

## Psychological Theory in Consumer Behavior

### Course Outline

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This is a research-oriented course. It focuses on principles from social and cognitive psychology that are foundations for how people form preferences (attitudes, feelings, evaluative judgments) and demonstrates how these principles are crucial for consumer research. The course should help you understand journal articles in behavioral consumer research and in psychology.

#### Objectives of the course

- Acquiring an overview of central concepts that are part of the standard knowledge of behavioral marketing and psychology.
- Practicing the process of theory construction and theory testing by means of experiments.
- Acquiring an appreciation of what “good” features of a psychological theory are.

The course format is centered on discussing your solutions to a set of exercises (see below). During this discussion we draw inferences about theory itself and about how to develop theory by designing experiments.

#### Readings

Please read the respective papers for a particular session before coming to class and in the order I have listed them because often one builds onto another. For a few papers on the reading list I have special instructions, indicated by a star (\*) before the reference to the paper.

All required readings are on ADAM. Those marked as “Further Readings” are voluntary.

#### Exercises

The exercises are like “research case studies”. When reading the articles you should pay special attention to those theories that are covered in the exercises. Be prepared to present your solution to every exercise in class, also if you have already presented. Thus, you should come prepared to be able to present swiftly.

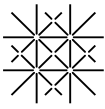
The exercises often ask you to make predictions for an experiment. In this case, use visuals to help your audience follow easily. Normally we use the board, but in an online course this is difficult. Hence, you should prepare slides that you can show by sharing your screen. If you know how to share an electronic white board, feel free to use that. It should take you no more than 10 minutes to present one theory. Your presentation should include:

- your hypothesis/hypotheses written in words
- a figure that depicts your predictions. Pay attention in the exercise instructions as to which the axes you should use in your figures.

Even though your slide just has hypothesis and figure for predictions, when you present you should explain any additional assumptions you made in order to make predictions, and you should explain your reasoning. Thus, for purposes of your presentation you should have a second slide in your deck with your additional assumptions.

#### Grading

Your grade will be based on a *detailed write-up of an exercise* that you will need to **at the beginning of class** in Session 7. You will need to **upload a Word file to the course webpage**. In addition, if I call on you to present an exercise solution and you have not prepared a slide (or whiteboard writing) that spells out your hypothesis in writing and a figure that shows your predictions, I will deduct .3 grade points from your final grade (e.g., lower a 5.0 grade for the course to a 4.7). These penalties would accumulate. This rule does not apply to Session 1.



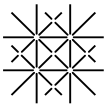
### **Class Attendance, Class Etiquette, and Visitors**

We will have class by means of Zoom video link. Please set up the software so you can use your phone, tablet or computer. You will also be able to dial in via phone in case you experience internet problems.

The sessions build on each other and a lot of the learning happens from students discussing with each other. Not attending would undermine your own progress as well as that of your fellow students. Thus, I expect attendance to all class sessions. However, given the difficulties of enforcing attendance on Zoom, I will not penalize anyone for not attending. If you miss class sessions, even one, the final paper you will write would almost certainly be of worse quality. The class sessions are carefully constructed to build on each other. The same goes for failing to prepare. I will choose students randomly to present their solutions, no matter whether they prepared or not.

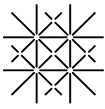
I will ask everyone to show themselves on video. If there are reasons why you do not wish to do so, you can let me know.

I do not allow video or audio recording of the class sessions.



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## Session 1

~~Please bring to every class a DIN A4 sheet of paper with your name printed on it. Please do not hand-write as it is very difficult for me to read.~~

### Readings:

Information sheet about exercises.

### *Methodology*

pp. 3-12 from: Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. D. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Only pp. 196-224 in: Miller, N. E. (1959). Liberalization of basic S-R concepts: Extensions to conflict behavior, motivation and social learning. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of a science. General and systematic formulations, learning, and special processes. Vol. 2* (pp. 196-292). New York: McGraw-Hill.

### *Automaticity*

Numerous readings across all sessions presuppose that you know the distinction between System 1 and System 2 that I cover in "Microeconomics and Psychology of Decision Making". Depending on your level of familiarity, you may want to review these from Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow* book now to avoid having too much of a work load later.

### *Conditioning*

MRM pp. 49-68 from Chapter 2 (Learning)

If you want to have some geeky fun, check out this product: <https://pavlok.com/how-pavlok-works/>

- Exercise "Pavlovian (classical) conditioning".

- Exercise "Experiments and Constructs I."

### Exercises and Homework:

Miller reading: Note that I will use a different terminology than Miller does on the assigned pages. What he calls *postulate* or *assumption* I will call *hypothesis*. I will use the term *assumption* in a different manner. I will use the term *prediction* as he defines it on p. 202 rather than *deduction*. Still, a prediction is a kind of deduction. I will also use the term *explanation* the way he defines it on p. 202. This chapter critical for the exercises we will do in class. It will serve as a model of how to make predictions from a theory. When reading, focus on the proposal of how to do experimental research rather than on the psychological theory of conflict behavior. Except for the homework below, will not discuss the paper in class, but you will need to read it very carefully to do the exercises.

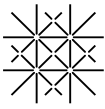
The paragraph in Miller on p. 202 (top left, third line) is very important. **As homework assignment, be able to give an example from any of the experiments in the Miller chapter for (1), (2), and (3). I will cold call at least three of you to give an answer to (1), (2), and (3).**

Shadish, Cook, & Campbell: Pay special attention to causal description versus causal explanation.

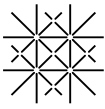
Please read the exercises and try to solve them. As these are the first exercises of this type, you may have no clue what to do. In that case, do not worry. Just come to class knowing the exercises and having tried to solve them. We will do them together. However, as of next session, I do expect you do be able to present a solution to the exercises.

### Further readings:

Chapter 6: Conditioned Behavior in Terrace. In: H. S. (1993). Introduction to Psychology. *Unpublished manuscript*. Posted on course webpage. *An introductory text on conditioning, written by a real expert. Read if MRM is too brief.*



- Gawronski, B., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2006). Associative and propositional processes in evaluation: An integrative review of implicit and explicit attitude change. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132, 692-731. *A very detailed discussion of System 1 versus System 2 (or associative versus rule-based processing). A must-read in this area.*
- Bargh, J.A., & Morsella, E. (2008). The Unconscious Mind. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3, 73-79.



## Session 2:

### Readings:

#### *Conditioning*

Martindale, C. (1990) *The Clockwork Muse* (pp. 359-361). Basic Books.

#### *A mentalistic challenge to behaviorism: Cognitive dissonance*

\*Gazzaniga, M. S. (2006). Leon Festinger, lunch with Leon. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(1), 88-94. This reading is voluntary. It is a highly entertaining biography of Festinger, which gives you a very personal impression of one of the most influential social psychologists.

Chapter 1 from: Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.

#### *Judgment (Assimilation-Contrast and Diagnosticity)*

Read (only) the introduction section of: Hoch, S. J., & Ha, Y.-W. (1986). Consumer learning: Advertising and the ambiguity of product experience. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13, 221-233. *Your learning objective is to understand top-down vs. bottom-up processing, ambiguity, and diagnosticity. You will need the latter in an upcoming session, so pay attention to this too, because there will be more readings on that.*

### Exercises:

“Top/Down Processing and Stimulus Ambiguity”

“Conditioning versus Cognitive Dissonance”. Prepare only Theories No. 1 (instrumental conditioning) and No. 3 (cognitive dissonance) in the exercise. Hand in one page for both theories.

However, I strongly recommend that you write down a full solution for your own practice.

### Further readings:

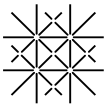
Rescorla, R. A. (1988). Pavlovian conditioning: It's not what you think it is. *American Psychologist*, 43, 151-160. *This article is a follow-up to our conditioning exercise from Session 1.*

pp. 9-25 from: Suls, J., & Wheeler, L. (2007). Psychological magnetism: A brief history of assimilation and contrast in psychology. In D. Stapel & J. Suls (Eds.), *Assimilation and contrast in social psychology* (pp. 9-44). New York, NY: Psychology Press. *An excellent review of the historical development of the assimilation-contrast. Helps you understand these concepts better.*

Chapter 3 “Commitment and Consistency” from: Cialdini, R. (1993). *Influence. Science and Practice*. New York, NY: Harper Collins. *Helps you see applications of the consistency principle.*

Sweldens S., van Osselaer S., & Janiszewski, C. (2010). Evaluative conditioning procedures and the resilience of conditioned brand attitudes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(3), 473-489. *Investigates rules of associative learning in the context of brand associations.*

Wilcox, K., Roggeveen, A. L., & Grewal, D. (2011). Shall I tell you now or later? Assimilation and contrast in the evaluation of experiential products. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38 (4), 763-773. *An application of assimilation contrast to consumer experience.*



### Session 3: Attention and Memory

#### Readings:

*Part 1: Attention, working memory, long term memory*

MRM pp. 104-106 What is attention?

MRM pp. 112-113 Perceptual enhancement

MRM pp. 137-155, 157f. section on retrieval

Feature Integration Theory (from Schacter et al., 2015)

*Part 2: Memory: accessibility and priming*

MRM pp. 174-175: Classic study by Meyer & Schvaneveldt on semantic priming

Only pp. 133-138 in: Higgins, T. (1996). Knowledge Activation. Accessibility, applicability and salience. In E.T. Higgins & A. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social Psychology (Handbook of Basic Principles)*. New York, NY.

#### Exercises:

-Exercise “The role of attention in attitude formation”: Make predictions only from the perspective of Aner Tal’s hypothesis (i.e., Hypothesis 1). We will cover Hypotheses 2 later and will not cover Hypothesis 3. Hand in one page.

### Session 4: Relevance of memory for judgment and choice

Only up to H1 and H2 of: Ahluwalia, R., & Gurhan-Canli, Z. (2000). The effects of extensions on the family brand name: An accessibility-diagnostics perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(3), 371-381. *The purpose of this reading is for you to understand Diagnostics, which you will need in an exercise later in the course. It is sufficient that you read up to H1 and H2 in order to understand this.*

Only pp. 136f. in Skowronski, J., & Carlston, D.E. (1989). Negativity and extremity biases in impression formation: A review of explanations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 105, 131-142. *The purpose of this reading is also for you to understand Diagnostics. It is sufficient that you read the section “Category Diagnostics Approach – subsection “Review and Application”.*

Laran, J., Dalton, A. N., & Andrade, E. B. (2011). The Curious Case of Behavioral Backlash: Why Brands Produce Priming Effects and Slogans Produce Reverse Priming Effects. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37, 999-1014.

Lecture “Microeconomics and Psychology of Decision Making”- review assimilation and contrast. You will need these concepts.

#### Exercises:

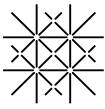
-“Exercise for Laran et al. (2011)”. When writing up your solution to this exercise, follow the instructions in this particular exercise and disregard the general instructions for the exercises. This exercise is different in nature. Hand in one page.

#### Further readings:

Logie, R. H. (2011). The functional organization and capacity limits of working memory. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20, 240–245. *A modern theory of working memory that goes beyond the single resource assumption.*

Keller, K. L. (2003). Brand Synthesis: The Multidimensionality of Brand Knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29, 595-600. *Theoretical ideas about the relevance of memory theory to brand strategy.*

Janiszewski, C. & Wyer R.S. (2014). Content and process priming: A review. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 24(1), 96–118.



## Session 5: Attribution and Causal Inferences

### Readings:

Pp. 99-120 from Gilbert, D. T. (1996). Attribution and interpersonal perception. In A. Tesser (Ed.), *Advanced Social Psychology* (pp. 99-147). New York, NY, USA Mc Graw Hill.

*For this and subsequent exercises you need to understand what a causal attribution in psychological theory is, as well as the principles of discounting and augmentation. Pay special attention to Trope's experiment.*

Read excerpt on augmentation from Chapter 2 (p. 38-39) "Attribution theory" from: Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). *Social cognition* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Kahneman (2011). *Thinking Fast and Slow*. The section on the *availability heuristic* from Appendix A.

Read excerpt on Schachter's Theory of Emotional Lability from p. 41-44, Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). *Social cognition* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Read pp. 2-8 from: Bem, D. J. (1972). Self-perception theory. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology. Vol 6* (Vol. 6). New York, NY: Academic Press.

During this session I will also hand out the exercise that you will have to hand in by Session 7.

### Exercises:

-Exercise "Accessibility and availability". Hand in one page for both theories (i.e., one page total). Write down only your hypotheses and draw your figures, i.e., do not write any other text! You will need to draw on readings from previous sessions, also the one's on diagnosticity that the previous exercises have not drawn on. Recall that we also discussed the availability heuristic in my lecture on decision making.

### Further Readings:

Frey, B. (2017). Policy implications of pay-for-performance and crowding out. *Journal of Behavioral Economics for Policy*, 1(1), 55-59. This is an external rewards undermining intrinsic motivation, which has been explained in terms of attribution theory.

## Session 6: Attitude Formation

### Readings:

Nowlis, S.M. & Shiv, B. (2005). The Influence of Consumer Distractions on the Effectiveness of Food-Sampling Programs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 42(2), 157-168.

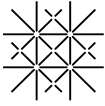
-Go back to the previously discussed exercise "The role of attention in attitude formation": Make predictions from the perspective of Nowlis & Shiv's (2005) dual-process hypothesis. Do not do the exercise for the Elaboration Likelihood Model, as we will not cover it in this course. Hand in one page.

### Further readings:

Fitzsimons, G. & Shiv, B. (2001). Nonconscious and contaminative effects of hypothetical questions on subsequent decision making. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(2), 224-238.

Novemsky, N., Dhar, R., Schwarz, N., & Simonson, I. (2007) Preference Fluency in Choice. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44 (August), 347-356.





## Session 7: Cognitive Dissonance vs. Self-Perception

### Exercise:

Dissonance (Festinger + misattribution) vs. Self-perception (Bem)".

This is the graded exercise which counts for 50% of your grade. Please read the separate document titled "Exercises" carefully for instructions and give me your written solution at the beginning of this session (I will not accept it later). If serious circumstances get in the way, you need to contact me before the session and you will have to provide evidence for these circumstances. This exercise and the solution we discuss in class are confidential and must not be passed on to others. Doing so would constitute a serious case of plagiarism that I would pursue according to the rules of the faculty and the university.

Bring a hardcopy to class and upload a Word file to the class webpage.