

Self and other

Outline

- Self
 - Everyone notices you
 - You are terrific
 - What you do makes sense
- Self and other
 - the fundamental attribution error
- Other
- Groups

Why do we like others?

- Proximity
 - “mere exposure effect”
- Similarity
- Attractiveness

Attractiveness Bias

- physically attractive people are rated higher on intelligence, competence, sociability, morality
- studies
 - teachers rate attractive children as smarter, and higher achieving
 - adults attribute cause of unattractive child's misbehavior to personality, attractive child's to situation
 - judges give longer prison sentences to unattractive people

How do we form impressions?

1. The power of first impressions

- Kelley's study
 - students had a guest speaker
 - before the speaker came, half got a written bio saying speaker was "very warm", half got bio saying speaker was "rather cold"
 - "very warm" group rated guest more positively than "rather cold" group

How do we form impressions?

2. First impressions are fast: Thin slices

- teaching
- personality ratings
- Gaydar

What effects do our perceptions of other people actually have on other people?

Self-fulfilling Prophecies

- When our beliefs and expectations create reality
- Beliefs & expectations influence our behavior & others'
- Pygmalion effect
 - person A believes that person B has a particular characteristic
 - person B may begin to behave in accordance with that characteristic

"You see, really and truly
... the difference
between a lady and a
flower girl is not how
she behaves but how
she's treated. I shall
always be a flower girl
to Professor Higgins
because he always
treats me as a flower
girl, and always will ..."
-- Eliza Doolittle

Studies of the Self-fulfilling Prophecy

- Rosenthal & Jacobson
 - went to a school and did IQ tests with kids
 - told teachers that the test was a "spurters" test
 - randomly selected several kids and told the teacher they were spurters
 - did another IQ test at end of year
 - spurters showed significant improvements in their IQ scores b/c of their teacher's expectations of them

Outline

- Self
 - Everyone notices you
 - You are terrific
 - What you do makes sense
- Self and other
 - the fundamental attribution error
- Other
 - Attractiveness
 - First impressions & thin slices
 - the Pygmalion effect
- Groups

How do we think about human groups?

- Us vs. them
- Stereotypes

Categories

- Humans and other animals accumulate information about categories of objects
- This information allows us to respond adaptively to novel instances, and is essential for survival

We also categorize people

- Men vs. women
- Child vs. adolescents vs. adults ..
- Whites vs. blacks vs. asians ...
- Lawyers vs. doctors ...
- Jews vs. Catholics ...
- Straight vs. gay ...
- Americans vs. Europeans ...
- Californians vs. New Yorkers ...
- Yale students vs. Harvard students ...

This is not necessarily a bad thing

Stereotypes are often positive
Stereotypes tend to be accurate

But ...

But there are problems

1. Not always accurate
 - confirmation bias with stereotypes

But there are problems

1. Not always accurate
 - confirmation bias with stereotypes
 - misleading data from media

But there are problems

2. Moral problems
 - people should be judged as individuals, not as group members
 - debates over profiling

But there are problems

2. Moral problems
 - negative stereotypes have all sorts of bad effects
 - e.g., stereotype threat

MATH TEST

NAME: _____

You have 90 minutes to answer the following questions. Good luck!

MATH TEST

NAME: _____

RACE: _____

You have 90 minutes to answer the following questions. Good luck!

MATH TEST

NAME: _____

SEX: _____

You have 90 minutes to answer the following questions. Good luck!

Studying stereotypes

- 3 levels of stereotypes in today's research
 - public
 - what we say to others about a group
 - private
 - what we consciously think about a group, but don't say to others
 - implicit
 - unconscious mental associations guiding our judgments and actions without our conscious awareness

Implicit Stereotypes

- Use of priming: subject might not know stereotype is being activated, can't work to suppress it
 - flash pictures of Black vs. White faces subliminally
 - give incomplete words like "hos _____."

Implicit Stereotypes

- Use of priming: subject might not know stereotype is being activated, can't work to suppress it
 - flash pictures of Black vs. White faces subliminally
 - give incomplete words like "hos _____," subjects seeing Black make "hostile," seeing White make "hospital"

Who cares?

(what difference can a fraction of a second make?)

Also ... implicit attitudes play a role in difficult "judgment calls"

Implicit Stereotypes

- Devine's automaticity theory
 - Everyone holds stereotypes
 - these stereotypes are automatically activated whenever we come into contact with individuals
 - we have to actively push them back down if we don't wish to act in a prejudiced way.
 - Overcoming prejudice is possible, but takes work

Summary

- Self
 - Everyone notices you
 - You are terrific
 - What you do makes sense
- Self and other
 - the fundamental attribution error
- Other
 - Attractiveness
 - First impressions & thin slices
 - the Pygmalion effect
- Groups
 - Stereotypes

Sleep (and dreams)

Electroencephalogram (EEG)

- Electrodes placed on the scalp provide a gross record of the electrical activity of the brain
- EEG recordings are a rough index of psychological states

EEG Waves of Wakefulness

- Awake, but non-attentive - large, regular alpha waves
- Awake and attentive - low amplitude, fast, irregular beta waves

Stages of Sleep

- Sleep stage 1 - brief transition stage when first falling asleep
- Stages 2 through 4 (slow-wave sleep) - successively deeper stages of sleep
- Characterized by an increasing percentage of slow, irregular, high-amplitude delta waves

Stages of Sleep

- Upon reaching stage 4 and after about 80 to 100 minutes of total sleep time, sleep lightens, returns through stages 3 and 2
- REM sleep emerges, characterized by EEG patterns that resemble beta waves of alert wakefulness
 - muscles most relaxed
 - rapid eye movements occur
 - dreams occur
- Four or five sleep cycles occur in a typical night's sleep - less time is spent in slow-wave, more is spent in REM

Summary: 2 types of sleep

Slow-wave/quiet sleep

- eyes drift separately and slowly
- immobile and hard to wake up

REM sleep

- active cortex
- EEGs similar to waking
- paralyzed, except for eyes
- erections in men
- Dreams

What is sleep for?

- Restoration theory - body wears out during the day and sleep is necessary to put it back in shape
 - growth-producing hormone
 - restoration of brain and other organs
- Preservation and protection theory - sleep emerged in evolution to preserve energy and protect during the time of day when there is little value and considerable danger

Sleep Disorders

- Somnambulism - sleepwalking
- Nightmares - frightening dreams that wake a sleeper from REM
- Night terrors - sudden arousal from sleep and intense fear accompanied by physiological reactions (e.g., rapid heart rate, perspiration) that occur during slow-wave sleep
- Narcolepsy - overpowering urge to fall asleep that may occur while talking or standing up
- Sleep apnea - failure to breathe when asleep

Sleep Disorders

- Somnambulism - sleepwalking
- Nightmares - frightening dreams that wake a sleeper from REM
- Night terrors - sudden arousal from sleep and intense fear accompanied by physiological reactions (e.g., rapid heart rate, perspiration) that occur during slow-wave sleep
- Narcolepsy - overpowering urge to fall asleep that may occur while talking or standing up
- Sleep apnea - failure to breathe when asleep
- Some interesting side-effects of ambien

Dreams

To sleep: perchance to dream:
ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what
dreams may come
when we have shuffled off this
mortal coil,
must give us pause

Two philosophical questions about dreams

- Am I dreaming right now?
- Can I be immoral in a dream?

Two philosophical questions about dreams

- Am I dreaming right now? NO
- Can I be immoral in a dream?
NOT USUALLY

True dreams versus Sleep thought

- true dream - vivid, detailed dreams consisting of sensory and motor sensations experienced during REM
- sleep thought - lacks vivid sensory and motor sensations, is more similar to daytime thinking, and occurs during slow-wave sleep

Facts about dreams

- Everyone dreams
- 3-4 times a night
- Fragile memories

What do people dream about?

- Hill's 50,000 dream reports; dreambank.net, etc.
- Most dreams are bad
(more misfortune, more negative emotions)
- Physical aggression
(more in tribal societies)
(more in men)
(more in Americans)

What do people dream about?

- What do people WANT to dream about?
Women: Romance and adventure
Men: Sex with strangers
- How many dreams are actually sexual?
About 10%
- What is the most common dream?
Being naked? Flying? Falling?

Dreams and REM Sleep

- What are true dreams for?
- Freudian theories?
- Side effect of memory consolidation

Laughter

What makes us laugh?

A first guess:

"We laugh when there is incongruity between what we expect and what actually happens, unless the outcome is frightening"

BUT:

- doesn't explain why incongruity causes laughter
- most incongruity doesn't cause laughter
- a lot of laughter isn't caused by incongruity

Typical prelaugh comments (=90%)

- I'll see you guys later
- Look, it's Andre!
- Are you sure?
- I know!
- How are you?
- I try to lead a normal life
- Does anyone have a rubber band?
- It wasn't you?
- We can handle this

"Humorous" prelaugh comments (=10%)

Poor boy looks just like his father
You smell like you've had a good workout
Did you find that in your nose?
[reference to dormitory food]
He has a job holding back skin in the
operating room

Some facts about laughter

1. It is social and communicative
 - Involuntary noise-making
 - Contagious
(laugh tracks, children)

Some facts about laughter

2. It is shared with other primates
 - laughing-like sounds in monkeys when they attack a common enemy
 - laughing-like sounds in chimpanzees when they tickle each other
- Q: What is tickling?
A: Touching parts of the body in a mock attack

Laughter as a signal of mock aggression and collective aggression?

Mock aggression
(tickling, teasing, insults, kidding around)

Collective aggression
(mob assault, executions)

- social bonding (Plato), often against a common enemy

Tragedy is when I cut my finger.

Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you fall into an open sewer and die.

Ingredients of humor

- A target, a person or institution, who experiences some harm. It can be an enemy, but also a friend, or even yourself
- The harm should not be so serious that it elicits strong negative emotions such as fear, grief, or pity
- The harm is often of a social nature, sometimes involving sex or scatology--banana peel, pie in face, pants falling down, etc.
- Some level of surprise

Why can't we tickle ourselves?

(but some can!)

1. No surprise; no mock-aggression
2. General deadening of self-stimulation

Reading Response

- Generate an interesting and testable hypothesis about either (a) dreams or (b) laughter