

**Course syllabus for  
“Theory and Methodology of Modern Psychology”**

Approved

MP Academic Council

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Credits	4
Contact hours	56
Self-study hours	134
Course	Theory and Methodology of Modern Psychology
Format of the discipline	Offline

**I. PURPOSE, RESULTS AND PEREQUISITES**

The main goals of the course are:

- 1) Studying areas of Social Psychology, which are not included in standard bachelor course of Social Psychology;
- 2) Introducing students to the latest developments and data in the field of Social Psychology;
- 3) Getting deeper knowledge of applied areas of Social Psychology;
- 4) Studying methodological tools of Advanced Social Psychology;
- 5) Building project activities skills in the field of Applied Social Psychology.

The following results are achieved at the end of the course:

- Student is capable to define theoretical and applied aspects of advanced social psychology.
- Student knows main theoretical approaches, fundamental research questions and concepts of advanced social psychology.
- Student is capable to give definitions of main categories and to estimate methods of social psychological research.
- Student knows different theoretical approaches in the field of social psychology.
- Student knows the international standards of presenting the results of the socio-psychological research in English in written and verbal forms.
- Student has skills of presenting different tasks prepared at home in English.
- Student knows criteria of good study in the field of social psychology.

- Student can apply different statements of psychological theories to solve problems arising in the field of social psychology.
- Student is capable to use methods of carrying out socio-psychological research.

The course does not have prerequisites, but builds on general theories in the following disciplines: General Psychology, Social Psychology, Experimental Psychology.

## **II. CONTENT**

### **1. Introduction**

Social Psychology as a scientific field: social relevance, basic concepts. Brief history of Social Psychology – before and after World War II. Main concepts of the “person” in the Social Psychology: consistency seeker, self-esteem maximizer, information seeker, information processor, foolish mistake maker, situational responder.

### **2. Social Cognition**

Concept of social cognition. Categorization process and schemes in social cognition. Content of social cognition. Social representations. Basic approaches to an individual as a subject of social cognition: rationalizing person, naive scientist, practicing data processing individual, cognitive miser, motivated tactician. Processes of social information processing: main stages and its characteristics. Error sources that occur in processing of social information.

### **3. The Social Self**

Structure of the “Self”, components of the «Self»: self-knowledge (self-concept); the interpersonal self, or public self; the agent self, or executive function. Functions of the self. Self-awareness, self-esteem, negative aspects of highest self-esteem. Self-deception. Self-efficacy, cross-cultural aspects of self-efficacy. Interdependent of self-concept, self-construal. Self-presentation and its functions. Self-Monitoring.

#### **4. Social Psychology of emotion**

Emotions phenomenology. Social functions of emotions. Emotion as a socio-psychological construct. The influence of emotions on social cognition. Emotions’ emergence. The theory of two factors by Schachter. Theory of assessments. Emotions and culture. The influence of social environment on the expression of emotions in different cultures.

#### **5. Attitudes and its measurement**

The structure of attitudes. Three-dimensional model of attitudes. The ratio of social attitudes and social behavior. The reasons for the mismatch between social attitudes and social behavior. Methods for measuring social attitudes: unipolar dimension measure, semantic differential, scaling technology, scale of social distance.

#### **6. Theory of planned behavior and Attitude change**

Studying relationships between attitudes and behavior. Theory of reasoned action by M. Fishbein and I. Aizen. Theory of planned behavior by I. Aizen (TPB). Model of planned behavior: attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control. Beliefs underlying 3 components of planned behavior. Studying relationships between intention and actual behavior according to the TPB. The concept of actual behavioral control, its function. Factors influencing beliefs about behavior, norms, and control. Studies conducted with the use of the TPB. Ways of changing behavior according to the TPB. Questionnaire constructing technique according to TPB for studying behavior. Context effect on attitudes. Stability of attitudes over time. The formation of social attitudes: classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning. Belief as a way of shaping and changing attitude. Attitude change with the help of using stimuli.

#### **7. Prosocial behavior**

The concept of prosocial behavior. Motives of prosocial behavior. Studies on prosocial behavior. Social support. Personal and situational factors influencing social behavior.

#### **8. Aggression**

Definition of aggression. Theories explaining the origin of aggression. Instinct theory of aggression (S. Freud, K. Lorenz). Frustration theory of aggression (J. Dollard, N. Miller et al.),

social learning theory (A. Bandura), theory of excitation transfer (D. Zillmann). Cognitive models of aggressive behavior (L. Berkowitz).

### **9. Attraction and Rejection**

Need for social contact, concept of affiliation. Situations impeding and promoting affiliation. Affiliation motives. Concept of attraction. Liking and disliking. Factors influencing expression of sympathy and antipathy. Attractive personality characteristics. Distinction between attraction and sympathy. Friendship and close relations. Factors affecting the development of friendship and close relations.

Social exclusion and its causes. The psychological consequences of the ostracism. Somatic reactions to rejection. Loneliness and psychological methods of coping with it.

### **10. Group Processes and Intergroup Relations**

Differences between interpersonal and intergroup behavior. Sources of prejudice. Theories explaining the sources of prejudice and discrimination in intergroup relations. Discrimination as a product of personal characteristics. Discrimination and prejudice as a result of conflict of interest in intergroup relations. Minimal group paradigm. Group affiliation and social identity. Social comparison. Opportunities of leaving the group. Contact hypothesis.

## **III. GRADING**

### *Quiz*

Each seminar and practical class will start with a short (15-20 minutes) quiz containing 2-3 open-ended questions. The questions are based on the lecture content and recommended literature (chapters and articles). Quizzes will be graded on a 10-point scale and contribute 20% to the final grade for the course.

### *Criteria of assessment:*

- 1) Depth and comprehensiveness of the answer
- 2) Definitions are provided when needed
- 3) Examples are given when required

### *Colloquium*

We expect that all students read recommended literature prior to the seminar and/or practical class and are ready to give a talk on the topic of the seminar. The groups of presenters (3-4 people) and discussants (3-4 people) will be chosen randomly at the seminar and must give a presentation on the topic (10-20 minutes). Discussants have to prepare questions and critique on the topic for the presenters (10-20 minutes). Each group will have 30 minutes for preparation.

The presentation is followed by the discussion and question session. Each student will be chosen as a presenter and discussant at least twice a module. Colloquia will be graded on a 10-point scale and contribute 20% to the final grade.

*Criteria of assessment:*

- 1) Depth and thoroughness of literature overview and analysis
- 2) Clear structure of report (critical parts of presentation: research problem, method, substantial results and conclusion)
- 3) Consistency and logical structure of the presentation
- 4) Consistency and clarity of the critique/questions
- 5) Quality of answers to the questions/critique (comprehensive and detailed answers)

*Course written assignment*

Home assignment is a project proposal of an intervention activity aimed at social change (e.g. anti-smoking campaign, pro-environmental behavior, designing better financial decisions, programs aimed at minorities inclusion, etc.). The topic of the project and the chosen intervention should be agreed with the lecturers in advance.

*Criteria of assessment:*

- 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.

*Part 1 (1<sup>st</sup> module). Literature overview*

It is the first part of your proposal. You should clearly state the problem and its significance, the goal of the project, and provide a brief, yet comprehensive, theoretical overview of academic social psychological literature (3000 – 5000 words).

*Part 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> module). Design of the intervention*

Based on the literature overview, the students propose the design of the intervention. The design should contain the description of the target audience, a detailed plan of activities, and the description of the expected results. The projects should be uploaded to LMS in written and presented on the last class of research seminar. The project will contribute 30% to the final grade for the course.

*Criteria of assessment:*

- 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;
- Project has a clear and precise practical result.

*The final exam.*

The final exam is held in the form of a test. Students are given 20 single choice questions. Each question contains four answer options.

10-point scale will be used in assessment of the test results.

The project will contribute 30% to the final grade.

*Criteria of assessment:*

Final grade is proportional to the number of correct answers to test questions.

1-2 correct answers – 1 point

3-4 correct answers – 2 points

5-6 correct answers – 3 points

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

**Forms of knowledge assessment and grading procedures.**

Knowledge should be assessed in 10-point scale. The final grade will consist of quizzes, colloquia, written assignment, and exam. It will be calculated using the following formula:

Final grade = 0.2\*Quiz average + 0.2\*Colloquium average + 0.3\*Written assignment + 0.3\*Final exam

All grades are approximated arithmetically.

**IV. EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT FACILITIES**

Example of questions for final test:

- 1) Evaluation apprehension, matching to standard and output equity are terms relating to
  - a. social facilitation
  - b. explanations of why individual productivity can drop when working in a group
  - c. group dynamics
  - d. the distraction-conflict theory of social facilitation
- 2) In cases where the argument in a message is very different to what an individual believes, persuasion will be more likely if
  - a. the argument is weak
  - b. the issue is ego-involving
  - c. the source is credible
  - d. none of the above
- 3) In the context of disadvantaged groups, which strategy can young people employ to maintain a positive self-esteem? They can
  - a. identify ethnic characteristics that they perceive in a positive way
  - b. congregate in specifically designated areas (ghettos)
  - c. keep to themselves
  - d. assimilate
- 4) The two major models of persuasion, the heuristic systematic model and the elaboration-likelihood model, have something in common. They both
  - a. draw on processes derived from developmental theories
  - b. deal with persuasion cues
  - c. postulate more than two processes involved in persuasion
  - d. use a stage model of attitude change
- 5) Sherif believed that intergroup harmony can turn to conflict, and then ethnocentrism, when
  - a. an authoritarian leader comes to power
  - b. the groups compete for scarce resources
  - c. temperatures rise
  - d. one group notices that another group exists
- 6) There is a paradox: the likelihood of helping someone in distress decreases as the number of potential helpers increases. This can be accounted for to some extent by
  - a. social loafing
  - b. lack of empathy
  - c. independence in western cultures

- d. diffusion of responsibility

## V. RESOURCES

### 1. Core literature

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

Baumeister, R., Bushman, B. Social Psychology and Human Nature (Third Edition). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2014.

Ajzen, I. (2005) Attitudes, personality, and behavior (2nd. Edition). Milton-Keynes, England: Open University Press / McGraw- Hill.

### 2. Additional literature

Anderson, C. A., Shibuya, A., Ihori, N., Swing, E. L., Bushman, B. J., Sakamoto, A., Rothstein, H. R., Saleem, M., & Barlett, C. P. (2010) *Violent video game effects on aggression, empathy, and prosocial behavior in Eastern and Western countries: A meta-analytic review*. Psychological Bulletin, 136(2), p. 151–173.

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Bandura, A. (1991). Social cognitive theory of self-regulation. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 50(2), 248-287.

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Baumeister, R. F. (2005). *The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Baumeister, R. F., & Heatherton, T. F. (1996). Self-regulation failure: An overview. *Psychological inquiry*, 7(1), 1-15.

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Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Kim, S.-Y., Westerman, D. and Tong, S. T. (2008) *The Role of Friends' Appearance and Behavior on Evaluations of Individuals on Facebook: Are We Known by the Company We Keep?* Human Communication Research, 34: 28–49.

### 3. Software

№	Name	Access conditions
1.	Microsoft Windows 7 Professional RUS Microsoft Windows 10 Microsoft Windows 8.1 Professional RUS	<i>From the local network of HSE (agreement)</i>
2.	Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010	<i>From the local network of HSE (agreement)</i>

### 4. Professional data base, informational referral systems, internet sources (electronic educational resources)

№	Name	Access conditions
<b>Professional data base, informational referral systems</b>		
1.	Oxford Scholarship Online	<i>From the local network of HSE (agreement)</i> URL: <a href="http://www.oxfordscholarship.com">http://www.oxfordscholarship.com</a>
2.	Annual Reviews	<a href="https://www.annualreviews.org">https://www.annualreviews.org</a>
<b>Internet sources (electronic educational resources)</b>		
1.	Social Psychology	URL: <a href="https://www.socialpsychology.org/">https://www.socialpsychology.org/</a>
2.	American Psychological Association	URL: <a href="https://www.apa.org">https://www.apa.org</a>

### 5. Material and technical support of the discipline

Classrooms for lectures on the discipline enable the use and demonstration of thematic illustrations that correspond with the program disciplines and includes:

- Personal computers with Internet access (operating system, office software, antivirus software);
- Multimedia projector with the remote control.

Classrooms for practical and laboratory classes of the discipline have the Internet access to the electronic informational and educational environment of the HSE.