Chapter 15

Social Psychology
Social Thinking

- **Social Psychology**
  - scientific study of how we think about, influence, and relate to one another

- **Attribution Theory**
  - tendency to give a causal explanation for someone’s behavior, often by crediting either the situation or the person’s disposition
Social Thinking

- **Fundamental Attribution Error**
  - tendency for observers, when analyzing another’s behavior, to underestimate the impact of the situation and to overestimate the impact of personal disposition

- **Attitude**
  - belief and feeling that predisposes one to respond in a particular way to objects, people and events
Social Thinking

- Our behavior is affected by our inner attitudes as well as by external social influences

- Internal attitudes
- External influences

Behavior
Social Thinking

- Attitudes follow behavior
- Cooperative actions feed mutual liking
Social Thinking

- **Foot-in-the-Door Phenomenon**
  - tendency for people who have first agreed to a small request to comply later with a larger request

- **Role**
  - set of expectations about a social position
  - defines how those in the position ought to behave
Social Thinking

- **Cognitive Dissonance Theory**
  - we act to reduce the discomfort (dissonance) we feel when two of our thoughts (cognitions) are inconsistent
  - example- when we become aware that our attitudes and our actions clash, we can reduce the resulting dissonance by changing our attitudes
Social Thinking

- Cognitive dissonance

Fiona’s attitude:

- The tuition here is too high

Fiona’s behavior:

- The school needs the money?

Cognitive dissonance
(awareness that attitude and behavior are inconsistent)

Dissonance resolved

- Maybe the school has a point
Social Influence

- **Conformity**
  - adjusting one’s behavior or thinking to coincide with a group standard

- **Normative Social Influence**
  - influence resulting from a person’s desire to gain approval or avoid disapproval
Social Influence

- Asch’s conformity experiments

Diagram:

- Standard line
- Comparison lines
  1
  2
  3
Social Influence

- Informational Social Influence
  - influence resulting from one’s willingness to accept others’ opinions about reality
Social Influence

- Milgram’s follow-up obedience experiment

Percentage of subjects who obeyed experimenter

The majority of subjects continued to obey to the end.
Social Influence

- Some individuals resist social coercion
Social Influence

- **Social Facilitation**
  - improved performance of tasks in the presence of others
  - occurs with simple or well-learned tasks but not with tasks that are difficult or not yet mastered

- **Social Loafing**
  - tendency for people in a group to exert less effort when pooling their efforts toward attaining a common goal than when individually accountable
# Social Facilitation

## Home Advantage in Major Team Sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Games Studied</th>
<th>Home Team Winning Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>23,034</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>2,592</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice hockey</td>
<td>4,322</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>13,596</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>37,202</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Courneya & Carron, 1992
Social Influence

- Deindividuation
  - loss of self-awareness and self-restraint in group situations that foster arousal and anonymity
Social Influence

- **Group Polarization**
  - enhancement of a group’s prevailing attitudes through discussion within the group

- **Groupthink**
  - mode of thinking that occurs when the desire for harmony in a decision-making group overrides realistic appraisal of alternatives
If a group is like-minded, discussion strengthens its prevailing opinions.
Social Relations

- Prejudice
  - an unjustifiable (and usually negative) attitude toward a group and its members
  - involves stereotyped beliefs, negative feelings, and a predisposition to discriminatory action
Social Relations

- **Stereotype**
  - a generalized (sometimes accurate, but often overgeneralized) belief about a group of people

- **Discrimination**
  - unjustifiable negative behavior toward a group or its members
Social Relations

- Does perception change with race?
Social Relations

- Americans today express much less racial and gender prejudice
Social Relations

- **Ingroup**
  - “Us” - people with whom one shares a common identity

- **Outgroup**
  - “Them” - those perceived as different or apart from one’s ingroup
Social Relations

- **Ingroup Bias**
  - tendency to favor one’s own group

- **Scapegoat Theory**
  - theory that prejudice provides an outlet for anger by providing someone to blame

- **Just-World Phenomenon**
  - tendency of people to believe the world is just
  - people get what they deserve and deserve what they get
Social Relations

- Vivid cases (9/11 terrorists) feed stereotypes
Social Relations

- Aggression
  - any physical or verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy

- Frustration-Aggression Principle
  - principle that frustration – the blocking of an attempt to achieve some goal – creates anger, which can generate aggression
Social Relations

Murders and rapes per day in Houston, Texas

As temperature soars, so does aggression
Social Relations

- Men who sexually coerce women

- Sexual promiscuity

- Coerciveness against women

- Hostile masculinity
Social Relations

- Conflict
  - perceived incompatibility of actions, goals, or ideas

- Social Trap
  - a situation in which the conflicting parties, by each rationally pursuing their self-interest, become caught in mutually destructive behavior
Social Relations

Social trap

- by pursuing our self-interest and not trusting others, we can end up losers
Social Relations - Attractiveness

- Mere Exposure Effect
  - repeated exposure to novel stimuli increases liking of them

- Conceptions of attractiveness vary by culture
Social Relations

- **Passionate Love**
  - an aroused state of intense positive absorption in another
  - usually present at the beginning of a love relationship

- **Companionate Love**
  - deep affectionate attachment we feel for those with whom our lives are intertwined
Social Relations

- **Equity**
  - a condition in which people receive from a relationship in proportion to what they give to it

- **Self-Disclosure**
  - revealing intimate aspects of oneself to others

- **Altruism**
  - unselfish regard for the welfare of others
Social Relations

- **Bystander Effect**
  - tendency for any given bystander to be less likely to give aid if other bystanders are present
The decision-making process for bystander intervention

- Notices incident? Yes → Interprets incident as emergency? Yes → Assumes responsibility Yes → Attempts to help
- Notices incident? No → No help
- Interprets incident as emergency? No → No help
- Assumes responsibility No → No help
Social Relations

- **Social Exchange Theory**
  - the theory that our social behavior is an exchange process, the aim of which is to maximize benefits and minimize costs

- **Superordinate Goals**
  - shared goals that override differences among people and require their cooperation
Social Relations

- Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction (GRIT)
  - a strategy designed to decrease international tensions
    - one side announces recognition of mutual interests and initiates a small conciliatory act
    - opens door for reciprocation by other party