

Psychology in Our World

Center for European Studies

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Full course description

In the field of social psychology, we study the effects of the real or imagined presence of others on the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals. The questions asked in social psychology have to do with our daily lives in the social world, and often seek to find answers to social mysteries. Power, personalities, attraction, stress, families, the act of winning and the experience of losing, all exert profound, but often undetected, effects on both people's individual lives and how we interact with others. These phenomena, and the culture in which they are embedded, affect our psyches, our professions, and our choices. Questions beg for answers in social psychology such as, "Why would a person, that is considered 'at the top,' make a decision that threatens that position by a choice that is more than risky?" "Why does someone get out of one unhealthy relationship and then make a choice to get into different unhealthy relationships?" "Do the ends justify the means?" Greed, altruism, narcissism, and deception surround us in life, what are their origins? Does nature or nurture influence us more in who we are and what we chose? In this course, we will seek to find answers to these questions and many others by studying the major perspectives of social psychology.

This course draws from a range of theoretical, clinical, and methodological approaches to explore several key questions: Where does the drive to pursue and persevere originate? Do we control our choices, and what is the theory behind decision-making? Is change something that lies within us and why is it so hard to make necessary changes? How does psychology play a part in our habits, the choice of partners, in our professional careers? , We will analyze and discuss both the scholarly ramifications of these ideas and also how to understand them in our lives and society more broadly.

General disclaimer: on-campus education and activities, as well as trips and visits related to the course are conditional. E.g. (Dutch) travel advice should be positive regarding the region that will be visited and institutions should be able to accept visitors. In case a proposed activity, trip or visit cannot continue due to circumstances, (online) alternatives may be organized.

Disclaimer ECTs: the number of ECTS credits earned after successfully concluding this course is the equivalent of 6 ECTS credits respectively according to Maastricht University's guidelines. Please consult with your home university if these credits will be accepted as part of your programme and, if necessary, converted to the credit system acknowledged by your home university.

Course objectives

This course will examine the unconscious patterns that drive human behavior and our choices. Through reading the text, books and articles, through lectures, discussions, class presentations, debates, case studies, multimedia, and a field trip, students will study how psychology impacts most aspects of who they are and what choices they make.

Prerequisites

Introductory psychology course. Interested students who miss this requirement are encouraged to contact CES. A minimum of 8 students is required for the class to take place.

Recommended reading

Text: Aronson, E., Wilson, T.D., Akert, R., & Sommers, S., (2015). Social Psychology (9th Edition) Prentice Hall

PNE2004

Period 6

15 Jul 2024 - 1 Aug 2024

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinators:

T. Hodges

[S. van der Laan](#)

Teaching methods:

Assignment(s), Lecture(s), Paper(s), PBL, Presentation(s), Research, Work in subgroups

Assessment methods:

Assignment, Attendance, Final paper, Participation, Presentation, Written exam

Keywords:

▪ **Habits** ▪ **Choice Theory** ▪ **Relationships** ▪ **Stress** ▪ **Attitude Change** ▪ **Decision Making** ▪ **Conformity** ▪ **Social Influence** ▪ **Interpersonal Attraction** ▪ **Motivation** ▪ **Emotions** ▪ **Persuasion** ▪ **Resilience**

Days:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday