

National research university “Higher School of Economics”

Department of Psychology

Course syllabus for the discipline
“Social influence”

For the students of the MSc program “Applied social psychology”
(specialization 37.04.01.“Psychology”)

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Moscow 2016

The given syllabus cannot be used by other departments of HSE or other universities without the allowance of the author

1. Scope of application and reference to regulatory documents

This syllabus establishes the requirements for the knowledge and skills of the students, and defines the content of the course and the forms of evaluation.

The syllabus is designed for the teachers, teaching assistants, and the students of the MSc program «Applied social psychology».

The program is designed in accordance with:

- Educational standard of HSE;
- Educational program for the specialization 37.04.01. Master of Psychology;
- The curriculum of the university for the program «Applied social psychology».

2. Course objectives

The aim of the course is to offer students an in-depth account of social influence. More specifically, students will enhance their understanding of concepts, models, theories, and research findings that are central to the study of social influence. Furthermore, the course will promote students' scientific thinking through reviewing, evaluating, and discussing empirical papers on social influence. Moreover, to master social influence tactics students will conduct a field experiment in which they test one or more of these tactics.

The course is designed to achieve the following goals:

- enhance your understanding of the concepts, models, theories, and research findings central to the study of social influence.
- promote your scientific thinking through reviewing, evaluating, and discussing existing literature on social influence.
- promote your academic skills through conducting, writing and presenting empirical research

3. Student's competences after the course

General competencies	Specific competencies
Student has profound knowledge in the field of social influence	<p>The student is capable to define theoretical and applied aspects of social influence.</p> <p>The student knows main theoretical approaches, practical questions, concepts, techniques of social influence.</p>
Student owns the system of main categories of social psychology and methods of research	The student is capable to give definitions of the main categories and to estimate methods of psychological research in social psychology.
Student is able to present the results of his/her work in the reports and presentations in English, both in public and individual communication	<p>Student knows the international standards of presenting the results of the socio-psychological research in English in written and verbal forms.</p> <p>Student has the skills of presentation of different home tasks in English.</p>
Student is able to use the specific concepts, models, and methods to solve complex problems in governmental, social and business organizations, administration bodies, and in the areas of research and consulting	<p>Student knows criteria of good study in the field of social psychology and social influence.</p> <p>Student can apply different statements of psychological theories to solve problems arising in the field of social psychology and social influence.</p>

4. Place of the course in the structure of the educational program

Social influence - elective discipline for 1st year master students of the MSc program “Applied social psychology”

The discipline builds on the previously learned general theories within the courses:

- General psychology;
- Social psychology.

The knowledge and skills built within this course will be needed to study the following disciplines:

- Advanced Social Psychology;
- Research seminar «Social and Cross-cultural psychology».

The language of instruction is English (teaching and all communications).

Duration of the course is 2 modules (152 academic hours, 4 credits).

5. Course schedule

№	Theme	Total number of hours	Class hours			Individual work
			lectures	seminars	practical classes	
1	Introduction to psychology of social influence	18	4	2	2	10
2	Types of social influence. Obedience to authority	22	2		4	16
3	Types of social influence. Conformity. Processes of	22	2		4	16

	conformity					
4	Minority influence and social change	20	2	2	2	14
5	Techniques of social influence	24	4	2	2	16
6	Six principles of social influence by Cialdini	20	2		2	16
7.	The powers of persuasion	26	4	2	4	16
	Total	152	20	8	20	104

6. Course content

1. Introduction to psychology of social influence

Key questions: How the thought, feeling, and behavior of the individual are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others? What is social influence? How do psychologists study social influence? Experiment.

Literature:

Allport, G. W. (1968). The historical background of modern social psychology. In G. A. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 1–46). Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley

Bertrand, M. and Mullainathan, S. (2001). “Do People Mean What They Say?”

Implications for Subjective Survey Data. *Economics and social behavior*, pp. 67-72.

Cialdini, B. (2001). *Influence: Science and Practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Orne, M. (1962). On the social psychology of the psychological experiment: With particular reference to demand characteristics and their implications. *American Psychologist*, 17(11), pp. 776-783.

2. Types of social influence. Obedience to authority

Description of compliance, obedience, conformity. Bases of Social Power. Obedience to authority. Milgram's obedience studies. Limitations of External Control.

Literature:

Cialdini, R.B. & Trost, M.R. (1998). Social influence :Social norms, conformity, and compliance. In D.Gilbert,S.T. Fiske & G. Lindzey (eds), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th ed. ,Vol.2,pp.151-92).New York: McGraw-Hill. A thorough overview of social influence research with a particular emphasis on norms and persuasion.

Martin, R., & Hewstone, M. (2007).Social influence processes of control and change:Conformity, obedience to authority, and innovation .In M.A. Hogg & J.Cooper (eds),*The SAGE handbook of social psychology Concise student edition* (pp.312-32). London: SAGE. An up-to-date and comprehensive review of social influence research, including conformity, obedience and minority influence.

Regan T. Dennis (1971) Effects of a favor and liking on compliance. *Journal of experimental social psychology* 7, 627-639

3. Types of social influence. Conformity. Processes of conformity

The formation and influence of norms. Yielding to majority group pressure. Who conforms? Individual and group characteristics. Cultural norms. Situational

factors in conformity. Informational influence. Normative influence. Referent informational influence.

Literature:

Asch, S. E. (1955). Opinions and social pressure. *Scientific American*, 31–35.

Asch, S. E. (1955). Opinions and social pressure. *Scientific American*, 31–35.

Schachter, S. (1951). Deviation, rejection, and communication. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 46(2), 190–207.

Baron, R. S., Vandello, J. A., & Brunsman, B. (1996). The forgotten variable in conformity research: Impact of task importance on social influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 915–927.

4. Minority influence and social change

Moscovici's studies. Conformity bias. Behavioural style and the genetic model. Conversion theory. Convergent-divergent theory.

Literature:

Mugny, G., & Perez, J.A. (1991). *The social psychology of minority influence*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. An overview of research on minority influence by two leading scholars of this not ably Europe an topic; also cover age of Mugny and Moscovici's own theories of minority influence.

Martin, R., & Hewstone, M. (2007). Social influence processes of control and change: Conformity, obedience to authority, and innovation. In M.A. Hogg & J.Cooper (eds), *The SAGE handbook of social psychology Concise student edition* (pp.312-32). London: SAGE. An up-to-date and comprehensive review of social influence research, including conformity, obedience and minority influence.

Mackie, D. M. (1987). Systematic and nonsystematic processing of majority and minority persuasive communications. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 41-52.

5. Techniques of social influence

The foot-in-the-door technique. The low-ball technique. The bait-and-switch technique. The labeling technique. The legitimization-of-paltry-favors technique. The door-in-the-face technique. The that's-not-all technique.

Literature:

Freedman, J.L. & Fraser, S.C. (1966). Compliance without pressure: The foot-in-the-door technique. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 4, 195-202.

Cialdini, R. B., Vincent, J. E., Lewis, S. K., Catalan, J., Wheeler, D., & Darby, B. L. (1975). Reciprocal concessions procedure for inducing compliance: The door-in-the-face technique. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 31, 206-215.

Burger, J.M., Reed, M., DeCesare, K., Rauner S. & Rozolis, J. (1999). The effects of initial request size on compliance: More about the That's-Not-All Technique. Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 21, 243-249.

Janssen, L., Fennis, B.M., Pruyn, A., & Vohs, K. (2008). The path of least resistance: Regulatory resource depletion and the effectiveness of social influence techniques. Journal of Business Research, 61, 1041-1045.

6. Six principles of social influence by Cialdini

Reciprocity. Commitment (and Consistency). Social Proof. Liking. Authority. Scarcity.

Literature:

Cialdini, Robert B. (2001) Influence: science and practice / Robert B. Cialdini.—4th ed.

7. The powers of persuasion

What two paths lead to influence? What type of cognitive processing does each involve and with what effects? The central route to persuasion. The peripheral route to persuasion. The elements of persuasion. Media influence: the two-step flow.

Literature:

Petty, R. E., & Brinol, P. (2008). Persuasion: From single to multiple to

metacognitive processes. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3, 137–147.

Petty, R. E., Haugtvedt, C. P., & Smith, S. M. (1995). Elaboration as a determinant of attitude strength: Creating attitudes that are persistent, resistant, and predictive of behavior. In R. E. Petty & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Tormala, Z. L., Brinol, P., & Petty, R. E. (2006). When credibility attacks: The reverse impact of source credibility on persuasion. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42, 684–691.

Tormala, Z. L., Clarkson, J. J., & Petty, R. E. (2006). Resisting persuasion by the skin of one's teeth: The hidden success of resisted persuasive messages. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91, 423–435.

Forgas, J. P. (2007). When sad is better than happy: Negative affect can improve the quality and effectiveness of persuasive messages and social influence strategies. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43, 513–528.

Keller, E. B., & Berry, B. (2003). *The influentials: One American in ten tells the other nine how to vote, where to eat, and what to buy*. New York: Free Press.

7. Education technologies

The interactive forms of teaching are used in the course: group discussion, case analysis (life stories, book or video materials). Recognized and well-known professors in the field of social psychology are invited to give «master classes».

8. Forms of evaluation for the current assessment and attestation

Form of the assessment	Criteria
<i>Colloquium</i> Students in small groups (2-3 people) read articles on specific topics selected by the teacher and then present main content of it to the whole group. Next step is group discussion.	1) Depth and thoroughness of material analysis 2) Clear structure of report (critical parts of presentation: research problem, method, substantial results and conclusion) 3) Consistency and logical structure of report

<p>HSE electronic resources are used for articles' selection</p>	<p>4) Quality of answers to the questions from audience (complete and detailed answers)</p>
<p><i>Homework (2)</i></p> <p>1) <i>Homework №1.</i> Students write an essay in English of not less than 20 000 signs. Topics for such essays will address various issues in advanced social psychology, which were not covered during lectures and seminars.</p> <p>2) <i>Homework №2.</i> Presentation of a project on applied socio-psychological work. Students are given the task to prepare a project on applied socio-psychological work in accordance to their own interests. For example, to develop a program of psychological rehabilitation of people underwent severe disease, a program of psychological adaptation of employees in a company, a program of psychological assistance to refugees, etc. Lecturer will tell in advance about requirements for writing a project and its structure. A program should be done in written form and given to the teacher, then orally presented and defended at seminar by student.</p>	<p>1) Student wrote essay in full; 2) Content of essay corresponds to selected topic; 3) Results of the most recent research in the selected area are used in essay; 4) Student's own analysis of material is presented in essay.</p> <p>1) Goal and objectives of project are clear; 2) Project has a clear socio-psychological orientation; 3) Project is based on knowledge of social psychology; 4) Presentation contains all necessary descriptive elements of project; 5) Project has a clear and precise practical result.</p>
<p><i>The final examination.</i> The final exam is held in the form of a test. Students are given 20 questions of closed type. Each question offers four answer choices 10-point scale will be used in assessment of the results of testing.</p>	<p>Final grade is proportional to the number of correct answers to test questions.</p> <p>1-2 correct answers – 1 point 3-4 correct answers – 2 points 5-6 correct answers – 3 points</p>

	7-8 correct answers – 4 points
	9-10 correct answers – 5 points
	11-12 correct answers – 6 points
	13-14 correct answers – 7 points
	15-16 correct answers – 8 points
	17-18 correct answers – 9 points
	19-20 correct answers – 10 points

Example of questions for final test:

1. Pauline reads an article citing several reasons for having life insurance. When she notices that the article is really an insurance company advertisement, she decides that life insurance is a waste of money. When the topic of insurance comes up a few weeks later, Pauline thinks that life insurance is a good use of money. This change in attitude over time represents the _____ effect.
a primacy
b reactance
c recency
d sleeper
2. Maureen is very intelligent, Audrey is moderately intelligent, and Denise is not very intelligent. A two-sided persuasive message will probably be most effective on _____.
a Audrey
b Denise
c Maureen
d The three women should be equally affected.
3. While listening half-heartedly to a lecture, Jamaal hears his professor cite several reasons why playing violent video games increases aggression. Jamaal accepts these reasons solely because his professor has been correct before. In this example, Jamaal is using _____ processing.
a alpha

b central route

c omega

d peripheral route

4. Research shows that a person who is distracted from a message is more likely to be persuaded by that message. The elaboration likelihood model explains this by suggesting that _____.

a distractions take up most of the person's peripheral processing ability

b distractions serve as cues for rewards and punishments concerning being persuaded

c a distracting attitude makes the source more likable

d distractions prevent people from engaging in central route processing of information

9. Forms of knowledge assessment and grading procedures

Knowledge should be assessed in 10-point scale. Grades on the following forms of knowledge assessment constitute the final grade:

$$\text{Grade}_{\text{accum}} = 0.3 * G_{\text{class}} + 0.7 * G_{\text{hw}}$$

$$\text{Grade}_{\text{class}} = 0.5 * \text{activity} + 0.5 * \text{reports}$$

$$\text{Grade}_{\text{hw}} = 0.5 * G_{\text{hw1}} + 0.5 * G_{\text{hw2}}$$

G_{accum} – the grade for participating in the classes and making all home works

G_{class} – the grade for being active during the discussions, and preparing presentations for the seminars

G_{hw} – the grade for homeworks = 0.5*homework1 + 0.5*homework2

$G_{\text{final test}}$ – the grade for the final examination (in the form of test)

$$\text{Grade}_{\text{total}} = 0.7 * G_{\text{accum}} + 0.3 * G_{\text{final test}}$$

10. Learning aids

Course book

Advanced social psychology. (2010). The state of the science. Ed. by R. F. Baumeister, E. J. Finkel, Oxford University Press, Inc. NY.

Basic literature

Allport, G. W. (1968). The historical background of modern social psychology. In G. A. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 1–46). Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley

Asch, S. E. (1955). Opinions and social pressure. *Scientific American*, 31–35.

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- Keller, E. B., & Berry, B.* (2003). *The influentials: One American in ten tells the other nine how to vote, where to eat, and what to buy.* New York: Free Press.
- Mackie, D. M.* (1987). Systematic and nonsystematic processing of majority and minority persuasive communications. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 41-52.
- Martin, R., & Hewstone, M.* (2007). Social influence processes of control and change: Conformity, obedience to authority, and innovation. In M.A. Hogg & J.Cooper (eds), *The SAGE handbook of social psychology Concise student edition* (pp.312-32). London: SAGE. An up-to-date and comprehensive review of social influence research, including conformity, obedience and minority influence.
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- Schachter, S.* (1951). Deviation, rejection, and communication. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 46(2), 190–207.
- Tormala, Z. L., Brinol, P., & Petty, R. E.* (2006). When credibility attacks: The reverse impact of source credibility on persuasion. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42, 684–691.
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