

# Comprehensive Examination in Experimental Psychology for Fall 2005

## Social Comprehensive Questions and Readings:

### *Social Comprehensive Questions*

1. Imagine that in a remote island off the coast of Indonesia, a new branch of homo sapiens was recently discovered. If that wasn't curious enough, the tribe there was found to have no apparent division of labor by gender. What challenges does this kind of behavior present to at least two major theories addressing gender differences? Also, how could these two theories continue to explain the usual gender differences observed in most societies, but still accommodate the lack of gender roles found in this new tribe of people?
2. Discuss three new areas of research related to the study of gender or sexuality that have emerged from the field of social psychology in the past 25 years. Be sure to discuss theory underlying and/or driving this research. (Note: Not all areas should pertain to gender differences.)
3. Current research in Social Psychology has given a lot of attention to the distinction between automatic (unconscious)/heuristic processes, and controlled (conscious)/more thoughtful processes in how we perceive others and ourselves. Summarize the key findings in the literature and integrate them into a larger picture of how we use both automatic and controlled processes in both self-perception and social perception.
4. There have been efforts to bridge the gap between social cognition and intimate relationships. Discuss this trend, giving specific examples. What do you see as the potential benefits to each of these areas of research and theory by drawing on the other?
5. More than 30 years ago, Bob Zajonc claimed that "preferences need no inferences." What was the theoretical thrust of this claim? What does the research in affect and cognition since then suggest about its veracity?
6. The Nobel Committee has decided to add a new award: The Nobel Prize for Social Psychology Theory. In order to make up for lost time, the Committee has decided to award three prizes immediately covering the time since the inception of the field until today. Please nominate three theories for this honor. As a preface to your answer, please explain your selection criteria (e.g., what makes a good theory). Then provide a brief background and summary of each of the three theories you have selected for the award and explain how each meets the criteria you specified. Be sure to be persuasive in arguing the merits of the theories you nominate and explain why you did not nominate other viable competitors.

## ***Social Comprehensive Readings***

*In addition to this reading list, students are expected to supplement their readings where appropriate from their graduate courses, including Social Psychology, Social Cognition, Advanced Psychology of Women, and Interpersonal Relationships.*

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Devine, P.G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 5-18.

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