



Course information 2016–17

SP2079 Elements of social and applied psychology

This course provides an overview of key areas of social psychology and their application. It addresses issues of both theoretical interest and practical importance, thereby aiding our understanding of how people behave, think, interact and communicate in social settings.

Aims and objectives

This course has five major aims. To:

- provide an overview of the scope of social psychology and its major methodological approaches
- identify the key ideas and processes people use in understanding their social world
- assess the impact of group membership and social influence on people's behaviour
- evaluate the role of social relations in our societies
- illustrate how social psychological knowledge and principles can be applied to real-world issues, especially in organisational and management settings.

Essential reading

For full details please refer to the reading list.

Hogg, M.A. and G.M. Vaughan *Social Psychology*. (Harlow: Prentice Hall)
Sanderson, C.A. *Social Psychology*. (New York:Wiley)

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course and having completed the essential reading and activities students should be able to:

- ✓ describe key concepts, theories and methodological approaches used in social psychology
- ✓ outline the processes used in understanding our social world
- ✓ assess how people behave in groups and the role of social influence
- ✓ analyse the processes and phenomena involved in social relations
- ✓ critically evaluate how social psychology can be applied to social issues and can aid our understanding of human behaviour in real-life settings, especially those involving organisational and economic issues.

Assessment

This course is assessed by a three-hour unseen written examination.

Students should consult the appropriate *EMFSS Programme Regulations*, which are reviewed on an annual basis. The *Regulations* provide information on the availability of a course, where it can be placed on your programme's structure, and details of co-requisites and prerequisites.

Syllabus

This is a description of the material to be examined. On registration, students will receive a detailed subject guide which provides a framework for covering the topics in the syllabus and directions to the essential reading.

What is social psychology?: The nature and scope of social psychology; factors which influence social behaviour; theoretical perspectives and the role of theory in research. Research methods in social psychology; research techniques in organisational, management and economic psychology; reliability, validity and realism; ethical issues in research. Approaches to applying social psychology to real world issues; the challenges and benefits of applying the knowledge and principles of social psychology to practical problems, especially in organisations, workplace and economic settings.

Understanding the social world: Concepts of the self; self-perception; self presentation; performance style and self-presentation strategies; the dramaturgical model. Perception of others and impression formation. Individual decision making and moral judgments; social cognitive strategies: heuristics, biases and fallacies; the impact of schemata and stereotypes. Attributions and attributional style; attribution theory; sources of error and bias. Attitudes: their nature, formation and functions; cognitive consistency and dissonance; the relation between attitudes and behaviour; recent models of the attitude-behaviour link; the nature and impact of social representations.

Social influence: Groups: roles, norms and cohesiveness; altruism and pro-social behaviour. Group influence: task performance; problem solving; decision making. Differences between individual and group decision making in social, economic and organisational settings. Intergroup conflict and conflict resolution, strategic interaction and negotiation. Conformity; normative influence, majority and minority pressure and its impact; compliance and acceptance. Obedience to authority; experimental studies; factors affecting obedience and their implications. Social influence and contagious processes in settings involving uncertainty, such as crowds and economic environments. Attitude change and persuasive communication; analyses of the factors involved in the persuasion process, with special reference to the media, advertising and brand identity.

Social relations: Interpersonal communication: the role of language and non-verbal cues; the role of the internet and social networking in communication, relationships and cultural transmission; corporate communication, corporate social identity and reputation management. Diversity, with special reference to gender and culture. Relationships and theories of attraction. Prejudice and discrimination: the role of competition, social categorisation, social learning and social cognition. The work setting, organisational behaviour, job satisfaction, leadership. Personality assessment and personnel selection. Stress and illness; life events and work as sources of stress. Culture in organisations, multiculturalism, intercultural contact and globalisation.