

# **Psychology of Prejudice: a Social and Cognitive Perspective**

*Spring Semester, The Swedish Program, Stockholm School of Economics*

**Location and time:** -

**Instructor:** Marta Zakrzewska

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**Office hours:** By appointment

## **Course description**

The nature of prejudice has been a topic of study in psychology, sociology, anthropology and other sciences for over a century. The understanding of prejudice has changed drastically: first considered an unnatural anomaly and pathology, a form of 'social cancer.' It is now thought to arise from processes as common and normal as the general human tendency to categorize and simplify in an attempt to make sense of experiences and observations. In this course, we will look at prejudice, its origins and consequences (discrimination), focusing on the empirical research in cognitive and evolutionary psychology, as well as on the social mechanisms that contribute to bias against others. At the end of the course, students should have a deeper understanding of how prejudice is born and promoted at both the individual (micro) level and at the (macro) level of societies and organizations. The course will also address current research on the topic of prejudice prevention.

## **Learning outcomes**

During this course you will:

1. Learn to think about sensitive social issues such as prejudice and discrimination from a scientific perspective.
2. Develop a deeper, integrative understanding of how to approach the topics of prejudice and discrimination from various perspectives, including cognitive and social psychological perspective
3. Understand how and which psychological processes influence behavior and attitudes of members of different groups around us.
4. Learn how the perspectives presented in the course relate to both intergroup attitudes and behaviors, and to broader sets of behaviors generally.

## **Course requirements and examinations**

Grades are based on your active attendance and participation in class, and on the midterm and the final paper. More details on all elements will be given during the first lecture and throughout the term.

### **Active participation and discussion moderation**

For each discussion seminar (lecture 2-7 and 9-11), the student is to submit two discussion questions related to the week's literature via Google Classroom. For each seminar a student will be assigned the roles of moderator of the discussion. Thus, once or twice each term, depending on class size, the student will moderate the seminar discussion. This involves gathering the questions submitted by all students and presenting them on-screen in chosen order. You are welcomed to look for, and present during class, any additional information that will help you discuss the topic. Feel free to include interactive elements, such as small in-class survey's, exercises, role play, etc. The moderators will also make sure everyone gets space to speak, and that the discussion stays on-topic.

### *Attendance*

This course takes an interactive approach that requires engaged participation from all members of the class. Students' presence is essential to the liveliness of the course; therefore, attendance is mandatory. One absence is permitted; each subsequent absence will lower the overall participation grade by one step (A → A-).

### **Examination: midterm and final papers**

*Midterm paper (2-3 pages):* the purpose of the midterm paper is for you to practice seeing examples of prejudice and discrimination in everyday life, and start you thinking about how to view it in the light of what you learned. Your task is to discuss a news event from a perspective of a theory you encountered during the course. Due: *(to be announced)*

*Final paper proposal (1 page):* To make sure you are on the right track, you will submit a final paper proposal that outlines the topic and approach of your final paper. More details will be provided during class. Due: *(to be announced)*

*Final paper (10 pages):* The final exam is as thorough examination of a phenomenon related to the classes topic that you find especially interesting. The paper includes a literature review and a proposal for a study design that could be used to study the phenomenon further. More details on the final paper will be provided later. Not turning in

the final paper in time will lead to the lowering of the final paper grade by one step for each day of delay (1 day delay: A → A-, 2 days delay: A→B). Due: *(to be announced)*

### Calculation of the final grade

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Active participation in seminars and discussion moderation	<b>20%</b>
Midterm paper	<b>30%</b>
Final paper and presentation	<b>50%</b>

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### *Class etiquette*

Everybody should behave respectfully in the classroom. This includes coming to class on time, giving speakers undivided attention, addressing classmates and the instructor with respect, and refraining from academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty: Any form of academic dishonesty is a violation of our code of conduct and will result in disciplinary actions. Plagiarism or other forms of cheating will result in an automatic F for the assignment and may also result in an immediate F for the course as a whole, based on the assessment of the Director of Studies and the Executive Director. If you want to use AI to assist your writing, you must adhere to the following guidelines: AI-assisted writing is permissible as long as its use is properly documented and does not substitute for students' doing the actual writing work. For all written take-home assignments, students who have used AI to assist them are required to submit a summary describing how they have used AI to help them complete the assignment (producing text, proofreading, finding citations, etc). In addition, students also have to clearly indicate which passages have been produced or assisted by AI, for example in a footnote that details how AI was used in that particular instance. Failure to acknowledge one's use of AI to complete an assignment will count as academic dishonesty and be subject to the same penalties as outright plagiarism or other forms of cheating.

Laptops and phones: You may use electronic devices for notetaking only. Full class engagement is not possible while scrolling social media or browsing the internet. Moreover, it can be both distracting for and disrespectful towards other. If you use your device (especially your phone) extensively for none-note taking purposes, you risk being marked as absent.

## Required readings

We will not follow a textbook during this course. Instead, we will read relevant publications that review topics of interest to us and present important studies. The readings are diverse, but they are always related to the theme of the seminar, i.e., they address different approaches to understanding prejudice and varied perspective on consequences of prejudice and discrimination, as well as on relevant topics. The selected materials will be distributed on the webpage for the course. The articles are listed in the syllabus but may be subject to change. The articles will be made available in the Classroom.

## Course schedule

Students are expected to read course materials before each session and prepare for active involvement. In preparation for the discussion, the student will submit two discussion questions through Google Classroom 24 hours before the seminar. For each seminar a student will be assigned the roles of moderator of the discussion. Total time for each session is expected to be 3 hours. The course consists of three types of in-class activities:

1. **Thematic seminars** which cover specific topics. Reading course materials and preparation for discussion is required before the seminars. Each seminar is structured as follows:
  - An introduction to the week's subject complementing the readings (instructor).
  - Seminar 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10: Discussion based on pre-submitted questions related to literature or the topics (the discussion is led by students)
  - Summary and feedback
2. **Study visit** (seminar 12 below, date of this seminar, and thus order of seminars in general might change).
3. **Final presentations** (seminar 11). Students' work will be presented, discussed and graded. Active participation is required.

## Syllabus

1. **Introduction: the changing perspectives on the nature of prejudice**

Duckitt, J. (2010). Historical overview. In J. F. Dovidio, M. Hewstone, & P. Glick (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination* (pp. 29-44). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446200919.n2>

2.

### **Cognitive take on prejudice (and how to measure it)**

#### **Discussion:**

*The SAGE Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination*: Chapters 3 and 7 (selected parts)

Cuddy, A. J., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2008). Warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social perception: The stereotype content model and the BIAS map. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 40, 61-149. (selected parts)

3.

### **Personality and social perspective on prejudice (and how to measure it)**

#### **Discussion:**

Sibley, C. G., & Duckitt, J. (2008). Personality and prejudice: A meta-analysis and theoretical review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 12(3), 248-279.

Ekehammar, B., & Akrami, N. (2003). The relation between personality and prejudice: a variable- and a person-centred approach. *European Journal of Personality*, 17(6), 449–464

4.

### **Prejudice in the brain**

#### **Discussion:**

Wheeler, M. E., & Fiske, S. T. (2005). Controlling racial prejudice: Social-cognitive goals affect amygdala and stereotype activation. *Psychological Science*, 16(1), 56-63

Sellaro, R., Derks, B., Nitsche, M. A., Hommel, B., van den Wildenberg, W. P., van Dam, K., & Colzato, L. S. (2015). Reducing prejudice through brain stimulation. *Brain stimulation*, 8(5), 891-897.

5.

### **Prejudice on the macro scale: health care and cancer research examples**

#### **Discussion:**

Samulowitz, A., Gremyr, I., Eriksson, E., & Hensing, G. (2018). "Brave Men" and "Emotional Women": A Theory-Guided Literature Review on Gender Bias in Health Care and Gendered Norms towards Patients with Chronic Pain. *Pain research & management*, 2018, 6358624. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/6358624>

Omerov, P., Craftman, Å. G., Mattsson, E., & Klarare, A. (2020). Homeless persons' experiences of health- and social care: A systematic integrative review. *Health & social care in the community*, 28(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12857>

Moore, M. R. (2017). Opposed to the being of Henrietta: bioslavery, pop culture and the third life of HeLa cells. *Medical humanities*, 43(1), 55-61.

## 6.

### **Health consequences of discrimination and prejudice**

#### **Discussion:**

Khullar, D. (2017) How Prejudice Can Harm Your Health. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/08/upshot/how-prejudice-can-harm-your-health.html?smid=url-share>

Pieterse, A. L., Todd, N. R., Neville, H. A., & Carter, R. T. (2012). Perceived racism and mental health among Black American adults: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 59(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026208>

Bor, J., Venkataramani, A. S., Williams, D. R., & Tsai, R. C. (2018). Police killings and their spillover effects on the mental health of black Americans: A population-based, quasi-experimental study. *Lancet*, 392, 302–310. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31130-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31130-9).

**Midterm exam, deadline: March 7<sup>th</sup>, 11PM**

## 7.

### **Guns, germs and prejudice - Disease avoidance**

#### **Discussion:**

Schaller, M., & Park, J. H. (2011). The behavioral immune system (and why it matters). *Current directions in psychological science*, 20(2), 99-103.

Thornhill, R., & Fincher, C. L. (2014). The parasite-stress theory of sociality, the behavioral immune system, and human social and cognitive uniqueness. *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*, 8(4), 257–264

## 8.

### **Prejudice in social media: a COVID-19 example**

### **Discussion:**

Ahmed, S., Chen, V. H. H., & Chib, A. I. (2021). Xenophobia in the time of a pandemic: Social media use, stereotypes, and prejudice against immigrants during the COVID-19 crisis. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 33(3), 637-653.

Croucher, S. M., Nguyen, T., & Rahmani, D. (2020). Prejudice toward Asian Americans in the COVID-19 pandemic: The effects of social media use in the United States. *Frontiers in Communication*, 5, 39.

Zeng, G., Wang, L. & Zhang, Z. Prejudice and xenophobia in COVID-19 research manuscripts. *Nat Hum Behav* 4, 879 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-00948-y>

## **9.**

### **Prejudice in pop-culture**

#### **Discussion:**

Dirks, D., Mueller, J.C. (2007). Racism and Popular Culture. In: Vera, H., Feagin, J.R. (eds) *Handbooks of the Sociology of Racial and Ethnic Relations. Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research*. Springer, Boston, MA. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-70845-4\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-70845-4_8)

Hennekam, S. and Syed, J. (2018), "Institutional racism in the film industry: a multilevel perspective", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 551-565. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-05-2017-0108>

Rolli, B. *BTS Were Once Again The Subject Of Racist On-Air Remarks—And Received A Pathetic Non-Apology*. Forbes

**Final paper proposal deadline: to be announced**

**(Spring break: )**

## **10.**

### **Reducing Prejudice**

#### **Discussion:**

Berry, D.R.; Wall, C.S.J.; Tubbs, J.D.; Zeidan, F.; Brown, K.W. Short-Term Training in Mindfulness Predicts Helping Behavior Toward Racial Ingroup and Outgroup Members. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, November 2021

Binder, J., Zagefka, H., Brown, R., Funke, F., Kessler, T., Mummendey, A., Maquil, A., Demoulin, S., & Leyens, J.-P. (2009). Does contact reduce prejudice or does prejudice

reduce contact? A longitudinal test of the contact hypothesis among majority and minority groups in three European countries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(4), 843–856.

Aboud, F. E., Tredoux, C., Tropp, L. R., Brown, C. S., Niens, U., & Noor, N. M. (2012). Interventions to reduce prejudice and enhance inclusion and respect for ethnic differences in early childhood: A systematic review. *Developmental review*, 32(4), 307-336.

**(optional) Submit final paper draft for feedback before presentations:**

**11.**

**Final paper presentations**

**12.**

**Psychological Research methods – Visiting a perception research lab at RISE Research Institutes of Sweden**

Details can be found on Google Classroom.

**Final paper, deadline: to be announced**