



Social Psychology

Psychology 320
Social Psychology

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Psyc 320 – Social Psychology

Definition

- The scientific study of the way in which people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the real or imagined presence of other people.

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Distinctions of Social Psychology

- Interest in perceptions or construals of social situations (not the objective reality of the social world).
- Experimentally based science.

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What Social Psychology isn't:

- Folk Wisdom
- Philosophy
- Sociology
- Personality Psychology

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Historical Roots

- Plato—crowd mind
- Triplett (1898)
 - Cycling, fishing reels, and tug of war.
 - Social facilitation vs. social loafing
- WWII
 - Social Influence
 - Fleeting researchers—Kurt Lewin
 - US Government needed help influencing citizens



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Cognition

- USA→Behaviorism (Skinner)
- Europe→Gestalt Tradition→not
 - Experience changes stimulus
- Computer Metaphor →Social Cognition
- 'As if'



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Guiding Principles

- Motivated Construals
 - Positive view of self
 - Accurate view of situation
- Processing
 - Conservatism—Miserliness
 - Accessibility
 - Superficiality vs. Depth