



HUMANS AS SOCIAL BEINGS: THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND BEHAVIORS

Seminar Leader: **Alice Wang**

House Leader: **Nana Kosugiyama**

Course Description

How in control of our actions are we actually? Our actions and thoughts are largely influenced by external factors. What we do, the way we think, and how we see ourselves all depend on our environments and the presence of other people around us. In this seminar we explore social psychology and through it the question of just how in control we are of our actions and perceptions. How does culture affect our actions and perceptions, and to what extent are we aware of this influence? When do we decide whether or not to help out another person in need? What external elements affect our overall happiness and what can we do to increase our happiness? At the end of the seminar, students will share stories from their own lives or create original stories illustrating one or more of the psychological concepts learned.

Schedule

Day 1: *Introduction to social psychology in a cultural context*

- What is social psychology? Why does it matter and how does it affect us? We'll start off the course by answering these questions, learning about the field of social psychology and the role it plays in our daily lives.
- Next, we will explore how human psychology differs across cultures (for example, between Japanese and American cultures), and how some cultures emphasize individuals whereas others place more importance on relationships and society as a whole.
- Finally, we'll discuss social psychology's applications in the modern world, and talk about how it can be used to help with education, product design, and more.

Day 2: *Bystander intervention*

- Why do most passersby just stand by and watch as crime happens on the street? What is going on in their minds? We will explore and discuss the Bystander Effect, an interesting psychological phenomenon where people do not help out those in need when others are present.
- We will then learn about and discuss well-known examples, including the murders of Kitty Genovese and Kazuo Nagano, the attempted murder of Japanese idol



Mayu Tomita, the “Good Samaritan” study, and other situations in which people do and do not help out others in need.

- To end the day, we will connect the idea of bystander intervention back to day 1 by discussing how cultural differences might change how one responds to seeing another person in need.

Day 3: *Happiness*

- What is happiness, and what influences it? How much control do we have over our own happiness, and what can we do to become happier? To begin Day 3, we will discuss these questions and psychological findings that seek to answer them.
- How is happiness measured? We will review psychological studies regarding happiness and issues with the measurement of happiness.
- Why are some countries considered more happy than others? Why do different cultures see different things as essential for happiness? At the end of the session, we will connect back to the idea of culture and discuss how cultural differences may change individuals’ definitions of “happiness.”

Day 4: *Psychological stories*

- How have we changed throughout the seminar and through learning about social psychology? We will round up the seminar by re-doing some of the exercises and activities from the past few days to see if students’ responses have changed with new knowledge of social psychology.
- Our **final exercise** will connect social psychology back to our own lives by creating and sharing stories illustrating one or more of the psychological concepts learned during the seminar.

Pre-Seminar Assignments and Readings

Day 1:

Introduction video to social psychology:

<https://youtu.be/h6HLDV0T5Q8>

(This moves quickly– just try to understand what you can)

Short introduction reading:

<http://www.simplypsychology.org/social-psychology.html>

(You do not need to understand everything– think of it as exploring. Skim the article and try to get a feel for the field of social psychology.)



Day 2:

Video on “aggression versus altruism”

<https://youtu.be/XoTx7Rt4dig>

(Again, it’s okay to not understand everything– just try to enjoy the video and and get a feel for the concepts.)

Short video example of the bystander effect

<https://youtu.be/OSsPfbup0ac> (from 0:39 s - 1:15 s)

Short article on Kitty Genovese’s murder

http://www.nytimes.com/1964/03/27/37-who-saw-murder-didnt-call-the-police.html?_r=0

Day 3:

Video on emotion:

<https://youtu.be/gAMbkJk6gnE>

Article on good research practice regarding positive psychology (just to skim through):

<http://cgu.edu/PDFFiles/sbos/Donaldson%20articles/Donaldson%202014%20Peer-Reviewed%20Science%20Positive%20Psychology.pdf>

Article on psychological studies regarding happiness (also just to skim through):

http://www.scholarpedia.org/article/Psychology_of_happiness

Message from the House Leader

Hello! My name is Nana. I’m a freshman at Waseda university majoring in political science. But I’m also interested in psychology and hospitality. In my personal life, I love playing squash and going to coffee shops. I’m looking forward to meeting you ;)

Message from the Seminar Leader

Hello!! My name is Alice and I’m currently wrapping up my freshman year at Princeton. I’m hoping to major in visual arts here, but have always been fascinated by psychology and human behavior. Outside of school, I can be found having fun playing piano, doing ballroom dancing, or exploring nearby streets with friends. I’m excited to meet you all!