Score out of 50

Social Psychology
- Focuses on behavior and mental processes of the individual in context of other people
- Outline for next four classes:
  - First impressions
  - Attribution errors, attitudes and behavior
    - Obedience to authority
    - The Stanford Prison Experiment
  - Illustrate the power of the situation

Attributions
- Causal attribution:
  - An inference about what caused someone’s behavior
  - Two possible causes: Disposition and situation

The fundamental attribution error
- Overestimating the role of disposition relative to the role of situation
  - Where others are concerned
- Also known as person bias

Example: Quiz show
(S. Ross et al., 1977)
- Participants were randomly assigned to be Questioners, Contestants, or Observers
  - Random assignment was made salient
Example: Quiz show

- Questioners were asked to write tough general knowledge questions
  - E.g., *What is the longest glacier in the world?*
  - Pose them to the Contestant
  - Give the answer when Contestant couldn’t
- Observers watched the whole interaction

Knowledge ratings

- Afterwards, Observers rated Questioner’s and Contestant’s general knowledge
  - Relative to the “average student”
  - Question: Would the ratings accurately reflect random assignment?
  - Person bias suggests not

Results

Observers thought the Questioner knew more than the Contestant
Discounting the role of random assignment in this situation

Attitudes and behavior

- **Attitude:**
  - A fairly stable evaluation of something as good or bad that influences our thoughts and behaviors
- Explicit measures:
  - Ask people direct questions about their attitude
  - Answers might be biased
- Implicit measures:
  - Test attitudes indirectly

Implicit Association Test (IAT)

- Reveals common attitudes
  - E.g., people generally associate female with nonviolent and male with violent
- Shows that attitudes can affect behavior
  - Behavior, here, is response time
  - Attitudes can influence behavior in much more profound ways
Behavior and attitudes

- Behavior can also affect attitude
  - *Cognitive dissonance*: An uncomfortable inconsistency between one’s behavior and one’s attitudes
  - *Dissonance reduction*: Reduce the discomfort by making behavior and attitudes more consistent
    - Attitudes might be easier to change than behavior

Dissonance reduction

(Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959)

- Participant was assigned two boring tasks
  - Then was asked to lie to a peer
  - To say the tasks were fun
    - Paid either $1 or $20 (about $9 or $175 today)
  - Then rated whether the tasks were fun
    - $1 participants rated the task more fun than the $20 participants did

Explanation

- Behavior: Lying to a peer
  - Hypothetical mental processes, afterward:
    - $20 participant: I lied, but the money was good
    - $1 participant: I lied, for no good reason
      - More dissonance than $20 participant
  - Attitude change that reduces dissonance:
    - I didn’t lie: The task was fun!
      - Sensemaking is a powerful and implicit process

Other examples

- Hazing rituals and initiation rites
  - Behavior: Allowing oneself to be mistreated
    - Attitude: It was worth it
      - Otherwise, I put myself through that for nothing
  - Cruelty and bullying
    - Behavior: Treating someone badly
    - Attitude: They deserved it
      - Otherwise, I was unfair
      - Blaming the victim: The world was unfair

Other examples

- Decision making
  - Behavior: Choosing X over Y
  - Attitude: Liking X more after choosing it
    - Otherwise, I made a random or wrong choice
  - Helps explain brand loyalty, campaign fever, ...

Effects of stereotypes

- A *stereotype* is a kind of attitude
- Stereotypes can affect behavior toward those who are stereotyped
- What about the behavior of the people who are stereotyped?
Effects of stereotypes

- **Stereotype threat:**
  - When behavior changes *negatively* to conform to an activated stereotype

- **Stereotype lift:**
  - When behavior changes *positively* to conform to an activated stereotype

**Stereotype threat and lift**

(Ambady et al., 2001)

- **Participants:** 81 Asian-American girls
  - Grouped by grade: Lower Elementary (K-2), Upper Elementary (3-5), Middle School (6-8)
  - Recruited from Chinese, Korean, Japanese communities in a US city
- **Did a manipulation task:**
  - K - 2 colored in a line drawing
  - 3 - 8 answered questions on a survey
- **Then took an age-appropriate math test**

**Conditions**

- **Asian identity:**
  - Picture: Asian kids eating with bowl and chopsticks
  - Survey: ethnicity of classmates and friends? language spoken at home? etc.

- **Gender identity:**
  - Picture: Girl holding doll
  - Survey: friends boys or girls? which are better at sports? which parent do you identify with?

**Conditions**

- **Control:** Landscape, the weather
- **Experimenter was blind to the stimulus**

**Results**

- **Stereotypes affected performance**
  - Positively and negatively
- **Caution advised**
  - Findings in the “social priming” literature don’t always replicate
  - Problems with internal validity, publication bias, “p hacking”