. Popular Sources for Additional Classroom Material

Aron, A., and Aron, E. (1990). *The Heart of Social Psychology* (2nd ed.). Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.

- This book provides a brief and popular account of some of the major findings in social psychology. It is based on interviews with active researchers in the field.

Brannigan, C. G., and Merrens, M. R. (Eds.). (1995). *The Social Psychologists: Research Adventures*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- This book contains a collection of first-person accounts of research by leading social psychologists including Susan Fiske, Mark Snyder, Robert Cialdini, and Leonard Berkowitz. The topics in this book cover all the major research areas in the field of social psychology.

Coats, E. J., and Feldman, R. S. (Eds.). (1998). *Classic and Contemporary Readings in Social Psychology* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- This book provides a unique set of 30 paired classic and contemporary selections from articles and books covering all the major topics in social psychology.

Dane, F. C. (1988). *The Common and Uncommon Sense of Social Behavior*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

- This book provides a very brief overview of social psychology. It also includes

a blend of research findings and everyday examples.

Davis, M. H. (Ed.). (2000). *Annual Editions: Social Psychology 01/02*. Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill.

- Updated annually, this volume provides convenient access to a wide range of current articles on social psychology that have appeared in magazines, newspapers, and journals.

Ellyson, S. J., and Halberstadt, A. G. (Eds.) (1995). *Explorations in Social Psychology: Readings and Research*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- This book contains a collection of 30 classic and contemporary articles from all areas of social psychological research organized under social thought, influence, and relations. Each reading in the book is accompanied by a short introduction.

Fein, S., and Spencer, S. (Eds.). (1996). *Readings in Social Psychology: The Art and Science of Research* (3rd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- This book contains a collection of 16 short readings on various topics dealing with social perception, social interaction, social influence, and applying social psychology. Each entry in the book includes a brief introduction by the editor and a set of critical thinking questions.

Gilbert, D. T., Fiske, S. T., and Lindzey, G. (Eds.) (1997). *Handbook of Social Psychology* (4th ed.). Cary, NC: Oxford University Press.

- This book provides an authoritative overview of the methods and findings of social psychology. It has two volumes, and nearly 2,000 pages of the book have been contributed by leading researchers.

Hendricks, B., Marvel, M. K., and Barrington, B. L. (1990). The dimensions of psychological research. *Teaching of Psychology*, 17, 76–82.

- This article presents a methodological cube that classifies studies along three dimensions: research design (descriptive, correlational, or experimental), data-collection method (self-report or observational), and research setting (laboratory or field). Examples of methodological cubes are drawn from the aggression literature.

Higgins, E. T., and Kruglanski, A. W. (Eds.) (1996). *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*. New York: Guilford.

- This book provides an overview of the central principles that guide social psychological investigations. Each chapter in the book describes alternative

conceptualizations of a particular principle and reviews the research that is relevant to it.

Lesko, W. A. (Ed.). (2000). *Readings in Social Psychology: General, Classic and Contemporary Selections* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- This book contains a collection of 42 articles that cover all the major sub-disciplines in social psychology. Each entry in the book includes a brief introduction by the editor and a set of critical thinking questions at the end.

Pacanowsky, M. (1978). Salt passage research: The state of the art. *Change*, 10 (8), 41–43.

- This article is a very funny application of popular social psychological theories and methods for predicting reactions to the request, “Please pass the salt.”

Pettijohn, T. F. (Ed.). (1998). *Sources: Notable Selections in Social Psychology* (2nd ed.). Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill Publishing.

- This book contains a collection of 42 classic articles, book excerpts, and research studies that have shaped the discipline of social psychology. The selections in the book are organized around the major areas of study in the field of social psychology.

Sapsford, R., Still, A., Wetherell, M., Miell, D., and Stevens, R. (Eds.). (1998). *Theory and Social Psychology*. London: Sage.

- This book contains a collection of 11 short essays on topics pertaining to nature and origins, making sense of diversity, and applying social psychology. This book could be an excellent supplemental material for creating lectures. The reading, however, may be somewhat difficult for average undergraduate students.

Stanovich, K. E. (2004). *How to Think Straight about Psychology* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- This book teaches students how to critically examine the claims about human behavior in the popular media.

Tesser, A. (Ed.). (1995). *Advanced Social Psychology*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

- This book has 12 chapters covering many of the topics addressed in the textbook. Noted authors of the book include Cialdini, Fiske, and Batson. It is an excellent resource for instructors who want to take their students beyond the textbook but need to get back up-to-speed with what is going on in social psychology.

Zimbardo, P. (1985, June). Laugh where we must, be candid where we can. *Psychology Today*, 19, 42–47.

- This article portrays a conversation with Allen Funt, creator of *Candid Camera*. Funt describes the potential educational value of the show and also responds to concerns about his use of deception and the potential for harm to his subjects. This might provide students with a good background on social psychology before the use of McGraw-Hill's *Candid Camera Classics for Social Psychology*.

Assignment Ideas

1. Social Psychology Essays

If instructors want students' involvement to move beyond reading the textbook and taking notes, then Ann Weber (1984) has suggested a teaching technique that involves assigning brief, one-page essays to students. Each essay should include the following: (1) a short description of a personal experience or an observation that illustrates or exemplifies one of the social psychological phenomena covered in class or the textbook; (2) a brief explanation of the theory or research dealing with the social psychological phenomenon or process discussed in the class, along with its references; and (3) an application of the research or theory in (2) to the observation described in (1), together with an evaluation of the "fit" of the theory to the life experience. If each essay is evaluated on a 4- or 5-point rating scale, the grading could prove to be simple and fast. A package of 5 to 10 essays can tell much about a student's level of interest and comprehension of social psychology.

2. A Social Psychology Portfolio

Rider's (1992) provided a teaching suggestion to have students create a portfolio of news clippings that illustrate psychological concepts. This could be applied to the social psychology course. To encourage students to apply what they have learned in class to their everyday life, have them collect newspaper and magazine articles and write an explanation of each article using the course material for the entire term. They can use articles, editorials, advertisements, advice columns, photographs, and cartoons. Instructors might suggest that students find at least one article for each chapter in the textbook. Rider found that for her introductory students, the median number of portfolio entries was twenty, with students' accompanying explanations ranging from two sentences to two paragraphs.

More journal, portfolio, and collections assignments can be found at <http://jfmueeller.faculty.noctrl.edu/crow/>.

3. **Research Summaries**

(http://jfmuellerr.faculty.noctrl.edu/240/paper_assignment_1.htm)

Jon Mueller asks his students to locate a journal article and summarize it by answering six questions.

4. **Brief Paper: Evaluating Evidence**

(<http://jfmuellerr.faculty.noctrl.edu/100/paper2.htm>)

Ask students to rank seven pieces of evidence in terms of how well they address a research question. This assignment could be very effective in reviewing and assessing students' ability to distinguish between good evidence and bad evidence.

5. **Play Mismatched Headlines: Correlation or Causation?**

(http://jfmuellerr.faculty.noctrl.edu/100/correlation_or_causation.htm)

Jon Mueller has collected a large number of links to articles on the Internet that make correlational or causal claims. Unfortunately, the claim made in the headline of the article (e.g., A causes B) often does not match the type of research (e.g., correlational) reported in the article given on the website. Can students identify which headlines accurately match the research reported and which do not? A variety of assignments can be developed from this task. (If instructors find more examples of such articles on the Internet, please send them to jfmuellerr@noctrl.edu.)

6. **Exploring Social Psychology on the Web**

If instructors intend to use the Internet for teaching their course, they may want to get students started early. Students may complete Demonstration 1-1, which is on page 10 of this instructor manual, as an out-of-class project. It will introduce them to the Social Psychology Network (<http://www.socialpsychology.org>), a comprehensive source of information for exploring virtually every major topic in the textbook. It is maintained by Scott Plous of Wesleyan University.

7. **Merging Art and Social Psychology**

(<http://jfmuellerr.faculty.noctrl.edu/crow/project1long.pdf>)

Nick Schweitzer asks his students to demonstrate or comment on any of the social psychological phenomena discussed by using any artistic medium. He includes samples of acceptable and unacceptable projects.

8. Demonstrate a Phenomenon

(<http://jfmueLLer.faculty.noctrl.edu/240/demonstration.htm>)

Heather Coon gives her students a fun, hands-on taste of social psychology by asking them to try out a phenomenon on three to six people and report their results back to class.

9. More Assignment Ideas

Over 100 different assignment ideas for social psychology and related courses can be found on the following websites:

- Resources for the Teaching of Social Psychology
(<http://jfmueLLer.faculty.noctrl.edu/crow/>)
- Social Psychology Network
(<http://www.socialpsychology.org/teaching.htm#assignments>)

Demonstrations**1. Reenacting Social Psychological Experiments**

Wann (1993) was successful in helping students comprehend social psychological research and its methodology. After dividing students into small groups of four to six members each, Wann asked each group to select a different experiment and develop a dramatic script to describe the research. Each group was responsible for obtaining a copy of the relevant article (e.g., Milgram's study of obedience), writing a script with the help of the article, and developing the props necessary to perform the play. Students played the roles of experimenters, confederates, and subjects with each play lasting for approximately 10 minutes. Students were instructed to pay attention to detail in an effort to reenact the study as accurately as possible. Poetic license was allowed where authors were not explicit.

Wann, D. L. (1993). Performing experiments in undergraduate social psychology classes. *Teaching of Psychology*, 20(4), 235–236.

2. Exploring the Field of Social Psychology

Demonstration 1-1 requires students to visit the Social Psychology Network to explore people, topics, and organizations in the field.

Demonstration 1-1

Bolt & Myers

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Visit the Social Psychology Network website (<http://www.socialpsychology.org>) to answer the following questions:

- a. Identify three specific topics in social psychology, and give the address of a website providing information on each of these topics.

- b. Identify three journals that publish research in social psychology.

- c. Identify one important research group studying social psychology in the United States and one important research group studying social psychology outside the United States. Briefly describe the primary interests of each of the groups.

- d. What are the primary research interests of David G. Myers, the author of your textbook?

3. **The *Social Connection* Video Series**

The video entitled *Role Playing: The Power of the Situation* addresses some questions raised in the chapter on the ethics of social research.

Films/Videos

1. *McGraw-Hill Social Psychology Videotape* (MGH, 30–60 min., 1994)

The videotape contains 10 motion clips of four to eight minutes on classic research studies and news events of particular interest to social psychologists. It is also accompanied by a viewer's guide.

2. *Candid Camera Classics in Social Psychology* (McGraw-Hill, 58 minutes, 1994)

This video has a total of 15 clips that are selected and edited by Philip Zimbardo and Allen Funt from the original *Candid Camera* series to illustrate some of the basic concepts in social psychology.

3. *Social Psychology* (Insight Media, 30 minutes, 1990)

This video introduces social psychology as an attempt to understand the social forces that influence one's attitudes and actions. It covers many of the primary issues found in social psychology, including attribution theory, stereotyping and prejudice, and the power of social roles.

4. *Constructing Social Reality* (ANN, 26 minutes, 2001)

This video is part of the *Discovering Psychology* video series, and it examines how one's perceptions and interpretations shape one's social relationships and behaviors. It also covers Rosenthal's self-fulfilling prophecy, Cialdini's persuasion principles, and Aronson's jigsaw classroom.

5. *The Power of the Situation* (ANN, 27 minutes, 3 seconds, 2001)

This video is part of the *Discovering Psychology* video series, and it shows how social context shapes one's behavior. It also portrays Lewin's work on leadership, Milgram's obedience studies, and Zimbardo's prison simulation.

6. *Inferential Statistics: Hypothesis Testing—Rats, Robots, and Roller Skates* (WIL, 28 minutes, 1975)

This video explores hypotheses testing, control groups, random assignment, and statistical inference through four humorous sketches.

7. *Methodology: The Psychologist and the Experiment* (CRM, 30 minutes, 1975)

This video explores research methods and emphasizes experimental design as a research method. It also covers Schachter's fear and affiliation experiment and Riesen's experiment

on the development of visual motor coordination.

8. *Two Research Styles* (Insight, 24 minutes, 1989)

This video examines the observational method using Dr. Jenny Hewison's research on how patients decide when to consult a doctor and the experimental method using Dr. Chris Alford's studies on the effects of alcohol on daily activities.

9. *Understanding Research* (ANN, 26 minutes, 2001)

This video is part of the *Discovering Psychology* video series, and it introduces the scientific method and the different ways in which data can be collected and analyzed. It also includes examples from social psychology and emphasizes the development of critical thinking.