

**Psychology 105**  
**Social Psychology**  
**Chapter 16**

**REMINDER**

You should have selected your term paper topic by now.  
Term Paper Draft 1 Due April 24  
(optional, if you want feedback on your paper)

Spring 2008

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**Social Psychology - Outline**

*Social Psychology is the study of the effects of other people on individual behavior, thoughts, feelings and emotions, of social interactions and cognitions, and of the effects of individual behavior on groups*

➤ **How the Social Situation Affects Individual Behavior**

- Social Standards
- Conformity
- Obedience
- Bystander Effect
- The Stanford Prison Experiment <http://www.prisonexp.org/>

➤ **Influences on Judging Others**

- Attributions and Fundamental Attribution Error
- Prejudice and Discrimination
- Some Roots of Violence and Terrorism

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**Three Major Themes of Social Psychology**

➤ **The power of Social Context to influence individual behavior**

- Presence of other people (real, imagined, symbolic)
- Activities and interactions among people
- Settings for behavior
- Expectations and norms for behavior in social settings

➤ **Responses are made to subjective interpretations of social situations ("perception is reality")**

➤ **Stereotyping and Prejudice**

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### Influence of the Social Context

- *How does the social situation affect individual behavior?*
- *We usually adapt our behavior to the demands of the social situation, and in ambiguous situations we take our cues from the behavior of others*
- **Situationism:** The view that the conditions in the social environment influence people's behavior as much or more than their personalities or dispositions do
  - Social environment:
    - People currently present, but also:
    - Living and working conditions
    - Educational background
    - Community and predominant culture
    - Family (current and past)

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### Social Standards of Behavior

- Social Role** - One of several socially defined patterns of behavior that are expected of persons in a given setting or group
- Most people have several social roles they assume regularly
- Social Norm** - Unwritten rules; a group's expectations of what is appropriate and acceptable for members' attitudes and behaviors
- Most social situations have norms, and norms vary among situations

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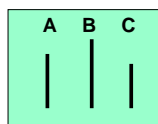
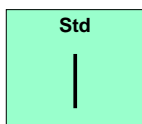
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### Social Pressure and Conformity

- **Chameleon effect** - tendency to mimic other people (rel. to social learning & imitation?)
- **Asch study of Conformity** -
  - Subject asked to make perceptual judgment after several confederates in group had given theirs:  
Which line is same length as standard line?



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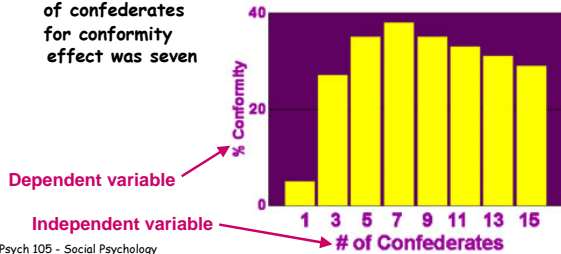
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### Social Pressure and Conformity - Asch Study

- On control trials (confederates gave correct answer), participants got nearly 100% correct
- On pressure trials (confederates agreed on incorrect answer), % correct dropped to around 60%.
- Optimum number of confederates for conformity effect was seven



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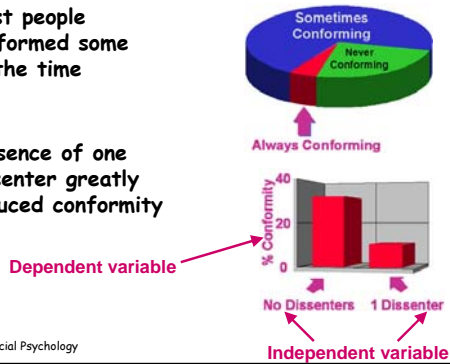
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### Social Pressure and Conformity - Asch Study

- Most people conformed some of the time
- Presence of one dissenter greatly reduced conformity



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### Independent Variables that Influence Conformity (increases ↑, decreases ↓)

Personal Variables	Situational Variables
Assumption that majority is correct ↑	Remainder of group is unanimous about answer ↑
Desire to be liked by group ↑	One or more dissenters ↓
Afraid to risk ridicule by disagreeing ↑	Other group members perceived as competent ↑
Grew up in a collectivist culture ↑	Task difficulty (harder) ↑
Low self-esteem, shyness ↑	Behavior is public ↑
Age (younger ↑, older ↓)	Size of group, up to ~7 ↑
Gender (women slightly ↑)	

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## Obedience to Authority

When told to do something they believe is wrong, how many people will obey an authority figure?

Milgram's studies of obedience to authority:

- Ordinary people, paid volunteers
  - "Learning" experiment, assigned role as "teacher"
- Experimenter in white coat instructed participants to shock "pupil" for making incorrect responses, increasing voltage on each error
- **Dependent variable:** How much voltage did the "teachers" deliver (or believe they delivered)?
- **One independent variable:** authority, defined as "scientist in white coat" vs. grad student

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## Milgram's Study - Results

Shock Level (volts)	% delivered
Slight (15)	100
Moderate (75)	100
Strong (135)	99
Very Strong (195)	99
Intense (255)	98
Extremely Intense (315)	90
Danger - Severe (375)	70
XXX: (450)	65 !!

"Pupil" complains of pain

Virtually all participants "delivered" weak to very strong shocks

"Pupil" begs to stop

"Pupil" screams in agony

"Pupil" stops responding

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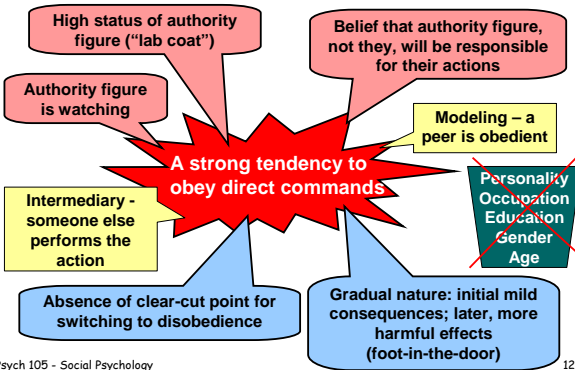
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## Variables Influencing Obedience to Authority



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## The Bystander Effect

It is night in a residential neighborhood of NYC. A woman, Kitty Genovese is being stalked, assaulted, screaming, running away, eventually is stabbed and murdered, over the period of  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. 38 people witness the murder. Only after the murder is done does any one call the police.

➤ *Why did no one intervene?* Ethically and morally, it seems that someone would have done so.

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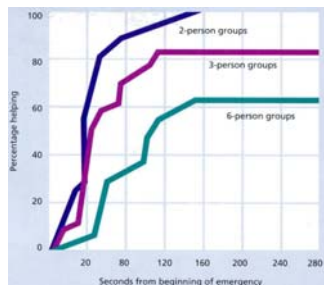
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## The Bystander Effect

➤ *The Bystander Effect:* The likelihood and speed of response of a bystander to offer aid or report a problem decreases as the number of bystanders known or believed to be present increases.

**Why don't people respond?**

- Diffusion of responsibility
- Conformity to others not responding
- No one in charge
- Lack of training in emergency procedures
- Situational ambiguity
- Unfamiliar with situation or neighborhood
- Perceived personal cost
- Lack of similarity to victim



## The Stanford Prison Study

<http://www.prisonexp.org/>

➤ 1971 study (Zimbardo, et. al.): attempt to separate effects of situational from dispositional factors on behavior

- Healthy, well-adjusted college students randomly assigned role of "guard" or "prisoner"
- Details of "real" jails and routines duplicated to make experience realistic
- Guards given no training; free to do whatever was necessary for control of prisoners
- In only a few days, guards became sadistic, prisoners became depressed and showed signs of extreme stress

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### The Stanford Prison Study

- Results:
  - Three of the prisoners broke down emotionally and were allowed to quit
  - None of the guards quit, or even came in late for their shifts
  - Guards began escalating violence when "no one was looking"
  - Only one observer, of ~50, suggested that continuing the experiment would be immoral
- Situational and role demand characteristics: the situation converted normal, psychologically healthy college men into sadists and helpless, hopeless people
- <http://www.prisonexp.org/>

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### Stanford (S) and Abu Ghraib (AG) Prisons

#### Some variables that influenced behaviors

No clear rules ("Use your imagination" - AG)	Gradual increase in level of cruelty
Assumptions about role expectations defined behaviors (including behaviors of researchers - S)	Deindividuation and masking of identities (uniforms, sunglasses, smocks, numbers, hoods)
No supervision	Prison environment
No response from authority to complaints	Prisoners seen as dangerous or less than human
No barriers to cruel behavior	Direction set by top officials, without constraints (AG)

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### Social Situational Influences on Individual Behavior

Critical variables influencing our actions:

- Ambiguous situation
  - Take cues from others (conformity)
  - Respond to authority
  - Diffusion of responsibility
- Presence/absence of leader or dissenter
  - Status of authority/leader/dissenter
- Agreement among group members
  - Model on peer behavior
  - Dissenters are powerful
- Gradual change in behavior asked
- Authority assumes responsibility for outcome

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### Other Group-Influence Phenomena

- **Social facilitation** - stronger performance in presence of audience, "home-team effect"
  - Works for well-learned or easy tasks, not for difficult tasks
- **Social Loafing** - weaker performance when working in a group than working alone
  - More likely when individual performance is not evaluated
- **Deindividuation** - loss of self-awareness and self-restraint in a mob
- **Group polarization** - enhancement of group's prevailing attitudes over time, thru discussion and interaction
- **Ingroup Bias** - preferential treatment given to people perceived to belong to one's own group
- **Groupthink** - group thought/behavior when desire for harmony overrides realistic appraisal of alternatives

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### Judgments about People - Constructing Social Reality

- *What influences our judgments of other people?*
- *The judgments we make about others depend not only on their behavior but also on their appearance and our interpretation of the social situation.*

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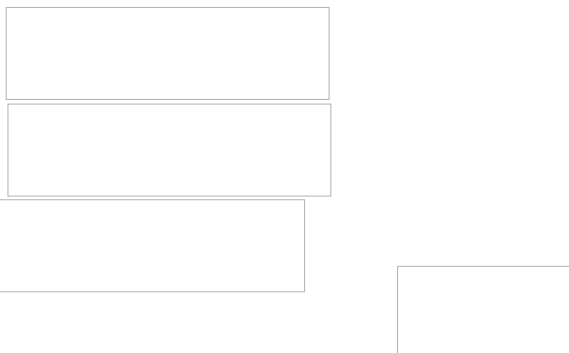
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### "Attributions"



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**Explaining the behavior of others**

- **Attributions:** making explanations for behavior or events. Someone's behavior is attributed to:
  - **Situational Causes:** Causes relating to the external situation, environmental factors
  - **Dispositional Causes:** Causes relating to internal characteristics or traits of individuals
- **Fundamental Attribution Error:** the tendency to underestimate the impact of the situation and overestimate the impact of personal disposition on the behavior of another person.
- **Actor-Observer Effect:** the tendency to attribute causes of one's own (bad) behavior to external factors, while attributing others' (bad) behavior to internal causes.
- **Self-Serving Bias:** tendency to take credit for one's accomplishments and blame failures on external factors

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**Stereotypes - a special type of schema**

- **Schema:** general type of knowledge structure, stored in memory, that may contain details, concepts, scripts about some topic or object and helps to organize information.
  - **Social Schema:** a schema containing information about a particular social experience or person
    - **Stereotype:** Collection of beliefs, attributions and impressions (schema) held about a group and its members; common stereotypes include those based on gender, race, age, occupation
      - Thinking about people in terms of a stereotype often leads to making the fundamental attribution error

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**Prejudice**

- **Prejudice** - a negative attitude towards a person or class of people based solely on his or her membership in a particular group, based on a stereotype
  - Negative emotions (dislike)
  - Negative attributions (dishonest)
  - Low expectation of reward or value → Low attractiveness
- Prejudiced attitudes serve as filters for selectively processing, organizing and remembering pertinent information about people, and tend to lump members of the target group as highly similar
- Prejudiced attitudes
  - May be unconscious
  - May unconsciously affect behavior
  - Are difficult to counteract and change
- **Discrimination** - acting on prejudice in a way detrimental to target of prejudice

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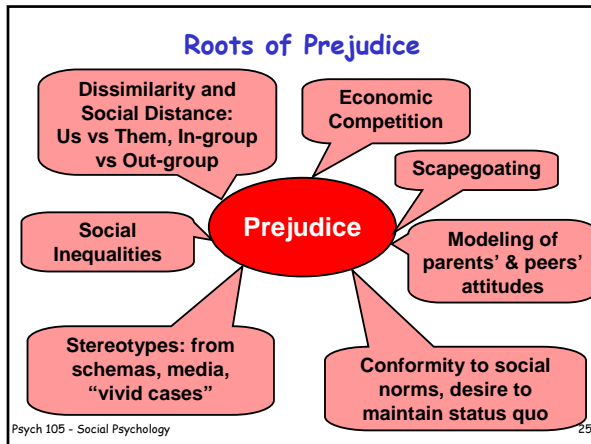
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- ### Combating Prejudice
- **Educational campaigns** - least effective (must overcome confirmation bias)
  - **New role models** - may serve to prevent prejudice from developing, moderating existing prejudice
  - **Equal status contact, cooperation required** - understanding increases
  - **Legislation and Institutional Support** - most effective.
    - Discriminatory behavior is made illegal
    - Leaders support antidiscrimination
    - →prejudiced attitudes diminish (attitude follows behavior)
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- ### The Roots of Terrorism
- **Psychological:**
    - Stereotypes and Prejudice
    - Discrimination
    - Frustration, pain and aggression
    - Sometimes, a leader
  - **Economic**
    - Poverty, powerlessness, hopelessness
    - Great disparity between haves and have-nots
  - **Historical - Cultural**
    - History of conflict
    - Opposed, irreconcilable world views
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