INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL COGNITION AND BEHAVIOR
Assoc. Prof. Ludmilla Andreeva
(45 hours)

Prerequisites
Students should have passed the following courses: introduction to psychology; psycholinguistics; cognitive psychology.

Exam information
Course requirements:
- Two written papers during the semester.
- Writing a final paper based on a simulated psychological interview.

The course aims at delineating the basic aspects of social cognition: how perceivers of the social world go about attaining understanding of self and others, moving beyond their naive lay theories about how people operate. It concentrates on the methods used, the research being done and the implementation of research results, e.g. their value for people's everyday functioning. Since some of the basic topics of social cognition are covered in the courses of psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology and social psychology, the emphasis of the present course is mainly on the applied side of social knowledge and especially interpersonal perception and communication.

1. Introduction to social cognition
What is social cognition? Social cognition and social psychology. Social cognition and cognitive psychology. Historical perspective. Relation of social cognition to other key theoretical paradigms. Three principles of social cognition. Elements of social cognition. Social information processing. Issues in social cognition. Intergroup aspects of cognition. Cognition and social interaction. Individual and social structure. Cross-cultural perspectives.

2. Social perception: impression formation, social schemas and social representations
What is social perception? Impression formation. The importance of first impressions. Central and peripheral traits. Primacy and recency effects. Impression management. Accuracy in social perception. Social schemas. Person schemas. Self-schemas. Role schemas. Event schemas. Social schemas as stereotypes. Social schemas and impression formation. Social schemas and self-fulfilling prophecies. The cognitive miser and the heuristics of thinking. The availability heuristic. The representativeness heuristic. The anchoring and adjustment heuristic. Social representations. Understanding social representations. Social representations and social schemas.

3. Shortcomings and Biases in Person Perception
The positive sense of self. Self-serving biases and positive illusions: unrealistically positive views of the self; unrealistic optimism about the future; implicit self-esteem. The need for control: control and over-attribution; exaggerated perceptions of personal control; self-verification; conflict among motives; the Just-world theory; transparency illusion. Belongingness: group-serving biases and positive social identity: positive identity; group enhancement; ingratiation. Egocentric perception: meta-cognition; egocentric communication; perspective taking and egocentrism. Embracing negative information: automatic affect and the detection of and attention to negative stimuli; negativity bias. Accuracy in social perception: positive evidence for accuracy; pragmatic accuracy.

4. Language and Social Cognition
The different faces of language-social cognition interface: language and language use; implications of the language and language use distinction. Language and social cognition: linguistic relativity; language, memory, cognitive processes, and behavior; cognitive inferences mediated by interpersonal verbs. Language and social cognition: language as a transformational device: the linguistic category model (LCM); the linguistic transmission of stereotypes; the question-answer paradigm. Language and social cognition: socially distributed knowledge.

5. From the Intra to the Interpersonal: Bridging the Gap from Cognition to Behavior

Construal and behavior: the interaction sequence; the self-fulfilling prophecy; stereotype threat; expectancies and construal of the environment (accessible stereotypes, theories, traits, exemplars, goals, self-standards); construing the past by relying on peak experiences and end experiences. Social change strategies. The auto-mobile model: ideomotor behavior; unwanted action. The dynamic personality: behavioral signatures; personality types as signatures.

6. Cognition and the Development of Close Relationships

The content of cognition in close relationships: theoretical perspectives; methodological considerations; empirical research; critique. The structure of cognition in close relationships: cognitive complexity; accessibility; critique. The process of cognition in close relationships: maintenance and enhancement; accuracy and verification. Toward an integrated theory of cognition in close relationships.

7. Shared Cognition in Small Groups

How shared cognitions develop: common experience, learning, social interaction, and social comparison; recent ideas of naturally occurring shared cognitions; social identity and self-categorization. The impact of shared cognitions on group process and performance: shared preferences; shared information (the common knowledge effect, cognitive centrality of group members); shared task representations; collective efficacy; shared meta cognitions - transactive memory; shared mental models; shared identity.

8. Communication as skilled performance

Motor skills. Interpersonal skills. Definitions of interpersonal skill. Goal-directed process. Interrelated behavior. Situationally appropriate behavior. Learning. Cognitive control. Social skills and motor skills: summary.

9. Core communication skills: Non-verbal behavior as communication – Approaches, issues and research

Non-verbal behavior in perspective. Non-verbal behavior as communication. Non-verbal behavior as style. The scientific study of non-verbal behavior (behavioral dimensions, setting and role influences on non-verbal behavior). Non-verbal behavior as communication: process and outcome factors of the interaction episode. Approaches to non-verbal behavior as communication (P. Ekman and W. Friesen, A. Dittmann, A. Mehrabian, M. Patterson). Non-verbal communication in context. Cultural influences. Non-verbal behavior in professional settings: a sample of research findings. An example of research and application: international politics. Strategies for interpreting non-verbal behavior.

10. Core communication skills: Questioning

Questions in professional settings. Functions of questions. Types of questions: closed/open questions, leading questions, recall/process questions, probing questions, rhetorical questions, multiple questions, responding to questions.

11. Core communication skills: Reinforcement

Clarifying the concept. Reinforcement and feedback. Reinforcement in interpersonal communication (reinforcement in non-verbal communication, reinforcement in verbal communication). Reinforcement in the new communication media. The concept of communication reinforcement. Applications of communication reinforcement in various fields.

12. Core communication skills: Reflecting

Interactional style and directness. Reflecting: conceptual perspectives. Reflecting: theoretical perspectives (the humanistic approach, the behaviorist approach, the linguistic approach). Reflecting: functional perspectives. Reflecting: empirical perspectives (reflections, reflections of feeling, paraphrases).

13. Core communication skills: Explaining

A definition of explaining. The nature of understanding. Types of explaining. The functions of explaining. The tasks and processes of explaining (the problem to be explained and the problem of explainees, the process of explaining, the outcome). Perspectives on explaining and understanding. Evidence from the field. Explaining in the classroom. Explaining in higher education. Explaining in the health professions.

14. Core communication skills: Self-disclosure – Strategic revelation of information in personal and professional relationships

Self-disclosure in personal relationships (self-disclosure and relationship development, relationship initiation and development, relational maintenance, relational de-escalation, relational dialectics/boundary management theory). Factors affecting self-disclosure: sex differences, reciprocal disclosures, self-disclosure and liking, requests for disclosures, self-disclosure on the Internet, revealing risky information, revelation of stigmatizing information. Self-disclosure in work relationships: disclosure and the development of work relationships, factors affecting disclosure at work, revealing risky information. Self-disclosure beyond personal and work relationships: disclosure and health, public disclosures.

15. Core communication skills: The Process of Listening

Research in listening: early attempts at measurement; attitudes and listening; listening and memory; alternative approaches to listening; interpretive listening; schematic listening. Broader aspects of the study of listening: audio or video; reading and listening; listening and behavior. Problems in listening research. Implications for practice.

16. Core communication skills: Humor and Laughter

Theories of humor and laughter: incongruity and developmental theories of humor; superiority and disparagement theories of humor; arousal theories of humor; psychoanalytic and evolutionary theories of humor. Our social experience of humor and laughter: humor as a search for information; humor as a means of giving information; humor in interpersonal control; humor as a device for group control; anxiety management; humor as a means of changing and sustaining the status quo. The social functions of laughter: humorous laughter; social laughter; ignorance laughter; evasion laughter; apologetic laughter; anxiety laughter; derision laughter; joyous laughter. Applications of humor: humor in therapy; humor and teaching.

17. Core communication skills: Persuasion

Identifying obstacles to compliance: when the audience has the desired attitudes (connecting the existing attitude with the desired behavior; focus on non-attitudinal factors); when the audience lacks the desired attitudes. Constructing effective messages: meeting objections; being clear and specific; following-up.

18. Core communication skills: Asserting and Confronting

Clarification of the assertion concept: response classes of assertion; distinguishing assertion from aggression. The skill of conflict assertion: overt behavioral components of conflict assertion. Process (interactive) skills. Covert behavioral components of conflict assertion. The social validity of conflict assertion: general findings; gender; response classes; level of assertiveness; racial and cultural values.

19. Core communication skills: Negotiation and Bargaining

Analytic models: the bargaining problem; the theory of games; evaluation; R. Walton and R. McKersie's (1965) model of social negotiations. Behavioral models of negotiation: outcomes of experimental negotiations; analysis of real-life negotiations. Information-processing models: making sense of change; matching capacities to demands. The characteristics of effective

negotiators. Discursive models: forging collective commitments that make sense; building close relationships; dilemmas in the process of negotiation.

20. Core communication skills: Relational Communication

Some goals and purposes of relationships. Behaviors, thoughts, and relating. Skills and the quality of relationships: skills and rules; judging relationship skill; communicative standards. Skill and the structuralist paradigm. Long-term or short-term relating as the basis for assessing skill; intrinsic or instrumental purposes of relationships; routine versus strategic aspects of maintenance and relating; can relational skill be taught.

CORE READINGS

Brewer, M. & Hewstone, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Social cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Delamater, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Chapter 11, pp. 259–283). London: Springer.

Hargie, O. D.W. (Ed.) (2006). *Handbook of communication skills*. London: Routledge.

Moskowitz, G. B. (2005). *Social cognition: understanding self and others.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Pennington, D. C. (2000). *Social Cognition* (Routledge modular psychology). London: Routledge.

- I've Loved You So Long (2008) – the process of self-disclosure
- Dead Man Walking (1995) – listening
- Transamerica (2006) – intimacy and self-disclosure in family relationships
- Boys Don't Cry (1999) – gender and non-verbal behavior
- Waitress (2007) – attraction, social exchange theory
- The Break-Up (2006) – developmental model of intimate relationships