

Examination: PSY2014/PSYPRO4314 – SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY II

Autumn semester 2019

Department of Psychology

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Examination date: November XX, 2019

Examination time: 15.00-19.00

Permitted examination support materials: None

Language of questions: English

Response language: English or Scandinavian languages

Number of pages (front page excluded): 2

Instructions:

Part A. There are 4 questions that require a short answer. Respond to at least 3 questions, each response of approximately 1 handwritten page or about 300 words. To pass the exam 3 of these questions must be evaluated as pass, (A-E). The best 3 responses are evaluated in Part A, which counts for 60% of the final exam mark.

Part B. There are 3 questions to choose from in this part. Respond to 1 of those in an essay-like format. Part B counts for 40% of the final exam mark.

Language: You may respond in English or a Scandinavian language. If you experience problems in translating a certain concept, e.g. name of model or theory, you can use the English terminology.

Exam questions:

PART A

There are 4 questions in this part. Answer at least three questions (approximately 1 handwritten page, or about 300 words, for each question).

Question 1. A) Explain why social justice matters to people. B) Describe different individual (personal-level) responses to injustice.

Guide:

The general answer to A) is that humans of all times have had ideas about how individuals, groups and societies should behave, and such judgments lie at the heart of feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. High quality answers (A and B) also mention suggested answers by *Social exchange theory* (that justice "regulates" social interactions based on self-interest motivation and expectations that others will follow the rules, which leads to accepted systems for allocating resources) and/or *Social identity theory* (that distributive, procedural and retributive justice function as indicators of quality of social relationships).

B) Different individual (personal-level) responses to injustice include *not to act*, just accept (not denial, but out of loyalty or resignation, which often is associated with depression and physical stress, even self-destructive behavior), and *actions* such as to try to verify the injustice by gaining social support, to seek to restore fairness e.g. by economic compensation, or to retribute through "silence treatment", absenteeism, or to do harm to perpetrator or others. High quality answers present several of the mentioned aspects in the reply.

The expected answer for an A would include both the mentioned central themes and sufficiently address the mentioned, or otherwise correct, examples.

Relevant course material: Tyler, T. R., & Smith, H. J. (1998). Social justice and social movement. In Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske and Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (4th ed., Vol. II, pp. 595-629). Boston, Massachusetts: McGraw Hill.

Question 2. Describe briefly how ostracism may threaten basic needs and how attempts to fortify these need threats may result in different behavioral responses.

Guide:

Brief ostracism episodes result in sadness and anger and threaten fundamental needs. Individuals then act to fortify or replenish their thwarted need or needs. Behavioral consequences appear to be split into two general categories: (1) **attempts to fortify relational needs** (belonging, self-esteem, shared understanding, and trust), which lead generally to pro-social thoughts and behaviors, or (2) **attempts to fortify efficacy/ existence needs of control and recognition** that may be dealt with most efficiently through antisocial thoughts and behaviors. Regarding moderators and situational influences on coping with ostracism, Williams & Sommer (1997) report on sex differences in the reflective stage within the ball-tossing paradigm. Girls are more willing to tend-and-befriend than boys; i.e., they work harder for the group following social exclusion than boys. In addition to the two general categories above, a “freeze” response is also observed with participants reporting flat emotions (and no change in mood following ostracism), lethargy and a sense of meaninglessness.

The expected answer for an A would include a correct description of the two general categories of attempting to fortify needs, identification of the paradigms used for examining behavioral responses, and relevant moderators. The C grade answer shows a basic understanding of the phenomenon.

Relevant course material: Williams, K. D. (2007). Ostracism. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, 425-452.

Question 3. A) Define the concept *Social stigma*. B) Describe two central dimensions of social stigma.

Guide:

The expected answer for an A would include a comprehensive definition and address both the central themes correctly.

A): Social stigma is often defined as socially constructed, negatively evaluated social identity within a certain context, i.e. to possess a specific attribute or characteristics that in a given context leads to social devaluation. “...primarily a situational threat, the predicament of being in a situation where one’s stigma could influence how one is treated and judged” (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998, p. 504).

B): The chapter points out *visibility* as one central dimension of stigma (non-concealable characteristics, e.g. gender, race, physical marks, etc. that others can be aware of, note, and judge. Such characteristics may influence thoughts, feelings and behavior). A second central dimension is *controllability* (when a condition or characteristic result from, or could be eliminated by, behavior of the person, i.e. when the individual is seen responsible for the stigmatizing condition). There are discussions and disagreement about the controllability of stigmatizing conditions but, generally, one can expect a more negative evaluation if a condition is perceived to be controllable.

Relevant course material: Crocker, J., Major, B., & Steele, C. (1998). Social stigma. In Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske and Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (4th ed., Vol. II, pp. 504-553). Boston, Massachusetts: McGraw Hill.

Question 4. How can dehumanization processes be explained and what consequences are related to such situations?

Guide:

Dehumanization relates to debasement, deprivation, or the denial, of full humanness to others (not to be confused with depersonalization which in psychology is related to detachment within the self.) The background is, according to e.g. social identity theory, that people enter groups that they perceive as positive and distinctive to achieve self-enhancement, or self-esteem. This group identification is related to a strong in-group bias or tendency to favor the own group. The closer relations in the in-group favor more familiarity and detailed knowledge of persons in the group. In contrast will outgroup members become perceived as less individual, or more similar, to one another, i.e. the outgroup homogeneity effect or bias. This bias is assumed related to the use of stereotypes of outgroups and their members and it is believed to facilitate dehumanization. Dehumanization processes in turn justify maltreatment of outgroups and their members as well as maintain intergroup prejudice and conflict. There are several types of consequences, all including marginalization, exclusion and denying individuality, e.g. derogatory language objectifying a person (mechanistic dehumanization) or presenting them as animals (animalistic dehumanization) as well as all kinds of degrees of cruelty.

The expected answer for an A would include a correct definition as well as a description of different types and degrees of consequences. The C grade answer shows a basic understanding of the phenomenon.

Relevant course material: Swann, W. B., & Bossom, J. K. (2010). Self and identity. In Susan T. Fiske, Daniel T. Gilbert and Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 589-628). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

PART B.

There are 3 questions to choose from in this part. Respond to 1 of those in an essay-like format.

Question 1. Discuss the role of leadership in group performance and behavior.

Guide:

The expected answer for an A would include or address the following central themes. Marks B-E would include the aspects and themes to various qualified degrees. The student fails (F) if/when none of the aspects of leadership in Hackman and Katz (2010) are used in the response, and/or if the response clearly has no social psychological substance and is based on “popular opinion/guesswork” without reference to psychological theory and empirical studies.

There are several potential ways of structuring a response to this question. A strong A-type response should acknowledge that there are no specific personality traits or leadership styles that facilitate or inhibit group performance. The research front is more pre-occupied with revealing which leader behaviors that work best under specific circumstances (contingency models).

An A-response should also acknowledge the bi-directional causal nature of leadership influence. For instance, leaders do not solely influence groups, but certain groups tend to attract specific leadership

styles. Co-operative and competent groups often attract more independency and considerate leadership, whereas more hostile and incompetent groups tend to attract more directive leadership styles.

Research has further illuminated that how a leader designs and composes a group explains about four times the variance in group performance than hands on leadership. Groups that are well-composed are also much less influenced by poor leadership than poorly composed groups.

A strong A/B response could also dwell into that leadership may emerge without individuals holding formal roles as leaders. Emerging leadership is common in self-managing groups. Research has demonstrated that the extroversion and consciousness traits and strong cognitive abilities are associated with taking emerging leadership within self-managing groups. These leaders may help such groups to set realistic goals, improve the management of group identity and better regulation of emotional processes/conflicts that arise.

Hackman and Katz (2010) also points to the importance of temporality in group leadership. Four stages of leadership have been identified as particularly efficient in facilitating performance.

(1) Before the group is established (allocation of resources and group structuring), **(2) When the group initiates its work** (foster collaboration, motivation etc.), **(3) At the midpoint of the task cycle** (leader may help members reflect upon the performance strategy), **(4) End of task cycle** (facilitate learning from experience).

The students may also discuss potential risks (e.g. struggle for power and dominance) and benefits (e.g. more resources allocated to leadership) from shared leadership/groups with more than one leader.

Relevant course material: Hackman, J. R., & Katz, N. (2010). Group behavior and performance. In Susan T. Fiske, Daniel T. Gilbert and Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (5th edition, Vol. 2, pp. 1208-1251). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Question 2. The chapter on communication models makes a distinction between signs and symbols. A) Explain the respective concepts of signs and symbols. B) Discuss why the distinction is relevant to communication theories or models.

Guide:

A: Both signs and symbols are signals. A *symbol* is a signal that stands for, or *signifies*, something other than itself; it is a product of social convention, e.g. letters, words, certain hand signals. Symbol use is learned behavior. A *sign* is another kind of signal with an *intrinsic relationship* to what it signifies; causally related in the same process, e.g. to blush when embarrassed, pupil contraction when frightened. Thus, signs are involuntary although some may be socially modified in relation to cultural norms.

B: The relevance of the distinction to communication theories may provide discussions with different foci. Excellent answers include explanations related to theoretical “schools” as well as examples of communication models in the chapter. One discussion approach can be to start with the varied definitions of “communication”, e.g. some positions define communication as the transmission of a “code” or agreed symbols (e.g. Wiener), and communication therefore becomes restricted to (symbolic) language. Other researchers make no distinction between symbolic or expressive (sign) signals (e.g. Watzlawick), a position that fails to distinguish between behavior more and less significant to communication. Still others define communication as informative, including information by signs and symbols (e.g. Ekman; Ekman & Friesen) with an emphasis on signs as the

true information. Another approach to the discussion may provide examples of the “communication models” in the chapter, which differ with respect to defining communication when it comes to where meaning is located. That is, located in the property of messages (Encoder-Decoder models; based on symbols as Wiener suggests), in the speaker’s intentions (Intentionalist models), in the addressee’s point of view (Perspective-Taking models) and in the participants’ joint activity (Dialogic models). Both these types of answers are relevant to the question. The two approaches are not overlapping, but present different conceptualizations of where meaning is located and how it is transmitted or communicated.

Relevant course material: Krauss, R. M., & Fussell, S. R. (1996). Social psychological models of interpersonal communication. In E. Tory Higgins and Arie W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social Psychology. Handbook of Basic Principles* (pp. 655-701). New York: The Guilford Press.

Question 3. Explain why Robert B. Zajonc holds that emotions and affect are of prime importance.

Guide:

This is a large task that can be handled in multiple ways. It gives students an opportunity to show both how much they captured from the chapter and lecture as well as how to structure a response to such a broad topic. This guidance only provides some central themes that are expected to be included in an excellent answer.

Zajonc’s view is based on a fundamental distinction between *emotions* (affect), related to a dimension of approach and avoidance, and *cognitions*, related to what is true or false. (He argues for an independence of affect from cognition albeit the direct pathway between the amygdalae and thalamus). Emotions are what we experience, emotional phenomena enter almost all aspects of life, and culture enters into emotional experience. He holds that emotions/affect are of prime importance because without them we would not be able to distinguish between what is “good” or “bad”, which is essential to the structuring or categorization of impressions. Thus, cognitive categories exist because some objects or events etc. matters more than others. He asks whether a world without emotions could exist and gives a long list of examples and explanations to why it cannot; essentially because humans would not be able to categorize and structure input based on what matters, i.e. by guidance of emotions. He also holds that emotions are distinctly social processes - albeit a necessary biological basis. The answer may include the distinctions made between basic emotions (that cannot be reduced) and non-basic emotions (composites of other emotions, e.g. shyness= fear of humiliation), as well as between the concepts emotion and affect (and the concept “affect” carry different meanings in biological vs. cognitive emotion theories) or affective reactions (which he holds can occur without the participation of cognitive processes). The student who attended the lecture, or who read Zajonc’s 1980 paper, may add that much of the discussion in the 1980’s relates to distinctions made between concepts such as emotions, affect, reactions, and reflexes etc. Comparisons may be made to the James-Lange vs Cannon-Bard positions, or the later influences by Schachter and Singer’s (1962) two-factor theory of emotion. The chapter presents various theories of emotion, which are directed at different goals (e.g. neural substrates, expressions and reactions, development, linguistic categories, affect and appraisal, etc.) and students are welcome to use such comparisons to highlight these views as well as position Zajonc’s contributions to the field.

Relevant course material : Zajonc, R. B. (1998). Emotions. In Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske and Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (4th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 591-632). Boston, Massachusetts: McGraw Hill.