Social Cognition

Person Perception
The nature of our thinking

- **Four Core Processes:**
  - Attention: Selecting information
  - Interpretation: Providing meaning
  - Judgment: Impressions & Decisions
  - Memory: Storing for the future
If you had to describe the way that people think how would you?

• Are we ‘lazy’ or ‘effortful’ thinkers?
  – “naïve scientists”
  – “cognitive misers”

• Both = Motivated Tacticians
How can we manage both?

• **Serial; switch back and forth**

• **Parallel; both implicit and explicit**
  – explicit – effortful
  – implicit – effortless

So what determines?
How can we manage both?

MOTIVATION

When are we motivated and not?

— Interest
— Time
— Load
Do we possess the ability?

Do we really know ourselves?

Pick a number:

1  2  3  4

YOU PICKED 3

- Nisbett & Wilson’s, “Dress study”
Social Categorization

• Our tendency to sort people into social categories

• How is this related to Stereotyping?
Mental Shortcuts and Simulations

• **Heuristics**
  – Representative
  – Anchoring and Adjustment
  – Availability
Mental Shortcuts and Simulations

- Mental Simulations
  - Hindsight Bias
  - Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking

Courtroom

Olympics
Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Countertactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Counterfactual Thinking
Social World Beliefs

- False Consensus Effect
- Confirmation Bias
- Self-fulfilling Prophecies
- Learned Helplessness
- Just World Beliefs

Are these Detrimental or Beneficial?
Social Perception

– the way we seek to know and understand other persons and events

– **Impression formation:**
  • the process by which one integrates various sources of information about another into an overall judgment.

– **Attribution process:**
  • the process by which people use information to make inferences about the causes of behavior or events.
Impression formation

Additive vs. Averaging models
  – Implications?

Central traits
  – Implications?
John
People who work with John describe him as:

- Intelligent
- Skillful
- Industrious
- Warm
- Determined
- Practical
- Cautious

Unlikeable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Likeable
People who work with John describe him as:

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Impression formation

Central traits

– Implications?
Social Perception

the way we seek to know and understand other persons and events

Attribution process:

• the process by which people use information to make inferences about the causes of behavior or events.
Attributions

Heider’s Attribution Model

– Locus of causality -
  • internal attribution
  • external attribution

– Locus of control -
Correspondent Inference Theory

Edward Jones and Keith Davis (1965)

• preference for making internal attributions.

• Rules
  – social desirability
  – Choice
  – noncommon effects

• *Fundamental Attribution Error*
Bernard Weiner’s model

- Added *Stability & Controllability*

- internal and stable:
  - (he laughed because he is a happy person)

- internal and unstable:
  - (he laughed because he had a funny thought)

- external and stable:
  - (he laughed at a very funny picture)

- external and unstable
  - (he laughed because someone tickled him)

- Controllability (Morality)