Applied Social Psychology

[E2401P136]

Course objectives and learning outcomes

This course provides an overview of the areas of research in which social psychology has been applied outside the laboratory. Different theoretical and methodological approaches useful for understanding various contexts will be analyzed, with particular attention also given to the ethical issues involved in such types of research. Examples and research tools applied to the fields of health, environment, and politics will be discussed, focusing in particular on scientific misinformation, vaccination behavior, sustainable eating, climate change, belief in conspiracy theories, and dehumanization.

During the lessons and through individual study, students should acquire the following skills:

- understand the main theoretical and methodological approaches in applied social psychology;
- recognize individual, social, and contextual factors that influence cognition and behavior;
- analyze how attitudes and belief systems affect behavior;
- identify and apply various methods of intervention and applied research;
- evaluate applied research designs aimed at addressing social issues;
- examine key areas of application, such as politics, health, the environment, and digital technologies;
- apply different research methods and paradigms to real-world contexts.

Contents

- Characteristics of applied social psychology
- Understanding social issues through the application of socio-cognitive models
- Belief systems and attitudes in behavior influence
- Social psychology and health
- Social psychology and vaccination behavior
- Social psychology of conspiracy theories
- Sustainable food-related behaviors

- Social psychology of climate change
- Political psychology
- Dehumanization

Entrance requirement

No prerequisites are required. However, a good understanding of the fundamentals of social psychology will allow for a more informed engagement with the course content.

Teaching and learning methods and activities

The lessons will be held in person in the classroom.

In addition to traditional lectures (about 42 hours), during which active participation in class discussions will be encouraged, approximately 18 hours of interactive teaching will involve guided discussions of scientific articles, viewing and commenting on videos, and practical exercises applying methods and tools related to the course topics.

The material presented in class (slides and, where possible, scientific articles) will be made available on the course's e-learning platform.

Interested students will have the opportunity to deepen some of the course topics by preparing a written assignment (in the form of a project to be carried out in small groups) that analyzes an example of research in the field of applied social psychology.

Test and assessment criteria

The exam is written (computer-based test in the lab) and consists of open-ended questions (similar to very short essays) aimed at verifying the effective acquisition of theoretical and methodological knowledge as well as the ability to apply them to real-world situations.

The evaluation criteria include the accuracy of answers, the ability to argue, summarize, make connections, and critically interpret reality.

Participation in optional activities offered during the course (see "Teaching and learning methods and activities") also contributes to the final grade (weighted as one-third of the overall score).

The material listed in the bibliography but not covered in class is still an integral part of the exam program.

Erasmus students can contact the instructor to agree on an English-language bibliography and to take the exam in English.

Bibliography

Required reading: Steg, L., Keizer, K., Buunk, A. P., & Rothengatter, T. (Eds.). (2017). *Applied social psychology*. Cambridge University Press (only the chapters indicated on the course e-learning page). Detailed information about additional teaching materials will be published on the e-learning page associated with the course.