Overview

The idea that much of mental life occurs without conscious intention, awareness, or control has a long intellectual history in both psychology and philosophy, and has taken root as one of the central tenets of contemporary psychology. In this seminar, we will explore the ways in which large swaths of mental processes and behavior operate outside of conscious awareness. We will begin with the history of these ideas but place a special focus on the empirical research of the past 40 years. After reading work in cognitive psychology that introduces us to foundational concepts such as implicit learning, memory, and perception (i.e., subliminal perception), we will spend the bulk of our time engaging with how these processes unfold in our social worlds (e.g., attitudes, prejudices, emotions, goals, self-esteem, and relationships). We will conclude by considering the implications of this research for notions of free will and individual responsibility. Readings will draw from cognitive, social, and clinical psychology as well as neuroscience and philosophy.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Understand the ways in which automatic and controlled thought operate in cognitive and social domains.
2. Digest empirical psychological research.
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of measurement tools in psychological research.
4. Develop a psychological experiment in an online platform, conduct data analysis, and report research findings in a professional manner.
5. Generate novel research questions by integrating multiple perspectives and sources of information; propose methodologies to test them.
6. Communicate ideas clearly orally and in writing, and be skilled at giving and receiving feedback.

Our Big Questions

How do mental processes operate outside of conscious awareness?

How do thought and behavior occur in the absence of control, and sometimes in ways that contradict our intentions?

How can we measure cognitions and attitudes that are not verbally reportable?

How do the mental processes we are engaging with this semester play out in our social world?
**Policies**

**Participation & attendance.** Attendance is mandatory. This class is founded on discussion among students, and you can’t contribute if you’re not here. Participation grades will be lowered for each absence.

**Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is unacceptable. In its most easily identifiable form, plagiarism represents copying someone else’s words. This kind of offense is rare. More common are other, similarly damaging ways to plagiarize. Use of someone else’s ideas, arguments (including structure of the literature review), or words without citing them constitutes plagiarism, and is unacceptable. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, work independently on every assignment. Any violation of academic integrity will result at the least in loss of credit for the assignment, and may result in failure in the class.

**Late assignments.** Late written assignments will immediately lose 15% of their points, and an additional 10% every 24 hours beyond the deadline.

**Electronics.** Cell phones should be turned off (off, not vibrate) and placed out of sight. Laptop computers are not allowed. If you text or access non-course materials during our class time, you are mentally absent from class, which will be treated just as a physical absence.

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**Assessment**

**Class Participation.** Participation from everyone is crucial. Class participation consists both of thoughtful speaking and careful listening - as a member of our group, you should also respond with thought to your classmates’ comments.

Participation includes careful preparation and completion of the reading. Look at the assignments ahead of time and plan accordingly. If you tend to be uncomfortable speaking up in classes, please talk to me early in the semester to discuss ways to help you succeed. **120 points**

**Weekly Questions.** You will post a discussion question on the course website by 3pm on Monday. These questions provide a jumping-off point for discussions, and give you an opportunity to engage with the readings prior to attending class. More details on this requirement are at the end of the syllabus. Questions will be graded on a √+/ √/ √- scale. (10 points each) **70 points**

**Implicit Measure presentation.** You will present a method of measuring implicit social cognitions to your classmates. Before your presentation your classmates will complete the task online, so you don’t need to describe the structure of the method. Instead, in approximately 12 minutes, you should: 1. Describe how the data are scored (you can do so conceptually, not statistically); 2. Discuss evidence for its reliability and validity; and 3. Offer your own assessment of the measure’s strengths and weaknesses. **30 points**

**Replication.** You will be performing a replication of a study related to our course material. This assignment is inspired by recent initiatives related to open science. **75 points**

**Final paper.** In your final paper you will propose an experiment to test a novel research hypothesis. More details are at the end of the syllabus. **50 points**

**Proposal 20 points, Peer draft 35 points, Peer review 35 points, Final presentation 35 points, Final paper 50 points. (175 points total).**
Grading Scale

The total number of points earned out of 500 total points determines your grade, with cutoffs for each threshold as indicated below. The scale may change, but only in a direction that would help your grade. Pluses and minuses will be assigned at the top and bottom of each range.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A-range</td>
<td>450</td>
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<td>B-range</td>
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<td>C-range</td>
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A - range 450 points D 325 points
B - range 400 points F Fewer than 325 points
C - range 350 points

Summary of Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly questions</td>
<td>As indicated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act out priming study</td>
<td>2/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>List of measures for replication</td>
<td>3/3**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implicit measure presentation</td>
<td>3/7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replication pre-paper</td>
<td>3/10**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replication programming</td>
<td>3/17**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper proposal</td>
<td>3/27**</td>
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<td>Replication final report</td>
<td>4/16**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>4/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer draft</td>
<td>5/5**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>5/23**</td>
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**Not a class day. Assignments should be submitted to Moodle by 11:00 pm.

Schedule

January 31: Introduction to the Course


February 7 Historical & Contemporary Issues


DUE: WEEKLY QUESTION


DUE: WEEKLY QUESTION, “ACT OUT” PRIMING STUDY


Articles to act out.


DUE: WEEKLY QUESTION, LIST OF MEASURES FOR REPLICATION (3/3)


Read your assigned journal article VERY carefully.

DUE: WEEKLY QUESTION, IMPLICIT MEASURE PRESENTATIONS, REPLICATION PREPAPER (DUE 3/10)


Implicit Measure Presentation Articles

1. Affective priming
2. The Sorting Paired Features Task
3. Affect Misattribution Procedure
4. Extrinsic Affective Simon Task

DUE: WEEKLY QUESTION; REPLICATION PROGRAMMING (DUE 3/17)


MARCH 21: NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK!
March 28: Data Analysis

DUE: PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PAPER (DUE 3/27)
No reading – you will begin data analysis for your replication project in class.

April 4: Scientific Writing

READINGS TO BE ASSIGNED BASED ON STUDENT INTEREST AND GOALS

April 11: Social Interactions

DUE: WEEKLY QUESTION, REPLICATION FINAL REPORT (DUE 4/16)


McNulty, J. K., Olson, M. A., Meltzer, A. L., & Shaffer, M. J. (2013). Though they may be unaware, newlyweds implicitly know whether their marriage will be satisfying. *Science, 342*(6162), 1119-1120.


April 18: Conscious Will, responsibility, and implications

DUE: WEEKLY QUESTION


DUE: PRESENTATION (4/25)
You will have 12 minutes to present on your final project, with the goal of receiving feedback for the final paper. You should come to class prepared not only to present your work, but to offer thoughtful feedback to your classmates.

MAY 2: NO CLASS (ADVISING DAY)
DUE: PEER DRAFT (DUE 5/5)

PEER WRITING WORKSHOP
DUE: PEER FEEDBACK
Details will be provided in class.

MAY 23: FINAL PAPER DUE
GUIDELINES: WEEKLY QUESTIONS

Beginning the second week of class, you will post questions to Moodle. You must read and consider your classmates’ questions before class. Questions are intended to help you organize your thoughts, provoke class discussion, and give you a sense of how your classmates approach the material. Think of your questions like Goldilocks and the three bears – they shouldn’t be too small (“The sample size wasn’t big enough in Study 1”) or too big (“What is memory?). **For the first two weeks of posting, indicate the type(s) of question you are asking (see below).**

Here are some questions that psychologists ask. They may be a starting point for generating questions:

- Are the hypotheses reasonable? Are they logical, given the literature reviewed? **HYP**
- Do the methods of the study allow the author(s) to test the hypotheses outlined? **METH**
- Are the statistical analyses appropriate? **STAT**
- Do the data support the inferences drawn in the article? **INFER**
- Are there alternative explanations for the findings? **ALT**
- Does anything you know (from other classes, other readings in this class, or being human) contradict or limit the theory or data in the article? **CONTR**
- Does the reading suggest any directions for future research or new hypotheses? **FUTURE**

While these questions should be well thought-out and follow the basic rules of English grammar, they are not a formal writing assignment, and do not need to be in APA format. This is your chance to share the questions or thoughts you had while completing the reading and to direct class discussion toward the areas that most interest the class. You can also include questions of fact or clarification (i.e., if you didn’t know a term or understand some piece of a reading), but these should be in addition to questions intended to generate discussion.

There are eight weeks listed as having questions due – your best seven questions will count toward your grade (or, you can skip any week but the first two weeks).
GUIDELINES: REPLICATION PROJECT

In this assignment, you will be performing a replication of a recent study. This assignment is inspired by the recent initiatives related to open science. “The gold standard for reliability is independent replication ... Replicating and extending allows researchers to create an interlocking edifice of findings, rather than an array of unconnected phenomena (Newell, 1973). What better way to promote this kind of cultural shift than to instill our students the values that we want our young scientists to hold?” (Frank & Saxe, 2012).

Replicating an existing study provides the opportunity to get to know a particular study very well, and to build on the skills you developed in Statistics and Research Methods in study design and data analysis. I hope this assignment will provide you as an individual and us collectively as a class the opportunity to practice psychological science, and to be active producers as well as consumers of knowledge.

You will be assigned (based on your expressed interest, as well as skills and desired areas for development) a recent study for replication, and placed intro a group. Your group will then create an online version of the study, and I will launch it on Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (mTurk), which “is a novel, open online marketplace for getting work done by others.” (Buhrmester et al., 2011). You will then analyze the data and complete the report.

Steps of the Replication Project

Description of replication project in class, assignment of articles

I will describe the replication project and the selected articles in class, and will assign groups based on student interests, skills, and desired development.

Complete list of measures for replication project

Your group will submit a complete list of all measures, questions, instructions, and other materials that will be used in your replication. See “Sample Complete Set of Measures” on Moodle for an example of what I might submit if I were conducting a replication of Study 3 from Correll et al. (2002), which we will read in class.

Finish programming replications, hand in “prepaper”

You will finish programming your replications and I will launch them on Mechanical Turk. You will also submit your replication “prepaper” which will consist of: 1. A very short introduction to the study; 2. A description of the method (including power analysis, description of your planned sample, materials, procedures, analysis plan, and description of any differences from the original study). You must follow the replication template posted on Moodle for this assignment. There is also an example report of a replication to give you a sense of the amount of detail required. Each group only needs to submit one paper.
Complete programming replications

1. I will set up a blank template for you on surveygizmo and give you the login information.

2. Program your study using surveygizmo. I have tried to select studies that will be straightforward to program, but you may well find that you need to problem solve and make decisions.

3. I will launch your study on mTurk.

Data analysis (in class)

We will conduct data analysis in class.

Replication “postpaper” due

This paper should include: 1. The text of your prepaper with edits based on my feedback (but not based on your data); 2. Your results (including description of how the data were prepared, a description of the results of your confirmatory analyses that conduct the tests you detailed in your prepaper analysis plan, and any exploratory analyses you chose to conduct); 3. Discussion (including a summary of the replication attempt and commentary). Again, you must follow the replication template posted on Moodle for this assignment. You may again find the example report of a replication useful.

Grading

Grades will reflect:

- Initiative and independence (while also seeking appropriate guidance) on programming the study and conducting data analysis.

- The quality of the replication (e.g., Did you include all needed measures? Did you have the appropriate measures? Were your analyses completely and competently conducted and reported?)

- Quality of the written report (Did it have all of the required components? Was the writing clear and free of grammatical and typographical errors? Were you thoughtful and accurate in interpreting your results and providing any commentary?)

- Were you an outstanding group member? You will (confidentially) evaluate and grade the other members of your group for their contributions, and will be evaluated for your work in the group.
GUIDELINES: FINAL PAPER

In your final paper you will propose an experiment that tests a hypothesis related to automaticity and social life. Your experiment must be a true experiment – at least one variable must be manipulated. The study should not be a correlational design (i.e., testing whether one variable is associated with another variable). Your project can cover any topic related to what we have covered in class – it may be a focused look at something specific we’ve looked at in, or it may explore a topic not covered in the syllabus. In either case, you will be expected to complete additional research beyond the readings on the syllabus for your project.

Initial proposal. In this 2 page (double-spaced) proposal, you should present your study to the reader in a condensed way. You should have a minimum of six citations at this point, at least four of which are empirical articles not included in our syllabus. Your proposal should address the following questions:

- What is your research question?
- Why is this research important?
- What previous literature led you to your questions?
- How will you test your hypothesis?
- What are your predicted results?

Draft. Your draft will consist of at least six continuous pages of writing of your final paper, and an outline (that makes very clear to the reader what the final paper will argue and look like) for the unwritten sections. These pages can be any section of the paper.

Final paper. This paper will be written like an empirical journal article, although with a “Predicted Results” section rather than an actual Results Section. In the Introduction, provide a clear and logical justification. It should review the literature relevant to your study, while leading up to your particular research question. Before you move onto the Method section, you should have clearly stated your study’s aims and hypotheses. The Method section should be detailed enough that a reader would be able to replicate your study. Include all materials (in Appendices if needed) that you would use in your study. The Results section should describe the analytical techniques and predicted results for your study (include at least one figure and one table in APA format). In the Conclusion, restate your aims, and “findings.” How does your study answer your question, and what inferences can be drawn from this research?

Additionally, you should include a cover memo that 1. Summarizes any questions and concerns that arose during the review process; and 2. Describes how you addressed these concerns in the final draft (or, if you made a principled decision NOT to address a particular concern, describes your rationale). For example, here is a portion of a response I wrote in a revision of a journal article:

Additionally, you requested that we “explain why your study is important to readers from many countries.” ... Explicitly note, early in the Introduction, that you are looking at attitudes of U.S. college students...” and suggested that we “add a sentence very early in the paper that all studies discussed are U.S. studies of college students unless otherwise noted.” In a similar vein, Reviewer 2 noted that there was “No discussion of the race/ethnicity of your participants. These are primarily white students, a percentage of Asian students and a few Latino/African American” and asked “How does this influence what you found?” Similarly, she or he noted that we “need to discuss differences in science fields - biology vs. physics.”
We have taken several steps to address these issues. As you suggested, we noted early on (p. 6) that the studies reviewed were based on American or Canadian samples. Where possible, we also added work describing the role of stereotypes about science and gender in locations other than North America, which included the following changes:

- **Discussion of studies investigating stereotype threat that used samples comprised of populations other than American or Canadian residents** (p. 7)
- **An expanded discussion of the magnitude and influence of implicit stereotypes about gender and science in a large, cross-national study** (pp. 8-9)
- **Addition of a "Caveats" section to the General Discussion** (pp. 30-32), in which we describe reasons to think that the same processes we observed would (or would not) emerge in other cultural contexts. This section also discusses differences in our results by participants' ethnicity, and acknowledges Reviewer 2's excellent observation that specific science subfields may differ in their gendered stereotypes.

**Additional guidelines**

- Papers should be between 12 and 14 double-spaced pages of text, plus a Title Page, Abstract, References, and Appendices. Page numbers should be included in the top right-hand corner
- Papers should follow APA style
- All papers should be carefully proofread for spelling and grammar before being turned in
- Papers should reflect substantial outside research
- You must work independently on this paper

**Oral presentation.** Finally, at the end of the semester you will share your research proposals with your classmates. In these 12-14 minutes presentations, you will describe your research question, and the study you've designed to test it. The presentation should be well-organized and engaging, and should use Powerpoint or its equivalent. Time will be allotted for discussion and feedback from me and your peers.
Final Paper – Peer Writing Workshop

During the end of the semester, we will switch from emphasizing reading others’ research to producing original work. The final project will culminate in a written research proposal. You will have ample opportunity for feedback on your final paper via an initial proposal, a writing workshop based on a draft, and an oral presentation to your peers.

You will make written comments on your classmates’ peer drafts, and your work will be graded. I take your work on this assignment extremely seriously for two reasons. First, your ability to constructively evaluate others’ work is a crucial part of your own intellectual development. Second, this process can be enormously valuable to writers but only if the editors do their jobs well. I expect that, like other seminars I’ve taught at Bard, our class will develop a lovely and supportive community; this is the assignment where maintaining those norms of care, respect, and a willingness to constructively challenge one another are the most crucial.

Peer Editing

Submission of Drafts

A. Submit your peer draft and self-reflection worksheet to Kristin and your group members.

B. Review your notes on good writing for Psychology.

Peer Editing

C. Print out hard copies of each peer draft.

D. Read the first peer draft.
   a. Skim it the first time you read it – don’t make any notes in the margins.
   b. Complete the top half of the peer evaluation worksheet (posted on Moodle).
   c. Reread the draft in more detail. Go slowly through the draft and make comments in the margins if needed. While you can comment on features such as APA style, grammar, and spelling, the more important comments focus on logic, clarity, organization, and use of evidence.
   d. Complete the rest of the peer evaluation worksheet.
   e. Write a cover memo to your peer summarizing your overall evaluation of the paper. You can think of these as being similar to the end-of-paper comments you get from me.
   f. Bring two copies of your in-text comments to the peer writing workshop (one for the writer, and one for me).
   g. Bring one copy of your peer evaluation worksheet and cover memo to class (for the writer). The cover memo will comment on general qualities of the draft, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. More details will be on the evaluation worksheet.
   h. Bring another copy of your peer evaluation worksheet and cover memo to class (for me). This copy ONLY should include a recommended grade for the paper.

E. Come to the workshop prepared to discuss your own and others’ work in your writing groups.

F. In all aspects of this assignment, remember that you are speaking to a peer and colleague and your goal is to deliver constructive feedback in a way that enables the writer to improve rather than to show how smart you are (we all know you’re very smart). For example, writing “The language of this paper is a barrier to the reader.” without noting places where the paper is clear and giving specific suggestions for improvement does not facilitate revision.
CHECKLIST: MAKE SURE YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL OF THE FOLLOWING PARTS OF THE ASSIGNMENT!

Writers: Submit the following to your group members and to Kristin by May 5 (11pm)

☐ Peer draft
☐ Self-reflection worksheet (on Moodle)

Editors: Bring the Following materials to the writing workshop in hard copy

☐ Two copies (one for the writer, one for Kristin) of your in-text comments
☐ One copy of your peer evaluation worksheet and cover memo for the writer
☐ A second copy of the peer evaluation worksheet and cover memo with a suggested grade for Kristin
**Clear statement of question**

Your question should be easily identifiable to the reader. Moreover, it should remain the focal point of your argument. At the end of the paper, if someone asked a casual reader “What was the author’s point?” he or she should be able to answer.

**“Thesis-like” quality of question.**

The central question should:

- Be the basis for your argument and proposed study
- Be compelling
- Provide evidence of originality of thought, and integration of the material beyond what we’ve discussed in class or covered in the readings

**Evidence that there is empirical support for thesis**

Your argument should be based on empirical evidence that comes from studies that are clearly described. The evidence to support your assertions should be clear. (If you make assumptions, be explicit that they are assumptions and that your argument rests on their validity.) You should have at least ten empirical sources that are NOT from our class readings.

**Logic of argument**

Your argument should be clear and logical. An excellent paper will avoid sweeping generalizations, will be objective in considering evidence, and will carefully address counterarguments to the thesis. Ideas should progress linearly.

**Study design**

Your proposed study should be a good test of your hypothesis. It should be well-thought-out, and free of any major confounds or artifacts.

**Overall writing style**

Prose should be straightforward, clear, and easy to follow. Your paper should be well-organized and written for a professional audience. The paper should be carefully proofread before turning it in.

**APA style**

The paper should follow APA format. In particular, in-text citations and your reference list should be accurate.

**Response to feedback**

Your cover memo for the final paper thoroughly describes how you addressed the feedback you received, and the final paper incorporates suggestions from your peer editors and me.