

Self-Knowledge. Fall 2006
Psychology 525 (Attitudes and Social Cognition)

Instructor

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Course Overview

This course will explore the scientific study of self-knowledge. In the first unit of the course, we will trace the boundaries of self-knowledge within four major domains, examining how well people know their own abilities, personality, attitudes, and emotions. Next, we will focus on obstacles to self-knowledge, including both motivational and non-motivational barriers to knowing oneself (Unit 2). In Unit 3, we will examine potential pathways to overcoming these obstacles. Finally, we will consider whether and when increasing self-knowledge represents a desirable goal (Unit 4).

Requirements and Evaluation

This class has 5 requirements, as described below:

- 1) *Class Participation* (20% of grade): Discussion is a central component of this class. It is therefore very important that you attend class and participate actively. You may be absent (physically or mentally) from one class session without penalty; each additional absence not cleared by me ahead of time will result in a one-step drop in this component of your grade. As part of your class participation, you will be expected to complete several demonstration activities (don't worry—these will require minimal time). For example, for the two weeks before we discuss emotions, you will be asked to keep a daily record of your own mood and several variables you think may predict your mood—we will analyze and discuss your data in class. Finally, though it almost goes without saying, open discussion in this course requires that everyone feel comfortable talking about sensitive issues; treating anyone in the class with disrespect will have a highly detrimental effect on the participation component of your grade.
- 2) *Discussion questions* (15% of grade): Each week, you must submit two discussion questions by noon the day before class via WebCT. These discussion questions should be thoughtful responses to the reading, not requests for clarification (although you are welcome to submit clarification questions in addition to your discussion questions). In forming discussion questions, you may want to challenge the conclusions drawn by authors, consider implications of the findings, or relate the readings to other topics. See me if you would like examples of good discussion questions.
- 3) *Class facilitation* (20% of grade): Twice during the semester you will serve as a class facilitator (see Info Sheet at the end of the syllabus for additional guidelines).
- 4) *Idea papers* (30% of grade): You will write 5 brief idea papers (2-3 pages each). In each paper, you should propose a study or series of studies related to that week's topic. To generate these studies, you may want to think about (a) an unresolved or overlooked question related to the week's topic, (b) a connection between the week's topic and your own research interests, or (c) a connection between the week's topic and other articles you've read in this course or another course. In each paper, you should briefly introduce the question or hypothesis (tying it to the course readings and any other relevant literature), describe your proposed study and expected results, and identify the broader conclusions that could be drawn from your results. You can choose which weeks to write these papers, but I would strongly recommend that you not wait until the last 5 weeks of the course to get started. Whenever you write a mini-paper, you should bring it with you to class and be prepared to share your idea with your classmates, who will help you refine it.

- 5) *Take-home Message Paper* (15% of grade): Because this course covers a diverse array of research, you will write a brief paper (2-3 pages) due on the last day of class in which you integrate readings from across the course to provide your own answers to several key questions about self-knowledge. The primary goal of this paper is to help you develop a memorable take-home message for yourself regarding the central issues covered in the course.

Class Structure

Each week, one student serving as class facilitator will be responsible for completing the recommended reading and teaching this material to the rest of the class. With my help, the facilitator will convey this supplementary material using lectures, demonstrations, and other methods (~20-30 mins). Next, we will discuss everyone's reading questions (~60-90 mins). Finally, during most classes, we will have an Idea Workshop, in which students who have written mini-papers that week will briefly share their study proposal with the class and receive feedback and assistance in refining it (~30-40 mins).

Access to Readings

Most readings will be available on WebCT (see "How to use WebCT" on the last page). You will need to obtain a copy of *Strangers to Ourselves*.

READING LIST

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Week 1 (Sept 7): Organizational Meeting (no reading)

Week 2 (Sept 14): The Big Picture (course overview)

Required

Nisbett, R. E., & Wilson, T. D. (1977). Telling more than we can know: Verbal reports on mental processes. *Psychological Review*, 84 (3), 231 - 259.

Wilson, T., & Dunn, E. W. (2004). Self-knowledge: Its limits, value, and potential for improvement. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 493 – 518.

Recommended

Dunning, D., Heath, C., & Suls, J. M. (2004). Flawed self-assessment: Implications for health, education and the workplace. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 5 (3). ****Read pages 69-79 only.**

UNIT 1: SELF-KNOWLEDGE WITHIN DOMAINS

Week 3 (Sept 21): Abilities and Behavior

Required

Buehler, R., Dale, G., & Michael, R. (1994). Exploring the "planning fallacy": Why people underestimate their task completion times. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67 (3), 366 – 381.

Dunning, D. (2005). *Self-Insight: Roadblocks and detours on the path to knowing the self*. New York: Psychology press. (read chapter 2.)

Epley, N., & Dunning, D. (2006). The mixed blessings of self-knowledge in behavioral prediction: Enhanced discrimination but exacerbated bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32 (5), 641 – 655.

Recommended

Gosling, S. D., John, O. P., Craik, K. H., & Robins, R. W. (1998). Do people know how they behave? Self-reported act frequencies compared with on-line codings by observers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74 (5), 1337 – 1349.

Epley, N., & Dunning, D. (2000). Feeling "holier than thou": Are self-serving assessments produced by errors in self- or social prediction? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79 (6), 861 – 875.

Week 4 (Sept 28): Personality

Required

Spain, J. S., Eaton, L. G., & Funder, D. C. (2000). Perspectives on personality: The relative accuracy of self versus others for the prediction of emotion and behavior. *Journal of Personality*, 68 (5), 837 – 867.

Wilson, T. D. (2002). *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the adaptive unconscious*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Chapter 4.

Oltmanns, T. F., Gleason, M. E. J., Klonsky, E. D., & Turkheimer, E. (2005). Meta-perception for pathological personality traits: Do we know when others think that we are difficult? *Consciousness and Cognition*, 14, 739 – 751.

Recommended

McClelland, D. C., Koestner, R., & Weinberger, J. (1989). How do self-attributed and implicit motives differ? *Psychological Review*, 96 (4), 690 – 702.

Asendorpf, J. B., Banse, R., & Mucke, D. (2002). Double dissociation between implicit and explicit personality self-concept: The case of shy behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83 (2), 380 – 393.

Week 5 (Oct 5): Attitudes (including self-esteem)

Required

Spalding, L. R., & Hardin, C. D. (1999). Unconscious unease and self-handicapping: Behavioral consequences of individual differences in implicit and explicit self-esteem. *Psychological Science*, 10, 535-539.

Dovidio, J. F., Kawakami, K., & Gaertner, S. L. (2002). Implicit and explicit prejudice and interracial interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 62-68.

Nosek, B. A. (2005). Moderators of the relationship between implicit and explicit evaluation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 134, 565-584.

Recommended

Teachman, B. A., & Woody, S. (2003). Automatic processing among individuals with spider phobia: Change in implicit fear associations following treatment. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 112, 100-109.

Week 6 (Oct 12): No class (SESP conference)

Week 7 (Oct 19): Emotions

Required:

Wilson, T. D., Laser, P. S., & Stone, J. I. (1980). Judging the predictors of one's own mood: Accuracy and the use of shared theories. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 18, 537 – 556.

Clore, G. L. (1994). Why emotions are never unconscious. In Ekman, P., & Davidson, R. J. (Eds.), *The nature of emotion: Fundamental questions* (pp. 285 – 299). New York: Oxford University Press. (Also read responses.)

Winkielman, P., Berridge, K. C., & Wilbarger, J. L. (2005). Emotion, behaviour, and conscious experience: Once more without feeling. In Barrett, L. F., Niedenthal, P. M., & Winkielman, P. (Eds.), *Emotion and consciousness* (pp. 335 – 362). New York: The Guildford Press.

Recommended:

Dunn, E. W., Brackett, M.A., Ashton-James, C., Schneiderman, E., & Salovey, P. (in press). On emotionally intelligent time travel: Individual differences in affective forecasting ability. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

UNIT 2: OBSTACLES TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Week 8 (Oct 26): Motivational limits

Required

Baumeister, R. F. Dale, K., & Sommer, K. L. (1998). Freudian defense mechanisms and empirical findings in modern social psychology: Reaction formation, projection, displacement, undoing, isolation, sublimation, and denial. *Journal of Personality*, 66 (6), 1081 – 1124.

Schooler, J. W. (2001). Discovering memories of abuse in light of meta-awareness. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, & Trauma*, 4, 105-136.

Anderson, M. C., & Green, C. (2001). Suppressing unwanted memories by executive control. *Nature*, 410, 366 – 369.

Commentary on Anderson & Green:

Conway, M. A. (2001). Cognitive neuroscience: Repression revisited. *Nature*, 410, 319 – 320.

Kilhstrom, J.F. (2002). No need for repression. *TRENDS in Cognitive Science*, 16 (12), 502.

Anderson, M. C., & Levy, B. (2002). Repression can (and should) be studied empirically. *TRENDS in Cognitive Science*, 16 (12), 502 – 503.

Recommended

Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 480-498.

Week 9 (Nov 2): Non-motivational limits: The Adaptive Unconscious

Required

Wilson, T. D. (2002). *Strangers to ourselves: Discovering the adaptive unconscious*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Chapters 2 & 3.

Roser, M. & Gazzaniga, M. S. (2004). Automatic brains—Interpretive minds. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13 (2), 56 – 59.

Dijksterhuis, A., & Nordgren, L. F. (2006). A theory of unconscious thought. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1 (2), 95 – 109.

Recommended

Gazzaniga, M. S., Ivry, R. B., & Mangun, G. R. (1998). *Cognitive Neuroscience: The biology of the mind* (pp. 542 – 549). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Johansson, P., Hall, L., Silkstrom, S., & Olsson, A. (2005). Failure to detect mismatches between intention and outcome in a simple decision task. *Science*, 310, 116 -119.

UNIT 3: ROUTES TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Week 10 (Nov 9): Looking inward

Required

Wilson, T. D., & LaFleur, S. J. (1995). Knowing what you'll do: Effects of analyzing reasons on self-prediction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68 (1), 21 – 35.

Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. *Psychological Science*, 8 (3), 162 – 166.

Schultheiss, O. C., & Brunstein, J. C. (1999). Goal imagery: Bridging the gap between implicit motives and explicit goals. *Journal of Personality*, 67 (1), 1 – 38.

Recommended

Koole, S. L., Kijksterhuis, A., & Knippenberg, A. V. (2001). What's in a name: Implicit self-esteem and the automatic self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80 (4), 669 – 685.

Week 11 (Nov 16): Looking outward (and back in)

Required:

Braucht, G. N. (1970). Immediate effects of self-confrontation on the self-concept. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 35* (1), 95 – 101.

Bem, D. J. (1972). Self-perception theory. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, (Vol. 6, pp. 1-62). New York: Academic Press.

Wilson, T. D. (2002). *Strangers to ourselves: Discovering the adaptive unconscious*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Chapters 9 & 10.

Recommended

Kenny, D. A., & DePaulo, B. M. (1993). Do people know how others view them? An empirical and theoretical account. *Psychological Bulletin, 114* (1), 145 – 161.

UNIT 4: VALUE OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Week 12 (Nov. 23): Is self-enhancement beneficial?

Required

Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion and well-being: A social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological Bulletin, 103* (2), 193 – 210.

Colvin, C. R., & Block, J. (1994). Do positive illusions foster mental health? An examination of the Taylor and Brown Formulation. *Psychological Bulletin, 116* (1), 3 – 20.

Paulhus, D. L. (1998). Interpersonal and intrapsychic adaptiveness of trait self-enhancement: A mixed blessing? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74* (5), 1197 – 1208.

Recommended

Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. D. (1994). Positive illusions and well-being revisited: Separating fact from fiction. *Psychological Bulletin, 116* (1), 21 – 27.

Week 13 (Nov. 30): Beyond self-enhancement...

Required

Bonanno, G. A., Keltner, D., Holen, A., & Horowitz, M. J. (1995). When avoiding unpleasant emotions might not be such a bad thing: Verbal-autonomic response dissociation and midlife conjugal bereavement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69* (5), 975 – 989.

Brunstein, J. C., Schultheiss, O. C., & Grassmann, R. (1998). Personal goals and emotional well-being: The moderating role of motive dispositions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75* (2), 494 – 508.

Dunning, D., Heath, C., & Suls, J. M. (2004). Flawed self-assessment: Implications for health, education and the workplace. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 5* (3), 69 - 106. ****Read p. 79 onward.**

Recommended

Fazio, R. J., & Powell, M. C. (1997). On the value of knowing one's likes and dislikes: Attitude accessibility, stress, and health in college. *Psychological Science, 8* (6), 430 – 436.

Facilitation Info Sheet

Here is what you will do as a facilitator during each part of class:

- 1) *Teaching recommended material (20-30 mins)*: Your job in this part of class is to familiarize your classmates with the material covered in the recommended readings. You may do this in whole or in part through lecture, but I would STRONGLY encourage you to incorporate creative or interactive teaching methods as well, such as:
 - a. Doing a demonstration that will allow your classmates to experience a psychological phenomenon discussed in the readings
 - b. Re-enacting the experiment in class
 - c. Showing a brief (<5 mins) video clip that highlights a key concept
 - d. Finding out some fun facts about study authors
 - e. Anything else you can think of—interpretive dance, diorama, whatever...
- 2) *Leading discussion (60-90 mins)*: Your job in this part of class is to facilitate (not dominate) class discussion of the readings. You will call on your classmates to read their own discussion questions in the order you determined ahead of time. Discussion does not have to be limited to the original list of DQ's and may shift toward issues you select or that come up in class, but it is your job (with possible nudging from me) to decide when discussion wanders too far astray from the key issues. Note that for most weeks you will need to leave time at the end of class to workshop research ideas generated by any students in their idea papers.

Here is the preparation you will need to do before facilitating:

- 1) Right after the class preceding your facilitation: See me briefly for initial discussion of possible approaches.
- 2) Well before facilitation: Read all of the required and recommended articles, and plan how to teach this material.
- 3) 24-48 hours before facilitation: Read through your classmates' discussion questions, and figure out how to organize them. Then, see me to go over your plans for the class.
- 4) More than 5 minutes before facilitation: Create a document that contains your classmates' questions in the order we decided upon (note that at least one question from everyone should be included). Make copies for everyone.

How to Use WebCT

TO LOGIN: Go to www.webct.ubc.ca and enter your CWL and password and then click on the link to this course.

(if you don't have a CWL, go to www.cwl.ubc.ca)

TO ACCESS READINGS:

- 1) Go to course homepage
- 2) Click on the relevant week (eg, "Week 3: Abilities and Behavior")
- 3) Click on the article you want

TO POST DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Go to course homepage
- 2) Click on "Discussions"
- 3) Click "Compose message"
- 4) **IMPORTANT:** Select the topic for the relevant week (eg, "Week 3: Abilities & Behavior")
- 5) Type or paste in your discussion questions, along with a subject line
- 6) Click "post"
- 7) Check that your message is displayed correctly!

TO VIEW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) From within the "discussions" tool, click on the relevant week.
- 2) Click the magnifying glass to view an individual message OR check off the messages and click compile to see all of the DQ's in one document.

How to Read Articles

FIRST: Ask yourself what you want to get out of the article. Do you need to do a close reading or will skimming suffice?

- **Skimming:** Skimming can be OK (eg, recommended reading)
 - Read abstract carefully
 - Read 1st 2 paragraphs and last paragraph of intro
 - Skim method section (read overview if provided)
 - Skip results
 - Read 1st 2 paragraphs of discussion and look at sub-headings
- **Close reading:** Read article once thru and then re-read key/confusing bits
 - Can *still* skim more tangential parts
 - Literature you already know
 - Endless response to minor reviewer point
 - Method
 - Appropriate operationalization of constructs (alternative interpretation?)
 - Results
 - Do the #'s (tables, graphs) really support the authors' hypotheses?
 - If this article is right, how does it change our knowledge of the humans?
 - What questions does it open up?
 - What implications does it have for your research?