

- 1 **Module 53: Social Thinking**
- 2 **Attributions**
 - How do we explain our own and others' behaviors?
- 3 **Types of attributions**
 - Dispositional: internal personality or character traits.

 - Situational: environmental causes outside the person.
- 4 **The Fundamental Attribution Error**
 - Our tendency to underestimate the situational components and overestimate the dispositional components of others' behaviors.
- 5 **Napolitan and Goethals research**
 - Had college students talk individually with a young woman who acted either warm and friendly or cold and aloof.
 - Group #1: told that the women's behavior would be spontaneous
 - Group #2: told that the woman had been instructed to act friendly or aloof.
- 6 **Napolitan & Goethals, contined**
 - After the conversation, students were asked to describe the woman's personality and explain why she was acting that way.
 - No difference in explanations for the groups: both attributed her personality to dispositional factors even when they had been told beforehand that her behavior was situational.
- 7 **Fundamental attribution error**
 - Basic idea: All of our behaviors depend to some degree on the situations in which we find ourselves and not always on our own internal personality factors
 - However, we often leap to conclusions and infer personality traits when how the person is behaving is highly influenced by the situation.
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 - Most of us have learned in our own experience to pay more attention to the person actually doing the behavior than to the effects of the situation in which the person finds himself.
- 9 **Why are attributions important?**
 - We attempt to explain other people's behaviors all the time—in class, at work, in the family, etc., and too often we focus on the personality
 - Research:
 - Fletcher
 - Zucker and Weiner

- 10 **Why are attributions important?**
- Other people make attributions about our behaviors all the time and it affects their behavior toward us.
 - Examples
 - at work
 - driver on the freeway
- 11 **The relationship between actions and attitudes**
- Most of the time we believe that our attitudes affect our actions—I treat my students respectfully because I like them and want them to succeed.
- 12 **Actions and attitudes—con't**
- However, much research shows that our actions often change our attitudes
 - I.e. attitudes follow behaviors
- 13 **Social norms and prejudice**
- If the prevailing norms in our group/neighborhood/family/workplace, etc., are prejudiced, we are more likely to behave in a prejudiced way even if we ourselves are not prejudiced.
- 14 **The foot- in- the- door phenomenon**
- The tendency for people who comply with a small request early to comply with a larger one later.
 - Basic idea: to get someone to do something big, start small and build.
- 15 **Why do our actions affect our attitudes?**
- Most people who have been coaxed into behaving in a way that is contrary to their beliefs begin to rationalize their behavior—they persuade themselves that they were justified in their behaviors.
- 16 **Cognitive Dissonance**
- When two of our thoughts (cognitions) conflict with each other—are inconsistent—our attitudes may change to reduce the resulting discomfort (dissonance)
- 17 **Cognitive dissonance: con't**
- Example: I pay you to write an essay for the school paper on why you believe tuition should be increased. You really disagree but do it for the money. Chances are you will change your attitude and begin to believe what you have written because it cuts down on the dissonance you feel.
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- If you do something that disagrees with your current belief or attitude, the attitude may change.

- Ex: Civil rights
Depression
Marital discord

19 **How role playing affects our attitudes**

- The roles we are playing in a situation may cause us to behave in ways that we normally would not.
- Phillip Zimbardo

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Module 54: Social Influence

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What factors in the situation itself affect our tendency to conform to others' behaviors even when we don't want to?

22 **The Chameleon effect**

- Chartrand and Bargh
- Ex: copycat violence after Columbine or Washington D.C. sniper shootings

23 **Group pressure and conformity**

- How the behaviors of other people encourage us to behaviors we don't agree with.
- Asch studies

24 **Factors that strengthen conformity to a group**

- You feel incompetent or insecure
- The group is unanimous
- You admire the group's status or attractiveness
- You have not yet committed to any response
- Others in the group are observing your behavior.
- The culture encourages respect for social standards

25 **Why do we conform to group pressure???**

Normative social influence:

- In situations like Asch's, we conform because there seems to be an existing standard set by other people.
- We risk rejection by standing out and being different.

- 26 **Informational Social Influence**
- Often we obey norms because the group provides us with information we need.
- 27 **Baron experiment**
- Showed Ss a slide of a person then asked them to pick out that person from a 4-person lineup.
 - Some people saw the lineup for 4 seconds, others for .5 seconds.
 - Some people were told the task was meaningless busy work. Others were told that the identification was extremely important.
- 28 **Baron experiment-con't**
- When the task was unimportant:
 - 1/3 of subjects conformed but
 - 2/3 of subjects did not
 - When the task was important:
 - almost no conformity when the task was easy
 - 1/2 subjects conformed when the task was difficult.
- 29 **Baron's conclusion**
- When we are unsure of what is right or when being right matters, we look to others in the group for information and are more likely to conform to their opinions.
- 30 **Obedience to Authority**
- Stanley Milgram: 1965 and 1964
- 31 **Milgram: Results**
- 63% of subjects complied fully.
 - Women and men had the same obedience rate.
 - Most subjects expressed anxiety but continued to obey kept on shocking the "learner."
 - Nobody suspected a hoax.
- 32 **Milgram: Factors that influenced conformity to an authority figure**
- The authority figure seemed legitimate.
 - The authority was supported by a prestigious organization.
 - The victim was depersonalized.
 - There were no role models for defiance.
- 33 **Applying Milgram in everyday life**
- 1942: 500 German reserve police officers were ordered to round up the Jews in a village, send the men to work camps and kill the rest. They were given a chance to refuse to participate—12 did so. The remaining officers killed 1500 women, children and elderly

• 20 intentionally missed or hid