

Social Psychology

SSC2019

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2017-2018

Period 2

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Introduction

Social psychology is all about the concept of *social influence*. People do not exist on their own but are inherently social. Within these social structures, people influence others and are also influenced by others. There are highly visible forms of influencing other people's behaviour, like talking a friend into going bungee-jumping ("Come on, we'll all go! You don't want to spoil the fun, do you?"). Television ads are also a good example of influence: A good commercial can dramatically increase the sale of a product.

But social influence goes *beyond* behaviour; it also involves thoughts and feelings. It is hard to resist the influence of your friends, fellow students, and teachers who surround you. We will do all we can to make you think scientifically. Yet, because of the numerous discussions you will have in the tutorial groups, the ideas of your fellow students will undoubtedly influence your own thinking. Apart from the examples we have given so far, there are also less visible, subtler forms of influence. The mere presence of other people influences our behaviour. In other words: Other people don't even have to *do* or *say* anything in order to influence us!

We can now come to a definition of social psychology: ***Social psychology is the scientific study of the ways in which people's behaviour, thoughts, and feelings are influenced by others.***

An important part of the definition is the term *scientific*. Social psychologists try to *explain* and *predict* phenomena that involve social influence. They do so by developing theories and then testing these theories in their research. Many of the scientific explanations that will be discussed in this course may seem obvious at first sight. But don't be fooled: It is often difficult to provide good explanations and make good predictions.

If we succeed in surprising you every now and then by showing you that reality is different than you might think at first sight, then we have fulfilled our purpose!

Course Objectives

The first objective of this course is to teach you social psychological theories and models that explain how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour are influenced by the implicit or explicit presence of other people. Second, you will gain knowledge about how theories and models explaining social influence and attitude change can be translated into practice or relate to everyday life. Third, via the practical assignment you will make contact with your self-perceived "out groups," applying social psychological concepts to your experiences and perhaps reducing some of your own stereotypes and prejudice in the process.

Previous Student Evaluations

Last year, 47 UCM students took part in this course and assessed it as "good" or "excellent" on every evaluated aspect (response rate: 89.36%). The overall excellence of the course was evaluated with a 4.32 on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *poor* to 5 = *excellent*. The general evaluation of the tutors on the same scale was 4.62. There were no scores below 4.07. We were, of course, very happy about this positive feedback because it seems to reflect our own enthusiasm for this course in particular and social psychology in general. However, last year students had valuable suggestions for improvements, which we implemented this year. Students' suggestions led to the following adaptations:

- In the past years students stated that they prefer lectures that go *beyond* their readings. Therefore, we have invited young, enthusiastic researchers to give lectures about topics they have studied for their PhD and early-career research. Last year, this was a great success and all lectures were evaluated as engaging and interesting (3.80 or higher).
- This year we will again use the textbook of Hewstone, Stroebe, and Jonas to introduce you to Social Psychology. The book has many contributions of European and US social psychologists. Students reported that they found the book very informative but also "dense". Therefore, I cut down the e-readers to ensure a manageable workload.
- A new element since last year concerns the inclusion of online materials (e.g., podcasts, YouTube clips, TED talks). We hope that this will make Social Psychology more "alive" and make the discussions in your tutorial group even more interesting.

We hope this acknowledgement of how we have dealt with former student evaluations shows that we take your suggestions very seriously. We hope this will motivate you even more to fill out the evaluation form at the end of the course. This may be of great benefit to next year's students, as you are now profiting from the trouble last year's students took to fill out the evaluation form.

Essential Textbook

This course uses the following textbook (there are copies in the UCM Reading Room): Hewstone, M., Stroebe, W., & Jonas, K. (2015). *An introduction to Social Psychology* (6th Ed). Chichester: Wiley. ISBN: 978-1-118-82353-8.

Additional Reading and E-Reader

Students in previous years have sometimes found the Hewstone et al. (2015) textbook too superficial. Therefore, if you are looking for a deeper read, you can also consult the following book: Dickerson, P. (2012). *Social psychology: Traditional and critical perspectives*. Boston: Pearson Education.

Note that the book of Dickerson should be considered *additional* reading. It is not a substitute for the essential textbook because it is less extensive (it does not give you an overview of the whole field). There

are five copies of the Dickerson book in the UCM Reading Room. The book is especially interesting for more advanced students who wish to go beyond the standard literature.

There is also an E-Reader with essential and additional literature. Please also check out our suggestions for online material as well!

Tutorial Groups

Tutorial groups are the pivot of our teaching system. In this course, there are 10 tutorial meetings and two presentation meetings. Each tutorial group will pre-discuss a problem. You will try to meet the learning goals by studying the literature and online materials. In the next tutorial group you will discuss what you have learned.

It is important to realize that the tutor of your group is *not* selected on the basis of his or her knowledge of the content of the materials covered in this course. Tutors are selected on the basis of the excellent evaluation scores they received while being a tutor at the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience or elsewhere. All tutors have a background in Psychology, but not per se in Social Psychology. Their background will help them in providing most answers to your questions, but do not expect them to be the expert on the topic under discussion. The tutors and the course coordinator meet every week to prepare tutorials to ensure that discussions are consistent across groups.

Lectures

Lectures are scheduled about one of the topics dealt with in the tutorial groups and often go beyond the prescribed literature. You are strongly advised to attend all the lectures. The subject matter that is discussed during the lectures concerns compulsory subject matter for the exam in this course.

Mandatory Attendance

For the tutorial groups a mandatory attendance of 85% is applicable. This particular course consists of 10 meetings implying that attending 8 meetings is satisfactory. Attending 7 meetings (and thus missing 3 meetings) means that you have to apply for a catch-up assignment. If you did not miss more than 3 meetings, you may take the exam, but the validity of the score on your exam will be conditional until your catch-up assignment has been judged as satisfactory. In case you miss more than 3 meetings, you will automatically fail the course. For the presentation meetings in week 6 (two meetings) a mandatory attendance of 100% is required (see below). If you have a very urgent reason causing you to miss a meeting you should discuss this beforehand with the course coordinator.

Practical Assignment Requirements

During the course, you will work on a practical assignment (see Page 29). In Week 6 we have planned the presentations of students' practical assignments (i.e., two sessions, see Preliminary Course Schedule). **Full attendance (100%) at these two sessions is required.** Failing to attend these sessions means that you

cannot hand in the practical assignment, which in turn means that you have failed the course. Again: If you have a very urgent reason to miss a meeting you should discuss this beforehand (and **not** after missing a practical session) with the course coordinator.

There is a strict deadline for handing in the practical assignment: Make sure you hand this in on time! The practical assignment is described in detail in the last section of the course manual (see **Page 29**) and the course coordinator will provide further explanation during the opening lecture.

Preliminary Course Schedule

Week	Activity	Topic
1 (9)	Tutorial Group 1: Task 1 Lecture 1 (Jessica Alleva) Tutorial Group 2: Task 1-2	Social Cognition Introduction to Social Psychology Social Cognition/Social Perception
2 (10)	Tutorial Group 3: Task 2-3 No lecture Tutorial Group 4: Task 3-4	Social Perception/The Self The Self/Attitudes
3 (11)	Tutorial Group 5: Task 4-5 Lecture 2 (Jessica Alleva) Tutorial Group 6: Task 5-6	Attitudes/Body Image The (Social) Psychology of Body Image Body Image/Attitude Change
4 (12)	Tutorial Group 7: Task 6-7 Lecture 3 (Jill Lobbestael) Tutorial Group 8: Task 7-8	Attitude Change/Aggression The (Social) Psychology of Aggression Aggression /Attraction
5 (13)	Tutorial Group 9: Task 8-9 Lecture 4 (Kai Karos) Tutorial Group 10: Task 9-10	Attraction/Group Pressure The (Social) Psychology of Evil Group Pressure/Prejudice & Discrimination
6 (14)	Tutorial Group 11: Task 10 No lecture Tutorial Group 12:	Prejudice & Discrimination/Student Presentations Student Presentations/Course Evaluation
7 (15)	Exam	

Exam

The exam will take place in Week 7, the last week of the course. The exam will be a mix of multiple choice questions and open essay questions: There will be 45 multiple choice questions (of which you have to answer 40) and 3 open essay questions (of which you have to answer 2). The exam will assess your knowledge about the literature (basic textbook, e-reader, lectures). There may be a word limit for your answers to the open essay questions to stimulate you to answer them concisely.

Course Grade

Your final grade will be composed as follows:

1. grade practical assignment report (minimal grade 5.5) = 30%
2. grade practical assignment presentation (minimal grade 5.5) = 10%
3. grade exam - multiple choice questions = 40%

4. grade exam – open essay questions = 20%

Re-Sit

The re-sit is only open for students who have:

1. complied with the compulsory attendance requirement,
2. handed in the practical assignment report (minimal grade 5.5) during the module,
3. given their practical assignment presentation (minimal grade 5.5) during the module, and
4. took part in and made a serious attempt at the first exam.

Coordinator

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Task 1: Social Cognition

Riddle

A father and his son are involved in a car accident. The father dies on the spot. The son is severely injured and is rushed to the hospital emergency room. He needs an operation to survive. The surgeon comes in, looks at the victim, and says: "I can't operate on him. He is my son".



What would you do?

You walk home, alone, after a dinner party at your friend's place. It is only a 15 min walk but you feel a bit uneasy because it is already quite late. The streets are dark and deserted. Suddenly you see a group of young men, and they are heading in your direction. They wear baseball caps and hoodies. They have not yet noticed you. You can still decide to turn into another street and avoid them, although that would mean a detour. What would you do?



Think Fast!

Question	Your answers
1 Think of 12 things you do to preserve our environment. How environmentally friendly are you on a scale from 1 to 10? (10 is the friendliest)	
2 In English, are there more words that start with the letter 'r' (e.g., rose) or more words that have 'r' as the third letter (e.g., burn)?	
3 Which animals kill more people in the US: sharks or horses?	
4 Think of 3 situations in which you have acted assertively. How assertive are you on a scale of 1 to 10? (a 10 indicates high assertiveness)	
5 Linda is 31 years old, single, outspoken, and very bright. She majored in philosophy. As a student, she was deeply concerned with issues of discrimination and social justice, and also participated in antinuclear demonstrations. Which of the two alternatives is more probable? 1. Linda is a bank teller 2. Linda is a bank teller and active in the feminist movement	
6 Do this with your entire tutor group: Please put the timer of your watch or mobile phone on 60 seconds. In these next 60 seconds, DO NOT TO THINK ABOUT A WHITE BEAR. BUT, if you DO happen to think about a white bear, mark this on a piece of paper.	

Task 2: Explaining Our Own and Other People's Actions

There's something about Richard...

Ann meets Joel and asks him about his course choices for next semester. He explains to her that he has chosen an elective course in occupational psychology. Ann tells him that another student, Richard, has selected the same course and that they will be most likely in the same tutorial group because occupational psychology does not attract a lot of students. "And", she continues, "I am curious to know what you will think of Richard. If I were asked to describe him, I'd say he is *intelligent, determined, hardworking, cold, and athletic.*"

Ann walks away, leaving Joel in confusion. What to think of this Richard person? And, why did Ann share her impression of Richard with him in the first place? He did not ask her if she knew any other students who made a similar choice. She brought this up herself, and it felt like gossiping. He should avoid Ann in the future; she seems like a very judgmental person. Or did she mean well, even tried to sort of warn him about Richard? Maybe he is fussing too much about this. It was just simple small talk in the corridor and that's what students do when they do not know what to say to each other: talk about courses and other people.

Well-done!

A child comes home with a good grade on a math test. What do you think of the two reactions of these hypothetical parents? What message do they convey to their child?

Parent A: "I'm so proud of you. You are such a smart kid! You must have a special math talent!"

Parent B: "I'm so proud of you. I know you've worked really hard for this test and now see what a great result!"



True story about your former course coordinator Carolien Martijn

Back in the old days, many students forgot to silence their cell phones during lectures. Therefore I always reminded students before my lecture to do this. I also enjoy demonstrations during my lectures to explain psychological principles more vividly. For a lecture about how people explain behaviour, I approached one of the students that I knew well. The plan was that I would unobtrusively call him during my lecture and that he would put the volume on max. That way, everybody would hear his phone ringing. And then I would act as if I was very angry with him. The goal was to discuss with students how they had perceived the event and how they had interpreted an unusual situation: What did they think of my behaviour, of his behaviour, how did they feel during the event, etc.

So we did.

When his phone rang, I acted like I was incredibly angry, infuriated. "I hate it when cell phones interrupt my story! Didn't I explicitly ask you to switch off the damn thing? Are you too stupid to understand a simple request or do you simply not care?" He acted as if he was very shocked by my reaction and literally shrank in his chair.

When I was finished shouting, the lecture hall was dead silent. The, one girl said with contempt: "What A Bitch!"

Then the student and I explained it was a set-up for educational purposes and we had our discussion. But it became quickly clear to me that students did not like me that much anymore. Normally, I have friendly chats with students in the corridor but this group of students hardly said "Hi" when I saw them outside class...



Task 3: The Self – Who Are You?

“To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom” is a famous quote attributed to Socrates. But in order to know yourself, you need to know what the “self” is.



Who am I?

Everybody has a “self” and we sincerely hope that you have one too. How did you learn about who you are?

Love thyself, truly.



Control yourself

Many people make New Year’s resolutions: I’ll study harder, be more attentive to my friends and family, exercise more, and eat healthier! What these resolutions have in common is that they all require self-control. But are there limits to self-control?

Task 4: Attitudes

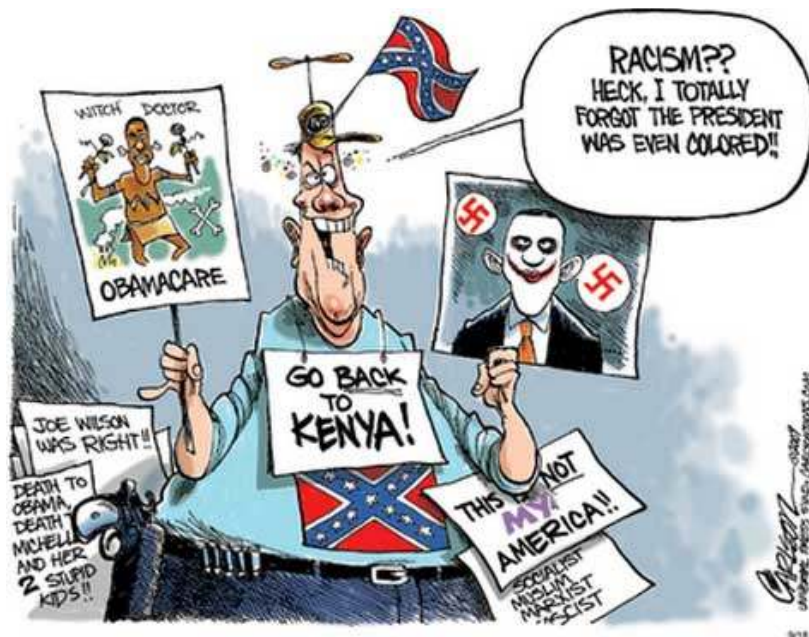
What voters say

"I don't like her, I just don't trust her. I find her arrogant and cold."

"I think Hillary Clinton could do whatever she puts her mind to. I really do. She's incredibly dedicated to public service, she is smart as a whip, and she's effective. America needs her."

"It's about time a woman becomes president of the United States. I will certainly vote for her."

What people say vs. what people think



Do people know what they think?

Find out your hidden thoughts about a topic of your choice. Go to: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/> (you can take the tests without registering and skip the questions about your demographics).

Believing is doing?

In principle, many people believe that they should protect the planet, protect their health, and strive for a just world. In practice, many people take planes to exotic holiday destinations, refrain from using sunscreen, and do not donate to Amnesty International.

Task 5: All Roads Lead to Negative Body Image

Part 1

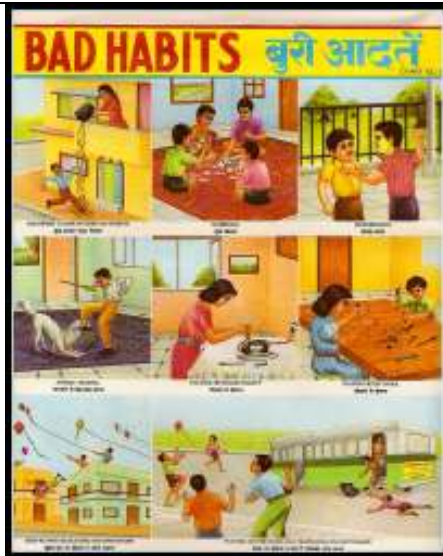


After having looked at these images, you might feel unhappy about your own body. Studies show that this applies for both women and men.

Part 2

“Wait a minute,” one of your Know-It-All peers remarks in response to Part 1. “Everyone is exposed to these kinds of images, but not everyone feels unhappy about their body!”

Task 6: Attitude Change



Money for your attitude

Participants in Group A take part in a boring experiment: For half an hour they have to turn 1-euro coins from heads to tails and back. Then experimenter explains that it is hard for her to find participants for the experiment: "Will you please tell the participants waiting outside that they are going to do an entertaining task? I'll give you 1 dollar if you help us." Most participants complied with his request.

Participants in Group B perform the same boring task. Afterwards they were also asked to tell the next participants that the task was entertaining. But they received 20 Euros for their help.

At the end of the experiment, all participants in Group A and B were asked the extent to which they liked the (boring) experiment themselves. Which participants said they enjoyed the experiment more? Group A or B?

Task 7: Aggression

There was a fight in the schoolyard today, started by Melvin, 9 years old. Not for the first time, either. The teachers discuss what happened and possible causes and consequences. See part of their discussion below:



Mr. Gene Heat's vision:

I think we should not exaggerate here. Melvin is a healthy boy and boys are simply more aggressive than girls, different hormones and all that. Moreover, it happened on a suffocating, hot day, I remember feeling irritated about nothing myself. He was probably all stirred up and took it out on the first person that stood in his way. Let's give him a reprimand and maybe we should keep children like Melvin inside in our air-conditioned classrooms on days like that.

Mrs. Carry Catharsis' vision:

I can relate to that. I have the feeling that Melvin has great trouble expressing his feelings and that all his aggressive energy keeps building up. At a certain point he explodes, not much to do about that. Maybe we can offer him a different outlet, some extra physical exercise classes perhaps? And teach him to hit a boxing ball instead of a child when he is feeling angry?

Mrs. Melody Media's vision:

We should see this in the broader societal context. Actually, there are a lot of fights going on lately. Nowadays, young children play aggressive games, watch violent series on television or the Internet, and think that hitting someone is a normal way of solving conflicts. I spoke to Melvin's mother and she told me she was worried because he is spending so much time on the Internet. His older brothers allow him to play games such as Call of Duty or Grand Theft Auto. We should organise an evening for parents, invite an expert, and discuss the possible effects of violent media on their children.

Task 8: Doctor Love



The Girl Next Door

Dear Dr Love,

I am 18 years old and in love with S., the girl next door. We have known each other since we were little kids. About three years ago, we discovered that we felt more for each other than just friendship. We are very happy and fantasize about having a home and kids together when we are a bit older. My friends make fun of me. They advise me that I should break up with S. and enjoy some freedom. They think I am a bore and that it is a bit odd to be in a relationship with the girl I grew up with. Dr. Love, I need your advice! Is it abnormal to fall in love with the girl next door?

Opposites Attract?

Dear Dr Love,

I'm a 29 year-old woman. After a few short relationships, I'm looking for a steady relationship with a nice woman. Because I have a demanding job and not much time to meet new people, I subscribed to a dating agency. The reactions were overwhelming: I received over 150 letters! But now I have a new problem: based on what criteria should I select my dates? The friend who is going to help me sort the letters tells me that I should look for a woman with a comparable background: We should share the same interests, hobbies, education, work, etc. But I'm not so sure about that. Shouldn't I go for something completely different? Don't they say that opposites attract?

Out of Reach?

Dear Dr Love,

I'm secretly in love with a guy who is studying at the same college. He is absolutely gorgeous: tall, athletic, you know, he looks like Jude Law. But I'm afraid I don't stand a chance. It's always the pretty girls who get guys like him. I'm not particularly beautiful but people say I have a nice smile and a great personality. What should I do? Should I take the plunge and ask him out? Is physical appearance really that important?

Daddy on a Date?

Dear Dr Love,

I'm writing you about my father. My mother passed away 15 years ago and he has not been in a relationship since. He kind of manages on his own, but I still think it would be better for him to find a nice partner again. What do you think, should I encourage him to start dating? I am not a psychologist like you but I think people are happier and healthier when they have someone who cares for them and they can care for.

The Thrill is Gone

Dear Dr Love,

I've been happily married for 11 years now. I love my wife: She is funny, smart, caring, and beautiful. We were married quite young. In the beginning we were passionately in love: I could only think about her and neither sleep or eat when she was with me. We still have a good sex life but it doesn't feel like in the beginning. I realized this when I saw my younger brother who is head-over-heels with his new girlfriend. He reminded me of myself 10 years ago and it feels like I've lost something. Can you help me?

Equal Affections

Dear Dr Love,

My partner and I fight a lot about the housework. I work four days a week and my partner works more than fulltime (she works at the hospital). I do most of the housework, which is ok, but I want her to do something, too. We've talked about this and agreed that she would take care of dinner two nights a week. What she does is take me out for dinner on one evening, and orders pizza, sushi, or Thai the other evening! I feel like she's taking the easy way out! But my partner replies that she kept her part of the deal: She takes care of dinner and how she does it is up to her. It feels so unfair!

Task 9: Groups

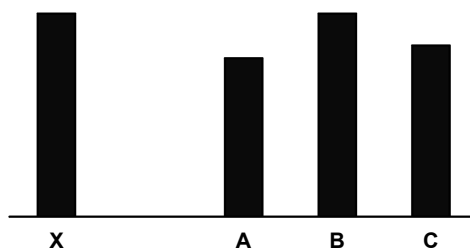
Part A

Many decisions that affect our lives are taken in groups. For example, groups of people decide on laws, on train schedules, or on organizing Lowlands. Also, in your own tutorial groups decisions are taken. It seems that the underlying assumption is that decisions made by a group of people are better than individual decisions. However, there are examples of group decisions that turned out to be disastrous (as some would argue for the decision to go to war in Iraq). Whether in those cases an individual's decision would have been better remains to be answered...

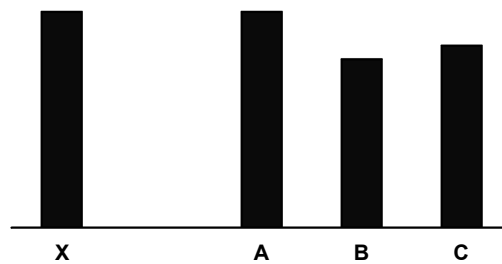


Part B1: The Power of the Group

Imagine that you are a participant in the following experiment. You walk in the room where the experiment is to be held. There are six other students present. You're all seated on one side of a long table. The experimenter is standing about 3 meters away from you and turns up a card with the following display on it:



The question is simple. Which line (A, B, C) has the same length as the left line (X)? The correct answer is, of course, B. The first student also says “B”; the next five students also say “B”; and you join the row with the right answer and respond “B.” The experimenter turns up the next card, and the answer is again very clear. Everyone also gives the same answer. It all starts to look like a really boring experiment when the experimenter turns up the following card:



The first student says “C” and you think: “He wasn’t paying attention.” The next student also says “C.” You start to wonder who is crazy when the next four students all say “C.” Confused, you stare at the card; the experimenter waits impatiently. He wants an answer. What would you do? Go along with the group or be the only one to give a different answer?

Asch (1956) conducted this classic experiment. In reality, the other six students were hired by him to give the incorrect answers. About one-third of his subjects conformed to the judgment of the group on a majority of the trials and approximately one-fourth stuck to their own opinion on all of the trials. The rest conformed on a number of trials but not the majority. In addition, all of the subjects reported feeling very uncomfortable during the experiment.

Part B2: Shocking

In 1963, the Social Psychologist Stanley Milgram invited 40 healthy volunteers to participate in an experiment which was introduced to them as a memory study. Milgram, the participants were told, wanted to know whether receiving punishment influenced memory (*in fact, the test was all about obedience to authority*). After arriving at the laboratory, they were introduced to a second participant and the experimenter. The second participant was actually an assistant (‘confederate’) to the experimenter. The experiment required that one participant played the role of ‘teacher’ and the other (confederate) the role of ‘pupil’. A coin was tossed to decide who would be the teacher and who would be the pupil during the experiment, but it was arranged in such a way that the assistant of the experimenter always turned out to be the pupil.

In the presence of the participant who was the teacher, the ‘pupil’ (confederate) was tied to a chair and electrodes were attached to his wrists. The pupil had to learn word associations. First he studied a series of word pairs; he was then presented the first word from a pair and had to select the associated word from four alternatives. To indicate his choice, he had to press one of four buttons that lit up a lamp where the teacher was sitting, which now was in a different space from where the pupil was. The teacher could hear the pupil but not see him. The task of the teacher was to give the pupil a shock as soon as he responded incorrectly.

The shock generator had 30 different levels: The level of the shock to be administered varied from 15 to 450 volts. On the button panel in front of the teacher, the level of shock was indicated in text and voltage from “Light Shock” (15-60 V), on the one end, to “Danger: Severe shock” (375-420 V) and “XXX” (435-450 V), on the other end.

After each incorrect answer (and the pupil answered incorrectly on a considerable number of occasions), the teacher was instructed to increase the voltage of the shock to be administered by 15 volts. The pupil began to moan after a

few shocks, later to scream, and he pounded on the wall that separated the teacher and ‘pupil’ when the shock voltage reached 300. From that moment on he no longer answered the questions asked of him. The teacher then usually turned to the experimenter, who stoically indicated that no answer meant an incorrect answer. The pupil simply had to be administered his shocks according to the scheme.

In the table below, indicate the maximum voltage that each of the 40 participants administered to the pupil. The number of participants who stopped for the first three voltage levels — that is, refused administration of these shock levels — has already been filled in. Fill in how many participants, you think, stopped at each subsequent level.

Number of participants for whom this was the maximum	
Slight Shock	
15	0
30	0
45	0
60	...
Moderate Shock	
75	...
90	...
105	...
120	...
Strong Shock	
135	...
150	...
165	...
180	...
Very Strong Shock	
195	...
210	...
225	...
240	...
Intense Shock	
255	...
270	...
285	...
300	...

Extreme Intensity Shock

315	...
330	...
345	...
360	...

Danger - Severe Shock

375	...
390	...
405	...
420	...

- XXX -

435	...
450	...

Task 10: Prejudice and Discrimination

Dear colleagues,

On September 15th more than 100 German social psychologists wrote an open letter to the Chancellor of the German Federal Republic, the German Parliament, and the Parliaments of the German federal states to express their scientific concerns about the possible consequences of the current political treatment of immigration for the German and the European civil society. The original letter can be found at <http://www.uni-marburg.de/fb04/team-wagner/aktuelles> . Below you find an English translation which might stimulate our internal scientific debates and perhaps even our external presentation.

Best, Uli Wagner

15/09/2015

Dealing with the flight to Germany – necessary political measures from a social-psychological perspective to:

The chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr Angela Merkel
Members of the German Bundestag
The Prime Ministers of the German Bundesländer
The members of the parliaments of the German Bundesländer

Dear Chancellor of Germany, Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Surveys currently show a great approval of refugees to find shelter in Germany. The German population's support of refugees is impressive. However, these positive attitudes are at stake since they may not be stable and may shift to condemnation or even active rejection and violence, at least for parts of society. Such a development would have massive ramifications for refugees and the social cohesion in Germany and Europe. From a social-psychological perspective, some developments are alarming but – with the respective volition – also evitable. Therefore, we feel compelled to comment on the issue from a scientific perspective.

Both the support and the rejection of people and groups of people strongly depend on feelings. Empathy (i.e., the comprehension of the others' situation and empathizing with their mental state) drives altruistic behaviour. In contrast, prejudices, discrimination, and violence are especially promoted by anxiety, but also by anger. The current state of immigration to Germany is unclear. News about large numbers of people who come to Germany on a daily basis are unsettling. Many people are not sure how to assess this situation. They fetch information from friends, social networks, politics, and the media.

1. Politicians, opinion leaders, public authorities, and the media must provide clear answers and solution processes. This reduces uncertainty, anxiety, and anger. Moreover, people have a need to live in a foreseeable and just world. If we experience others or ourselves to be permanently exposed to injustice, discrimination, or violence, we tend to blame the victims. There is a great danger that refugees will be blamed for their fate if their suffering is not attenuated. It is necessary and overdue for policy makers to make a serious effort to pass legislation that enables asylum seekers to apply for refuge without having to risk their lives first. Clarification also means a humane accommodation and admission process as well as a fair and expeditious decision about the asylum application. There is a lack of alternatives for people that come to Germany and Europe out of economic hardship – asylum applications cannot be an appropriate solution in this respect. Clear answers are especially needed about how Germany and Europe deal with wars, disastrous economic conditions, and discriminations in the countries of origin, because these conditions push people into flight.

2. The radical right tries to take advantage of the uncertainty about the immigration discourse for own political goals. They create horror scenarios in order to fuel negative emotions and thus rejection in the population. Political exploitation of refugees' hardship is unacceptable for democratic parties.

3. Negative emotions, rejection, discrimination, and violence towards others especially emerge with the impression that the others take something away from "us" or threaten important values or lifestyles that are important to us. This danger arises predominantly when deficient funding (e.g., on communal level) causes a resource conflict between the accommodation of refugees and public facilities or services. The admission of humans should be related to the least possible restrictions for the people already living here.

4. Immigration is – in the medium and the long run – a win for everyone involved, a fact that is not nearly enough considered and emphasized. The age distribution will change for the better: More young people will help to secure retirement benefits. Immigration will contribute to overcome skill shortage for many professions. Also, immigration will help to preserve infrastructure on a local level such as day care centres, schools, sports clubs, or small stores that would otherwise have to close in a shrinking community.

5. Uncertainty about how to deal with refugees is high particularly for people that have no experience with immigration – humans especially fear the unknown. Contact helps to overcome prejudice. Surveys (including current ones about the acceptance of refugees in Germany) have been showing more rejection of immigrants for people in the Eastern part than the Western part of Germany, which, among other things, dates back to a historically caused lower amount of immigration in the East and, thus, reduced chances of experience with immigration. The allocation of refugees in Germany must cover to a greater extent those federal states, regions, and neighbourhoods that until now only experienced few benefits from immigration. Otherwise these regions are in danger of being outpaced in their development of intercultural competence. In addition, especially rural regions that don't prosper can improve their infrastructure through immigration.

6. The currently diminishing solidarity of the European Union pervasively threatens its reputation, which will strongly damage the citizens' identification and their willingness to support this community. Europe must find a collective, solidary, and humanitarian approach to the so called refugee crisis.

Dear Mrs. Merkel, ladies and gentlemen,

The above mentioned remarks are concerned with current problems. We did not address medium and long term measures. A majority of the people that come to us as refugees today will stay permanently. Success or failure of their integration will shape the future face of Germany and Europe. Also, for the moment we ignored the current situation of refugees in the reception centres and local communities. From the perspective of our discipline, improvements are also necessary in these contexts.

for more than 100 Social Psychologists:

Prof Dr Ulrich Wagner,
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Practical Assignment

You will work on your practical assignment during the course and prepare a short report. You will also present your work to your fellow students and the tutor in Week 6 of the course. On the next page, the practical assignment is described in detail. Additionally, you will receive information from your tutor and in the opening lecture.

You will receive a score for your report and a score for your presentation. Your score of the report and the presentation should each be a 5.5 or higher. The report and presentation is 40% of your final grade.

The practical assignment should be handed in on time and there is a 100% attendance for the two presentation meetings. In case of emergencies, contact your tutor or the course coordinator before the deadline.

Taking Social Psychology to the Streets:

Humans of Maastricht

These days, it seems like people are becoming more and more polarised in their views, tightly embracing their “superior” in-group while pushing away and even demonising the “inferior” out-group. These tendencies can be harmful, as they can lead to less cooperation and communication between people, and to extremist views, prejudice, discrimination, and even violence toward others.

This practical assignment was inspired by the *Humans of New York* photography blog created by Brandon Stanton (www.humansofnewyork.com), and aims to dismantle some of the walls that we have put up between “us” and “the other” – a goal for the good of humanity, not just a good grade! More specifically, the objectives of this practical assignment are to:

- (1) Help you become more aware of the everyday diversity that exists around you;
- (2) Reduce stereotypes and prejudice toward unfamiliar or misunderstood groups by fostering a sense of connectedness and empathy with strangers;
- (3) Allow you to use the contact hypothesis in the real world and learn to avoid making the fundamental attribution error and activating a self-fulfilling prophecy.

To achieve these objectives, you will venture into the community and approach five people, couples, or families whom you don’t know and whom you consider different than yourself.

You will then ask these people a few questions and take a photo of them. Afterward, you will write a reflection paper in which you analyse your experience using concepts from social psychology (e.g., stereotypes and social norm violations, fundamental attribution error, the contact hypothesis, etc.). You will also share your experience with your tutorial group in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, and you will post your favourite photo and caption in our Facebook group.

Step-by-Step Plan:

- (1) Pick your target “out-group.” What group of people do you see as different from you, and whom do you hold stereotypical attitudes toward? Potential ideas include people from a different political, ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic background, or people of a different age group, gender, or sexual orientation. It can be anything, really, as long as you choose something that is specific to *your* self-perceived out-group.
- (2) Think of at least three interview questions beforehand. Be reasonable, and do not ask questions that are too sensitive (e.g., “What traumatic experiences have you had?”). Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no answer. Example questions include:
 - a. What was the happiest moment in your life?
 - b. What is the meaning of life?
 - c. What is the biggest struggle you face?
 - d. If you could give one piece of advice to a large group of people, what would it be?
 - e. Who do you most look up to, and why?

- (3) Venture into the community and find five people, couples, or families that fit your out-group, and who are willing to allow you to ask them a few questions and have their photo taken. At the end of your interview, ask for their permission to have their photo and caption posted in our Facebook group (do not post any photos of people who have not agreed to have their photo posted online).
- (4) Write a reflection paper in which you summarise (a) your thoughts about the assignment in general (e.g., biggest fear, challenges faced), (b) your actual experience on the streets (e.g., plan for approaching strangers, chosen location), and (c) the specific connections you made to social psychology (e.g., stereotypes and social norm violations, fundamental attribution error, the contact hypothesis, etc.). In the Appendix, include your interviewees' photos and answers to your questions. Your paper must include a reference list (e.g., for the connections that you made to social psychology) and should be 1,250 words (\pm 50 words; excl. references and Appendix).
- (5) Based on your reflection paper, prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the practical meeting (5 minutes max!). Be sure to include your pictures and key captions from your interviews.
- (6) Lastly, choose your favourite photo and an accompanying caption and post this in our Facebook group (link will be placed on ELEUM).
- (7) Mail your report to your tutor and safe assignment (ELEUM) and post your favourite photo and caption in our Facebook group no later than: **Friday December 8th before midnight.**

Additional Points:

- You can conduct your interviews in Maastricht or wherever else you choose, but be reasonable and do not go to places that might be unsafe. Try to do your interviews off the UCM campus (unless your target out-group is specific to UCM).
- Think of how you will record your interviewees' answers (e.g., on paper, on your phone).
- There are no specific guidelines for the photographs, except that they must be original photographs taken by you for the purpose of this assignment.
- The interviewees cannot be people that you already know.
- You will not be graded on your photography or journalism skills, but rather on the amount of thought, effort, and creativity that you bring to the project. A scoring sheet will be posted on ELEUM so you can see how your tutor will grade your assignment.
- There are many great podcast episodes to get you into the topic. A few excellent examples are the episodes "The Deep Story" and "In the Air We Breathe," from the "Hidden Brain" podcast (episodes can be accessed for free via the NPR website or any podcast app).

This practical assignment is based on "Taking Social Psychology to the Streets: Humans of Northeast Pennsylvania," by Kristel Gallagher (Thiel College). See: <http://www.actionteaching.org/award/humans-of-northeast-pennsylvania>

Reading Materials and Other Sources

Essential Textbook

Hewstone, M., Stroebe, W., & Jonas, K. (2015). *An introduction to Social Psychology* (6th Ed). Chichester: Wiley. ISBN: 978-1-118-82353-8

E-Reader (available via ELEUM)

Online Material:

For most tasks, we have added extra, online materials. Apple users can listen to podcasts directly via the standard podcast app, but you can also install a good podcast app such as Podcast Republic (or any other app you prefer). Or go directly to the websites of the podcast (Google *Invisibilia* NPR or *Hidden Brain* NPR). The materials intend to make the tutorial discussions livelier because they relate theories to practice, personal stories, etc. As you will notice, parts of the selected podcasts are directly relevant for the task, but other parts are more illustrative. You don't have to listen to/watch everything: be selective. This way, we hope that social psychology feels more real to you.

Task 1 – Social Cognition

Textbook:

Hewstone Chapter 4

E-Reader:

Holland, R., Hendriks, M., & Aarts, H. (2005). Smells like clean spirit: Nonconscious effects of scent on cognition and behaviour. *Psychological Science*, 19, 689–693.

Wegner, D. M., Schneider, D. J., Carter, S. R., & White, T. L. (1987). Paradoxical effects of thought suppression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 5–13.

Online Material:

- **TED talk** by Prof. Paul Bloom: [Can prejudice ever be a good thing?](#)
[We often think of bias and prejudice as rooted in ignorance. But as psychologist Paul Bloom seeks to show, prejudice is often natural, rational... even moral. The key, says Bloom, is to understand how our own biases work — so we can take control when they go wrong.]
- **TED talk** by Philosopher Dan Dennett: [The illusion of consciousness](#)
[A more general talk about consciousness, which questions whether we are in control of what we think, decide, perceive, etc. Philosopher Dan Dennett makes a compelling argument that not only don't we understand our own consciousness, but that half the time our brains are actively fooling us.]
- **Invisibilia Podcasts:**
 - Frame of Reference (episode July 8, 2016)
[This episode looks at the role our frame of reference plays in how we feel about our lives. The main story is about a recent experiment that took place at Harvard. Researchers wanted to see if they could get people with Aspergers to see emotional and social cues in the same way that neurotypical people do if they stimulated the brain with magnets (a treatment called TMS). They

found that some of the participants were able to see social cues in the world around them that had been entirely invisible to them before, but only for a brief window of time. We speak extensively with one of the people with Aspergers that took part in the study. Then Alix chats with Daily Show correspondent Hasan Minhaj about their shared experience of grappling with a frame of reference inherited from their parents.]

- The Power of Categories (episode February 6, 2015)

[Alix and Lulu examine how categories define us — how, if given a chance, humans will jump into one category or another. People need them, want them. This show looks at what categories provide for us.]

Task 2 – Explaining Our Own and Other People’s Actions

Textbook:

Hewstone Chapter 3

E-Reader:

Campbell, W. K., Sedikides, C., Reeder, G. D., & Elliott, A. J. (2000). Among friends? An examination of friendship and the self-serving bias. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 39, 229-239.

Lassiter, G. D., Geers, A. L., Handley, I. M., Weiland, P. E., & Munhall, P. J. (2002). Videotaped interrogations and confessions: A simple change in camera perspective alters verdicts in simulated trials. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 867-874.

Dweck, C. S. (2010). Mindsets & Equitable Education. *Principal Leadership*, 1–4.

Online Material:

- **Hidden Brain Podcasts:**

- Silver and Gold (episode 40 August 2, 2016)

[The rush of victory or crush of defeat in the Olympics can flash by very quickly. But if you slow those moments down, there's a lot to learn about human behaviour.]

- **Invisibilia Podcasts:**

- How to Become Batman (episode January 22, 2015)

[In "How to Become Batman," Alix and Lulu examine the surprising effect that our expectations can have on the people around us. You'll hear how people's expectations can influence how well a rat runs a maze. Plus, the story of a man who is blind and says expectations have helped him see. Yes. See. This journey is not without skeptics.]

Task 3 – The Self– Who Are You?

Textbook:

Hewstone Chapter 5

E-Reader:

- Baumeister, R., Vohs, K., & Tice, D. (2007). The strength model of self-control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16, 351–355.
- Dunning, D. (2012). Strangers to ourselves? *The Psychologist*, 19(10), 600–603.

Online Materials:

- **Hidden Brain Podcasts:**

- Me, myself, and IKEA (episode May 23, 2017)
[It's normal to feel drawn to people you share something with – whether it's a name, or a birthday, or a common background. But did you know that women named Georgia also gravitate toward the state of Georgia? And Virginias are slightly more likely to move to Virginia? Or that people with the last name Carpenter are actually more likely to be carpenters? This week on Hidden Brain, we talk about all the subtle ways we prefer things that have something to do with us, and why that means, for example, we prefer that IKEA furniture we built ourselves. This phenomenon – which we're calling the Narcissus Effect – can have much bigger implications than we might at first think.]
- Me, me, me (episode 38 July 12, 2016)
[It doesn't take a psychologist to see narcissism in our culture of selfies. But we decided to talk to one anyway. Jean Twenge is a researcher and author of the books *The Narcissism Epidemic*, and *Generation Me*.]
- Smoke and Mirrors (episode 37, July 5, 2016)
[Six months ago, Hidden Brain's Max Nesterak made a resolution to quit smoking. But as we all know... resolutions are made to be broken. This week, we check in with Max to find out how he's fared, and give you social science insight to help you quit your bad habits too.]

- **Invisibilia Podcasts:**

- The Personality Myth (episode June 24, 2016)
[We like to think of our own personalities - and those of our spouses, children and friends - as predictable and constant over time. But what if they aren't? In this episode, Alix Spiegel visits a prison to explore whether there is such a thing as a stable personality. And Lulu Miller asks whether scientists can point to a single thing about a person that doesn't change over time. The answer might surprise you.]

Task 4 – Attitudes

Textbook:

Hewstone Chapter 6

E-reader:

- Holland, R. W., Verplanken, B., & Van Knippenberg, A. (2002). On the nature of attitude-behavior relations: The strong guide, the weak follow. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 32, 869–876.

Online materials:

- **Hidden Brain Podcasts:**

- Losing Alaska (episode 27 April 19, 2016)
[Human beings would be better at fighting climate change if we weren't so, well, human. In this episode, we explore the psychological barriers to addressing climate change.]
- **Invisibilia Podcasts:**
 - Bubble-Hopping (episode 20 June 2017)
[The concept of bubbles (social bubbles, media bubbles, political bubbles) has become popular lately as people grapple with the outcome of the 2016 election. We talk to two people who are making attempts to break out of their bubbles, and expose themselves to new points of view. We start with a woman seeking to break out of the confines of the human bubble altogether, by teaching herself to experience the world more like a dog. Then we meet a young man named Max, who has made a life out of hopping from bubble to bubble.]
- **TED Talk** by Rory Sutherland: Life lessons from an ad man

Task 5 – All Roads Lead to Negative Body Image

E-Reader:

- Murnen, S. K., & Don, B. P. (2012). Body image and gender roles. In T.F. Cash (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Body Image and Human Appearance* (pp. 128-134). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- López-Guimerà, G., Levine, M. P., Sánchez-Carracedo, D., & Fauquet, J. (2010). Influence of mass media on body image and eating disordered attitudes and behaviors in females: A review of effects and processes. *Media Psychology*, 13, 387-416.
- Calogero, R. M. (2012). Objectification theory, self-objectification, and body image. In T.F. Cash (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Body Image and Human Appearance* (pp. 574-580). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Vartanian, L. R. (2012). Self-discrepancy theory and body image. In T.F. Cash (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Body Image and Human Appearance* (pp. 711-717). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Galioto, R., & Crowther, J. H. (2013). The effects of exposure to slender and muscular images on male body dissatisfaction. *Body Image*, 10, 566-573.

Online Materials:

- <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/hls/research/appearanceresearch/resources/podcast.aspx> (Appearance Matters Podcast, "Bonus Episode: Barbie's New Body," 19 minutes)
- http://www.ted.com/talks/cameron_russell_looks_aren_t_everything_believe_me_i_m_a_model#t-556102 (TED Talk by Cameron Russell, "Looks aren't everything. Believe me, I'm a model," 9 minutes)

Task 6 – Attitude Change

Textbook:

Hewstone Chapter 7

Online Materials:

- **Invisibilia Podcasts:**

- The New Norm (June 17, 2016)
[You probably don't even notice them, but social norms determine so much of your behavior - how you dress, talk, eat and even what you allow yourself to feel. These norms are so entrenched we never imagine they can shift. But Alix Spiegel and new co-host, Hanna Rosin, examine two grand social experiments that attempt to do just that: teach McDonald's employees in Russia to smile, and workers on an oil rig how to cry.]

Task 7 – Aggression

Textbook:

Hewstone Chapter 9

E-Reader:

Bushman, B. J., Baumeister, R. F., & Stack, A. D. (2012). Catharsis, aggression, and persuasive influence: Self-fulfilling or self-defeating prophecies? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 1–10.

Bushman, B. J., Newman, K., Calvert, S. L., Downey, G., Dredze, M., Gottfredson, M., et al. (2016). Youth violence: What we know and what we need to know. *American Psychologist*, 71, 17–39.

Online Materials:

- **TED talk** of Prof. Steven Pinker: The surprising decline in violence
https://www.ted.com/talks/steven_pinker_on_the_myth_of_violence
[Steven Pinker charts the decline of violence from Biblical times to the present, and argues that, though it may seem illogical and even obscene, given Iraq and Darfur, we are living in the most peaceful time in our species' existence.]

Task 8 – Dr Love

Textbook:

Hewstone: Chapter 11

Online Materials:

- **Hidden Brain Podcasts:**
 - Dating and Mating (episode 19 Feb 9, 2016)
[It's almost Valentine's Day, but this week we're not talking about love. Instead, we explore the other forces that drive our romantic relationships.]
 - Aziz Ansari on Modern Love (episode 9, November 17, 2015)
[Hidden Brain host Shankar Vedantam talks to comedian Aziz Ansari — star of a new Netflix show and coauthor of *Modern Romance* — about Tinder, texting and how dating is a bit like... buying jam.]

Task 9 – Groups

Textbook:

Hewstone: Chapter 8 & Chapter 13

E-Reader:

Burger, J. (2009). Replicating Milgram: Would people still obey today?. *American Psychologist*, 64, 1-11.

Fiske, S. T., Harris, L. T., & Cuddy, A. J. C. (2004). Why ordinary people torture enemy prisoners. *Science*, 306, 1482-1483.

Online Materials:

- Hidden Brain Podcasts:
 - Terrorism (episode 13, 15 December 2015)
[Why do young people join ISIS? Is it nihilism, or, as social scientists suggest, a perverse idealism? This week on Hidden Brain, we explore the psychology of terrorist groups, and why so many young people leave behind promising futures to join them.]
- YouTube Materials:
 - The famous Milgram experiment on obedience of authority. Search YouTube for: Milgram experiment why we blindly obey authority: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DxSKTSOA_E
 - Or watch the complete documentary:
 - part 1 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcvSNg0HZwk>
 - part 2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzTuz0mNlwU>
 - part 3 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmFCoo-cU3Y>
 - Talks of Professor Philip Zimbardo on the Psychology of evil and good search YouTube for: “Philip Zimbardo: The truth about good and evil,” and, “Philip Zimbardo: What makes a hero?”
 - The famous Solomon Asch experiment on conformity in groups. Search YouTube for: “Asch Conformity Experiment.”

Task 10 – Prejudice and Discrimination

Textbook:

Hewstone: Chapter 14

E-Reader:

Aronson, E. (2004). How the Columbine high school tragedy could have been prevented. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 60(4), 355–360.

Online Material:

- Hidden Brain Podcasts:
 - Hiding Behind Free Speech (episode 5 September 2017)

[Several weeks ago, white supremacists took to the streets of Charlottesville, Virginia, in a demonstration that left many Americans asking a lot of questions. Who are we as a nation? What do we stand for, and what do we tolerate? The United States goes further than many other countries to protect free speech – even hate-filled speech like that used in Charlottesville. In this episode, we look at how people use free speech arguments, and why the motivations behind these arguments may not be apparent – even to the people making them.]

- Men: 44, Women: 0 (episode 48, 18 October 2016)

[A century after women won the vote in the US, we still see very few of them in leadership roles. Researchers say women are trapped in a catch 22 known as “the double bind.”]

- **YouTube materials:**

- Het Grote Racisme Experiment BNN Documentaire 7 november 2013 (in Dutch but you can switch to English subtitles). Search YouTube for: “BNN - Het Grote Racisme Experiment” (7-11-2013).
- Jane Elliot's blue eyes brown eyes experiment. Search YouTube for: “Jane Elliott - blue eyes brown eyes” (many, many clips – choose for yourself).