

Social Psychology

- ❖ How we think in relation to others
- ❖ How other people influence not only our thinking but our actions
 - Conformity
 - Obedience
 - Group behavior
- ❖ How we treat & relate to each other
 - Prejudice
 - Attraction
 - Aggression
- ❖ Social thinking
 - Study of how we interpret, analyze, remember & use information about the social world
- ❖ Attribution theory
 - Attribution = conclusion about the cause of an observed behavior/event
 - We explain others' behaviors with 2 types of attribution
 - **Situational attribution** = factors outside the person doing the action (e.g. peer pressure)
 - **Dispositional attribution** = person's stable, enduring traits, personality, ability, emotions cause the action
- ❖ Errors in attribution
 - **Self-serving bias** = tendency to view one's self favorably
 - **Fundamental attribution error** = tendency to attribute other peoples' behaviors to their disposition & to be less likely to consider situational causes
- ❖ Cultural differences
 - Collectivist cultures
 - Behavior of others attributed more to situation
 - Credit for successes given more to others
 - Blame for failures is placed on oneself
- ❖ Attitudes
 - Feelings, ideas & beliefs that affect how we approach & react to other people, objects & events
 - ABCs
 - **Affect** (emotional reactions)
 - **Behavior** (or behavioral intentions)
 - **Cognitive**
- ❖ Changing attitudes
 - **Central route persuasion** = relying on evidence & logic
 - Best when attitude is important to the person
 - **Peripheral route persuasion** = appealing to fears, desires & associations
 - Best when attitude is unimportant to person

- ❖ Attitudes & behavior
 - Attitudes affect behavior when :
 - External influences are minimal
 - Attitude is stable
 - Attitude is specific to behavior
 - Attitude is easily recalled
- ❖ Behaviors affecting attitudes
 - Cognitive dissonance = when our actions do not match up with our attitudes
 - **Cognitive dissonance theory** = resolving dissonance by changing our attitudes to fit our actions
 - **Foot-in-the-door phenomenon** = tendency to be more likely to agree to a large request after agreeing to a small one (e.g. agreeing to donate \$20 to charity after agreeing to donate \$5)
 - **Door-in-the-face phenomenon** = tendency to agree to a smaller request after rejecting a larger one (e.g. agreeing to donate \$5 to charity after rejecting donating \$20)
 - We like who we agree to help & dislike who we agree to harm (adjusting attitude to actions)
- ❖ Social influence
 - Social situations have many ways of influencing our behavior, attitudes, beliefs & decisions
- ❖ Conformity
 - Change in behavior or belief as a result of real or imagined group pressure
 - Why we conform :
 - Automatic mimicry
 - Informational social influence
 - Normative social influence
- ❖ Automatic mimicry
 - Not by choice
 - Contagious yawning, arm folding, hand wringing, face rubbing, etc.
 - Adopting regional accents, grammar & vocabulary
 - Empathetic shifts in mood that fit the mood of others around us
 - Adopting coping styles of parents or peers (violence, yelling, withdrawal, etc.)
- ❖ Informational social influence
 - Choose to conform because we believe other peoples' views are correct or that their behavior is appropriate
 - When :
 - Situation is ambiguous
 - There is a crisis
 - Very difficult task
 - Other people are/are thought to be experts
- ❖ Normative social influence
 - Conformity because we want to be liked/thought of positively
 - Can happen even in unambiguous situations
 - Desire to be accepted/fit in
 - Leads to public compliance (people act on group norms, even if they disagree with them)

- ❖ Conformity is most likely when :
 - Group is medium sized & unanimous
 - You admire/are attracted to the group
 - Culture encourages respect for norms
 - Group tries to make you feel incompetent, insecure & closely watched
 - You are not fully committed to one set of beliefs or style of behavior
- ❖ Why people obey
 - Obedience to authority
 - Need for consistency
 - Escalation of commitment
 - Strange situations
 - Diffusion of responsibility
 - Importance of roles
 - Conformity