PSYC2113 – Cognitive Processes and Social Psychology

Unit of Study Code: PSYC2113
Coordinator: TO BE ADVISED
Format of Unit: 2 x 1 hour lectures/week x 13 weeks
1 x 1 hour tutorial/week x 12 weeks
Tutorial sizes: maximum of 20 students per group
Credit Point Value: 4 Credit Points
Qualifying: PSYC 1001 and PSYC 1002
Assessment:
Classwork:
30% All three components (Cognitive, Developmental and Social)
Quizzes:
Cognitive Processes: (Week 6)
Social Psychology: (Week 13)
Examination:
70% All three components (Cognitive 30%, Developmental 10%, Social 30%) Multiple choice

Unit of study general description:

The aim of the Cognitive Processes and Developmental component is to acquaint students with current theoretical and experimental work in cognitive and developmental psychology. The aim of the Social Psychology component is to extend some of the Social Psychology topics introduced in Psychology 1001 and to introduce some new topics. Students are expected to gain an understanding of two main areas of Social Psychology: (1) Group and intergroup relationships and (2) Interpersonal processes, with a focus on altruism and helping behaviour and affiliation and attraction.

Teaching outcomes:

Cognitive Processes
(1) Ability to describe, discuss and think critically about theoretical and experimental work on pattern recognition, visual and auditory attention models of lexical memory and access, reasoning, memory and imagery.
(2) Possession of an understanding of major historical, empirical and conceptual issues that have been the focus of mainstream research in cognitive psychology.
(3) Capacity for critical appraisal of theory construction, experimental method and statistical inference as they are applied in research on cognitive processes.
(4) Familiarity with the means to assess the truth of premises and the validity of arguments in the context of cognitive theory and experimental work.

Developmental
(1) Ability to describe, explain and evaluate research studies examining the influences of early sensory, cognitive and social/emotional deprivation upon cognitive and social development and to relate these studies to theoretical approaches to development.
(2) Ability to describe, explain and evaluate research studies examining the effects of early stimulation upon neural, cognitive and social development in animal and human subjects.

(3) Ability to describe, explain and evaluate research studies examining the influences upon cognitive and social development of programs designed to counteract the effects of early deprivation and to relate these effects to developmental theory.

Social
(1) Ability to describe, explain, evaluate and apply psychological models and research studies relevant to intergroup processes.

(2) Ability to describe, explain, evaluate and apply psychological models and research studies relevant to intragroup processes.

(3) Ability to describe, explain, evaluate and apply psychological models and research studies relevant to helping behaviour.

(4) Ability to describe, explain, evaluate and apply psychological models and research studies relevant to interpersonal attraction.

Evidence of learning:

Cognitive Processes
Assessment will take the form of a computer-based quiz in Week 6 covering work completed in tutorials during Weeks 2 - 5. At the end of semester, a multiple choice examination will assess knowledge of the entire course including tutorial work, lecture material, recommended reading and all the stated teaching outcomes.

Social and Developmental
Assessment will take the form of: (1) a written examination which will cover the full range of teaching outcomes (the examination will be in the form of multiple-choice questions), and (2) a class quiz in Week 13 which will employ multiple-choice and short-answer questions and which will be primarily concerned with the content of the tutorial programme.

SYLLABUS

Cognitive Processes

Pattern Recognition
The stimulus equivalence problem. Stages of pattern recognition: segmentation; feature extraction; classification and categorisation. Theories: template theory; feature theory; computational theory; connectionist theory.

Attention
Selective attention. Theories and models of attention. Stimulus set and Response set. Stroop and Navon interference effects

Language
Comprehension and production. Lexical access and models of word recognition: The Search model; The Verification Model; The Logogen model; The Interactive-Activation model

Memory
The episodic/semantic distinction. Implicit and explicit memory. Reality monitoring and memory for source. Autobiographical memory. Semantic memory models and the representation of knowledge: Network models; feature comparison models; spreading activation; the ACT* model; distributed representations and connectionism.

Imagery
Experimental studies: effects of size; mental scanning. Theories: Dual coding; the picture metaphor; propositional encoding; multiple working memory systems.

Reasoning
Deductive reasoning: syllogisms; errors in syllogistic reasoning; the Wason card-selection test; pragmatic reasoning schemata. Inductive reasoning: adaptive heuristics; representative and availability heuristics; constraints; generalization and specialization. Analogies.
Developmental

Early environmental influences upon cognitive and social development.

Studies of early sensory and social/emotional deprivation:
(a) animal studies of sensory deprivation - effects on problem solving and brain development;
(b) orphanage studies - effects on IQ and social development.

Early enrichment programs.
(a) Early stimulation - effects on development of brain and behaviour
(b) Head Start and other compensatory education programs - effects on IQ and social development

Social Psychology

Group and Intergroup Relationships

Intergroup processes
Relationships between groups; Prejudice, discrimination and intergroup conflict examined from the theoretical perspectives of intergroup conflict, social learning theory, personality and psychodynamic approaches; eclectic theory.

Intragroup processes
Relationships within small groups, particularly factors influencing group performance (task and maintenance); Leadership and follower processes; group polarisation; social facilitation; deindividuation.

Interpersonal Processes

Altruism, helping behaviour and social support
Altruism distinguished from helping behaviour; theories of helping behaviour; bystander intervention in emergencies; determinants of helping behaviour; reactions of the recipients of help.

Affiliation and Attraction
Is there a need for affiliation? Why do we affiliate? Conditions under which our need to be with others is heightened. The nature of social support. Attraction: Measuring attraction. Some determinants of attraction; mere-exposure, proximity, similarity of attitudes, similarity of personality, level of esteem, mood state.

TEXT
