SYLLABUS

GENERAL BACKGROUND READINGS

Attitude Structure:

Attitude Change:

COURSE GOALS:
The goal of this course, geared toward graduate students in social psychology, is to have students become familiar with some of the major issues and controversies that currently engage researchers interested in attitudes and persuasion. It is assumed that students have the knowledge equivalent of that provided in Psychology 630.

COURSE TOPICS:

Jan 3: Course overview
Jan 10: Negation effects in evaluative judgment and persuasion (RP) [A]
Jan 17: MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY (No Class)
Jan 24: Valence asymmetries in attention and evaluation: Is negative > positive? (RF) [B]
Jan 31: Single versus dual process models of persuasion and social judgment (RP) [A]
Feb 7: The IAT: What does it measure and how does it work? (RF) [B]
Feb 14: Fit and fluency effects in attitudes and social judgment (RP) [B]
Feb 21: Unconscious evaluative processing (RF) [A]
Feb 28: How emotion affects information processing, judgment, and persuasion (RP) [B]
Mar 7: Attitudes and the social context: How shall we conceptualize an attitude? (RF) [A]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Readings from original sources will be assigned each week. These readings will either be e-mailed to you as pdf files, or placed on the table outside Shirley’s office for you to copy. The class will be divided into an “A” and a “B” group. Each week the A group will write an answer to the “question of the week.” This question will be assigned one week in advance. Each week members of the B group will be assigned a particular reading for the following week. Their job will be to summarize the key points of their assigned reading for the class, and to indicate what the strengths and weaknesses are of this reading, and how it contributes to the question of the week. Their paper will focus on these issues as related to their assigned reading rather than the thought question more generally. Papers will be no longer than 2 pages (typed, double spaced, 12 point font, 1 in. margins) in length. The “A” group papers are due at the beginning of class. The “B” group papers should be e-mailed to Rich and Russ by midnight on the Sunday before class (petty.1@osu.edu; fazio@psy.ohio-state.edu).

GRADING:
The grading will be based on the weekly papers (50%) and class discussion (50%).
January 10 – Topic 1
Negation Effects in Evaluative Judgment and Persuasion

**Background Readings:**


**Main Readings:**


**Question of the Week:**

How does recent work on “negation” inform our understanding of the sleeper effect and any other phenomena in the attitudes literature to which it has not yet been applied?
January 24 – Topic 2:

Valence Asymmetries in Attention and Evaluation: Is negative > positive?

Background Reading:


Main Readings:


Also:


Question of the Week:

Consider the evidence regarding the existence of a valence asymmetry. Are you convinced that an asymmetry exists? If not, why not? If so, how general is it, when does it occur, and what mechanism(s) might be responsible for the asymmetry?
January 31 – Topic 3
Single versus Dual Process Models of Persuasion and Social Judgment

Core Background Reading:

Additional Readings:


Question of the Week:
What is your view on the single versus dual (or multi-process) models of persuasion and social judgment? If there is more than one mode of processing, how is it best to conceptualize the multiple processes? What are the criteria for establishing when we should have one versus more than one process of persuasion (or social judgment)?
February 7 - Topic 4:
The Implicit Association Test: What does it measure and how does it work?

Background Readings:

Main Readings:

Optional Reading:

Question of the Week:
The IAT has attracted a great deal of attention and has been used widely over the last few years. Yet, we only recently have begun to learn about the mechanism(s) that underlie performance on the IAT. Given what has been learned, what does the IAT measure? What would you conclude about the validity of the IAT as an implicit measure of attitudes? In other words, provide an assessment of the IAT.
February 14 – Topic 5

Fit and Fluency Effects in Attitudes and Social Judgment

Core Background Reading:


Additional Readings:


Question of the Week:

What do research on “fluency” and “fit” have in common? Explain whether a common theoretical framework can accommodate both phenomena or not.
February 21 – Topic 6:  
*Unconscious Evaluative Processing*

**Background Reading:**


**Main Readings:**


**Question of the Week:**

Does the research from this set of readings force us to “stretch” our view of unconscious processing? What are people capable of doing unconsciously?
February 28 – Topic 7
How Emotion Affects Judgment, Information Processing, and Persuasion

Core Background Reading:


OR


Empirical Readings:


Question of the Week:

As far as you can tell from the background reading and the empirical readings, what question about emotion and attitudes/evaluations has NOT been addressed that you think warrants scientific scrutiny. Explain your suggestion and relate to the existing literature as much as possible (from the readings assigned).
March 7 - Topic 8:  
*Attitudes and the social context: How shall we conceptualize an attitude?*

**Background Reading:**


**Main Readings:**

*A. Influence of the social context*


*B. Are attitudes merely constructions?*


**Question of the Week:**

Consider the recent evidence that has accumulated regarding the effects of the social context on attitudes. What are the implications of this evidence for conceptualizing the attitude construct? Does the evidence support, or more boldly, necessitate, the constructionist perspective espoused by Schwarz & Bohner? Why or why not?