

Psy 607: Self and Other
Winter 2013, Wednesdays, 1:20-3:20, Room 143, Straub Hall

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Office hours: Mondays 1:15-3:15; and by appointment

Course Description:

This advanced social psychology seminar will explore the concept of the self in the context of other people in an individual=s social world. Specific topics to be covered include social comparison, self biases (e.g., the better than average effect), projection, perspective taking, and self-other merging (i.e., instances when the boundaries between self and others become blurred or altered). Readings will be largely from primary sources (i.e., journal articles). They will be drawn primarily from the social psychology and social cognition literature, but links may be made to other subfields of psychology. The class format will emphasize discussion, reaction and critique of the readings, and ideas for future research.

Course Aims:

This course will provide an overview of the social psychological study of self and other. Students should become familiar with recurrent issues and themes in the study of self and other and the empirical techniques and paradigms used to study the self and other. Students will be invited to hone their critical thinking skills in critiquing past studies, and they will be given the opportunity to identify creative and important new directions in the study of the self and other.

Activities and Grading:

There are 3 grading options for taking this course: graded for 4 credits (includes writing a final paper); graded for 3 credits (no final paper); or pass/no pass for 3 credits (no final paper).

* For 3 credits, reading responses and class participation are weighted 80% and the “Hot Topic” presentation (described below) is 20%.

* For 4 credits, reading responses and class participation are weighted 60%; “Hot Topic” presentation is 15%; and the paper is 25%.

Participation: This is a seminar. Your thoughtful contributions to the discussions are an essential part of the course content. In order to facilitate participation, you are required to electronically post responses to the readings on Blackboard (under the “Discussion Board” option) by 8 pm the night before class. You get one free “no response” class (you should still read, but you don=t need to write a response - please don=t everyone use your “free” class at the end of the term!). Please bring a printout of your posting with you to class; if discussion wanes, I will call on people to present their reactions to the readings. For those of you who are shy, I will weight your written comments more in determining your participation grade, but ideal participation involves sharing your ideas in class, because it allows for dialogue. If participation is uneven, in order to facilitate participation by all class members, I may occasionally ask more vocal class members to hold back.

What kinds of responses to the readings am I looking for? Here are some possibilities:

a) Questions for future research - what is the next study that needs to be done, why, and how should it be conducted? (Ideally, this could lead to research you actually do. It might also lead to a topic for your final paper if you are writing one; see below.)

b) Methodological and other criticisms - how could the study have been conducted better? Are the researchers justified in drawing the conclusions they do? Note that pointing out that they should have used subjects other college students is ok, but gets tiresome if that=s the only criticism you have class after class. Expand your critical horizons! The point is not simply to critique, but to think about important

ways that the aspects you are critiquing may limit the applicability of the results or mislead our understanding of the phenomenon.

c) Applications - now that the researchers have found what they found, assuming you think the results are valid, how can this information be used in the “real world”? (This might also lead to a final paper topic.) Can you give examples of the phenomena described in the papers? Can you suggest variables that may moderate these phenomena based on real life examples?

Attendance is **required**. If you must miss a class, speak to me prior to your absence, or as soon as possible after your absence. You are allowed to miss one class (with good reason) without penalty, although perfect attendance will be appreciated. Absences will affect your participation grade. Three or more absences will result in course failure.

Please note: IF this breakdown of points for evaluation fails to provide sufficient motivation for students to read and respond actively and thoughtfully to the readings, alternate measures (e.g., assigning students to lead discussion) might be taken. (This is not a threat so much as it reflects my desire NOT to waste everyone's time sitting around in the seminar with nothing to say.)

Hot Topic Presentation: Each student will make a 10-20 minute presentation on a topic not directly covered in the readings. A list to choose from will be presented in class the first day; nominations for other topics will be entertained as well. Timing of presentations during the term will coincide with relevant material in the class. In preparing your presentation, you should read at least two psychology papers on your topic as background (papers that are not part of the syllabus). Your presentation can include findings in these papers, but please do not *just* summarize the articles. The goal of the presentation is to introduce the class to your topic and tell them something interesting about it. You can use of PowerPoint for your presentation, but it is not required. Please think through, prepare, and plan your presentation in advance, making it worthy of class members' time.

Final Paper: If you are writing a paper (i.e., taking the class for 4 credits) your final paper can take one of two formats: You can propose a new study (supported by a thorough literature review of related background research) or you can write an applied paper, using results of past studies to solve some world problem or improve some institution. In both cases, you are expected to show both your knowledge and integration of past research and your ability to go beyond this work by creating something novel (e.g. a new study or an application). I'm expecting papers to be in the 8-15 page range (that's text, not including references or title pages). Longer is fine as long as longer doesn't also mean rambling. APA style should be used for citations. Please cite things appropriately. If you directly quote, use quotation marks and provide the page number of the quotation in your citation. Use APA style references.

New study paper option: The study you propose must be doable, in theory. However, you can assume you have access to a wide variety of resources (subject pools, computers, confederates, money). It must be clear how your variables are operationalized. Also, it should be clear, either from your introduction or from an additional “expected results” section what you expect to find. It's fine if you have rival hypotheses, but you must be clear about what various outcomes would mean for these hypotheses. You do not have to include all your materials for this paper, but if you are developing a new measure for your proposed study, you should include that. Think of this as an opportunity to generate a proposal for a study you really might actually do, including a study related to your current research (however, your study proposal for this class should not be one that you have already turned in or will turn in for another assignment).

Applied paper option: The problem you wish to solve or institution you wish to improve must be something that really needs fixing, making your attempts to fix it important. (Remember, your applied paper will be read in the context of other papers proposing new studies, and as an experimental social

psychologist, new research ideas are always important and interesting to me!) Again, any solutions must be doable in theory, but you can assume that you have the resources and power that would be available to a hotshot, big-time Apolicy wonk@ (e.g., you can't propose to "imprison all the narcissists" but you could propose a system-wide educational program to be introduced into elementary school curriculum).

You will turn in a one-page (or more) proposal describing what you plan to do for your paper in class on February 20 (Week 7). The more detailed your proposal, the better feedback I can give you.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated (but I'm not anticipating any in a graduate seminar). I am a big nasty ogre when it comes to penalties for plagiarism. I reserve the right to run any of your written material in this class through SafeAssign (an electronic database of scholarly sources); staying enrolled in this class is an indication of consent to this. I am more than happy to talk to you in advance about what would constitute plagiarism.

Readings

Readings are to be done BEFORE the class for which they are listed. They will be posted on the Blackboard site for this class, but most are also available from the library online. Please let me know immediately about any access problems!!

The papers are listed in the order I recommend reading them (not because some are more important than others, but because reading some of them will provide background for others of them).

Content note: It was really hard to narrow down the readings for this course. I had to ruthlessly cut things to keep the reading from being excessive (but managed to put some topics back in as "hot topics"). In terms of picking particular papers, papers that were "classic," cited a lot, cutting edge, particularly good illustrations of particular phenomena, written by notable authors in this area of psychology, written by authors with Oregon connections, and/or written particularly well got priority.

Week 1 – January 9: Introduction to the seminar

Week 2 – January 16: No class

Many seminar participants will be at a conference. Please note there are two weeks' worth of readings for the next week!

Week 3 – January 23: Self-favoring and self-centered social comparisons

Guenther, C. L., & Alicke, M. D. (2010). Deconstructing the better-than-average effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99, 755-770.

Krizan, Z., & Suls, J. (2008). Losing sight of oneself in the above-average effect: When egocentrism, focalism, and group diffuseness collide. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 929-942.

Kruger, J., Windschitl, P. D., Burrus, J., Fessel, F., & Chambers, J. R. (2008). The rational side of egocentrism in social comparisons. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 220-232.

Sedikides, C., Gaertner, L., & Vevea, J. L. (2005). Pancultural self-enhancement reloaded: A meta-analytic reply to Heine (2005). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89, 539-551.

Heine, S. J., & Hamamura, T. (2007). In search of East Asian self-enhancement. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 11, 1-24.

(Erratum associated with this article: The figure captions were reversed.)

(continued, next page)

Valdesolo, P., & DeSteno, D. (2008). The duality of virtue: Deconstructing the moral hypocrite. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 1334-1338.

- Pronin, E., Olivola, C. Y., & Kennedy, K. A. (2008). Doing unto future selves as you would do unto others: Psychological distance and decision making. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34, 224-236.
- Malle, B. F., Knobe, J. M., & Nelson, S. E. (2007). Actor-observer asymmetries in explanations of behavior: New answers to an old question. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, 491-514.

Week 4 – January 30: Projection

- Hoch, S. J. (1987). Perceived consensus and predictive accuracy: The pros and cons of projection. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 221-234.
- Epley, N., Keysar, B., Van Boven, L., & Gilovich, T. (2004). Perspective taking as egocentric anchoring and adjustment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 327-339.
- Van Boven, L., & Loewenstein, G. (2003). Social projection of transient drive states. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29, 1159-1168.
- Ames, D. R. (2004). Inside the mind reader's tool kit: Projection and stereotyping in mental state inference. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 340-353.

Week 5 – February 6: Social comparison

- Gibbons, F. X., & Buunk, B. P. (1999). Individual differences in social comparison: Development of a scale of social comparison orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 129-142.
- Lockwood, P., & Matthews, J. (2007). The self as a social comparer. In C. Sedikides & S. J. Spencer (Eds.), *The self: Frontiers of social psychology*, 95-113. New York, NY, US: Psychology Press.
- Gardner, W. L., Gabriel, S., & Hochschild, L. (2002). When you and I are "we," you are not threatening: The role of self-expansion in social comparison. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 239-251.
- Hodges, S. D. (2005). Feature matching in social comparisons. In M. Alicke, D. Dunning, & J. Krueger (Eds.), *The self in social judgment* (pp. 131-153). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Week 6 – February 13: Metaperceptions and warped looking-glass selves

- Barr, C. L., & Kleck, R. E. (1995). Self-other perception of the intensity of facial expressions of emotion: Do we know what we show? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 608-618.
- Cameron, J. V., & Vorauer, J. D. (2008). Feeling transparent: On metaperceptions and miscommunications. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2, 1093-1108.
- Carlson, E. N., & Kenny, D. A. (2012). Meta-accuracy: Do we know how others see us? In S. Vazire & T. D. Wilson (Eds.), *Handbook of self-knowledge*, 242-257. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Chambers, J. R., Epley, N., Savitsky, K., & Windschitl, P. D. (2008). Knowing too much: Using private knowledge to predict how one is viewed by others. *Psychological Science*, 19, 542-548.

Week 7 – February 20: Perspective taking for good or bad

- ***One page paper proposal due at beginning of class today!*** (if you are writing a paper)
- Hodges, S. D., Clark, B., & Myers, M. W. (2011). Better living through perspective taking. In R. Biswas-Diener (Ed.), *Positive psychology as a mechanism for social change* (pp. 193-218). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Press.
- Vorauer, J. D., Martens, V., & Sasaki, S. J. (2009). When trying to understand detracts from trying to behave: Effects of perspective taking in intergroup interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 811-827.
- Epley, N., & Caruso, M. (2009). Perspective taking: Misstepping into others' shoes. In K. D. Markman, W. M. P. Klein, & J. A. Suhr (Eds.), *Handbook of imagination and mental simulation*, 295-309.

New York, NY, US: Psychology Press.

Ku, G., Wang, C. S., & Galinsky, A. D. (2010). Perception through a perspective-taking lens: Differential effects on judgment and behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 46*, 792-798.

Week 8 – February 27: The keys to empathic accuracy

Hodges, S. D., Lewis, K. L., & Ickes, W. (in press). The matter of other minds: Empathic accuracy and the factors that influence it. In P. Shaver, M. Mikulincer (Eds.), J. A. Simpson, & J. Dovidio (Assoc. Eds.), *APA handbook of personality and social psychology: Vol 2. Interpersonal relations and group processes*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Zaki, J., Bolger, N., & Ochsner, K. (2009). Unpacking the informational bases of empathic accuracy. *Emotion, 9*, 478-487.

Lewis, K. L., Hodges, S. D., Laurent, S. M., Srivastava, S., & Biancarosa, G. (2012). Reading between the minds: The use of stereotypes in empathic accuracy. *Psychological Science, 23*, 1040-1046.

Eyal, T., & Epley, N. (2010). How to seem telepathic: Enabling mind reading by matching construal. *Psychological Science, 21*, 700-705.

Week 9 – March 6: Self-other overlap

Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., Mashek, D., Lewandowski, G., Wright, S. C., & Aron, E. N. (2004). Including others in self. *European Review of Social Psychology, 15*, 101-132.

Myers, M. W., & Hodges, S. D. (2012). The structure of self-other overlap and its relationship to perspective taking. *Personal Relationships, 19*, 663-679.

Mashek, D., Stuewig, J., Furukawa, E., & Tangney, J. (2006). Psychological and behavioral implications of connectedness to communities with opposing values and beliefs. *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology, 25*, 404-428.

Dehart, T., Pelham, B., Fiedorowicz, L., Carvallo, M., & Gabriel, S. (2011). Including others in the implicit self: Implicit evaluation of significant others. *Self and Identity, 10*, 127-135.

Week 10 – March 13: Effects on self of imagining others

Baldwin, M. W. (2001). Relational schema activation: Does Bob Zajonc ever scowl at you from the back of your mind? In J. Bargh and D. K. Apsley (Eds.), *Unraveling the complexities of social life: A festschrift in honor of Robert B. Zajonc* (pp. 55-67). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Hodges, S. D., Sharp, C., Gibson, N. & Tipsord, J. (in press). Nearer my god to thee: Self-God overlap and believers' relationship to God. *Self and Identity*.

Mar, R. A., & Oatley, K. (2008). The function of fiction is the abstraction and simulation of social experience. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3*, 173-192.

Taylor, M., Hodges, S. D., & Kohanyi, A. (2003). Fictional people with minds of their own: Characters created by adult novelists and imaginary companions created by children. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality, 22*, 361-380.

Finals Week: Paper due Wednesday March 20 at 1:20

How to read for this class:

It is very important that you do the course readings. The readings will provide us with a common ground. Skimming them will not be sufficient. When reading primary sources (empirical journal articles) keep in mind that the authors are trying to tell you not only what they found and why it is important, but how they found it. It is the methods and results that often make journal articles effortful to read, but it is essential that you read and understand these sections. As you read a journal article, make sure you can answer these questions:

- What is the research question? What do the researchers hope to show?
- What are the theoretical independent and dependent variables? How did the researchers operationalize them? (How did they manipulate the predictor variable? DID they manipulate the predictor variable?! How did they measure the dependent variable?)
- What kinds of analyses did the researchers use? What form were their results? (Did they find a difference in means? Did they find different correlations? Did they find main effects? Interactions?)
- What do the results mean, both at the level of the study and on a broader level? Try to restate the findings as a general statement.
- Was there anything wrong with the methods the researchers used? Are there logical flaws in their arguments? Can you think of an alternative explanation for their findings?

I will expect you to know the answers to these questions when we are discussing the articles. It may be helpful to skip around while reading a journal article, BUT MAKE SURE YOU READ THE WHOLE THING. Try reading the abstract first, to give you some idea of what the article is about and where the authors are going. However, be prepared for there to be unfamiliar terms and/or concepts in the abstract. Don't get discouraged--these should be explained in the body of the paper. It may be helpful to read the intro and then peek at the discussion before tackling the methods and results. You may also find that you have to read some sections twice--knowledge you have gleaned from another part of the article may help you to make sense of something that was unclear at first. For all of the readings (not just journal articles), think about reading as if you have to explain what you have read to someone else.