Module teaching units:

1. THE PAST OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS DOMINANT TRENDS
   a) The (critical) history of Social Psychology
   b) Research paradigms in Social Psychology and related disciplines

2. THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL AND SOCIETAL RELATIONSHIPS: COOPERATION AND COMPETITION
   a) Cooperation and competition as basic social processes.
   b) Social conflicts (interpersonal and intergroup)
   c) Social, self-conscious and 'competitive' emotions (affiliation, pride, embarrassment, guilt, shame, envy, and jealousy)
   d) The individual and the group: social dilemmas and citizenship

3. MOTIVATION IN SOCIETY: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIETAL PROCESSES

4. POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PUBLIC THOUGHT

5. APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY:
   a) evaluation of public policies and programmes
   b) evaluation of public policies and programmes

Supervised research
The students conduct independent research under the supervision of the teachers of the submodules (21 credits).
1. THE PAST OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS DOMINANT TRENDS

György Hunyady, Anna Kende

a. The (critical) history of Social Psychology
b. Research paradigms in Social Psychology and related disciplines

National characterology from the period of national awakening, and mass psychology following – a critical approach to – socialist movements both played important roles in the prehistory of Social Psychology. These pre-scientific attempts point out the strong general need to a psychological interpretation of societal phenomena. The term, social psychology and its systematic empiricism appeared at the crossroads of Psychology and Sociology in the early 20th century. Social Psychology has always been an American science, in which the pragmatism of the American society played an important role, and in which methodological individualism could flourish. Descriptive attitude research was followed by research on group-dynamics, attitude-dynamics and cognitive style at the time of the second World War and thereafter. The so called cognitive revolution in the 70’s can be explained by both scientific and social changes which led to the quarter-century-long dominance of the paradigm of information-processing. At the beginning of the 21st century, the period of studying group-based emotions and ideologies appeared, in which two subdominant approaches – the collectivistic and the affective – merged. The study of the history and prehistory of Social Psychology can demonstrate the changing research strategies of the discipline, the role that the American and European cultural context played in it, and furthermore the specific challenges that the East-Central European context presents, which despite or as a matter of fact because of the ambiguities of societal developments in the region, offers valuable explanations of international relevance as well. The historical analysis of Social Psychology overviews the international scientific literature, the main research groups and the system of their connections.

Readings:


2. THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL AND SOCIETAL RELATIONSHIPS:
   COOPERATION AND COMPETITION
   Márta Fülöp, Mihály Berkics

a) Cooperation and competition as basic social processes.

b) Social conflicts (interpersonal and intergroup)

c) Social, self-conscious and ’competitive’ emotions (affiliation, pride, embarrassment, guilt, shame, envy, and jealousy)

d) The individual and the group: social dilemmas and citizenship

In this course, competition and cooperation will be considered as basic phenomena of social and societal processes from various theoretical and empirical approaches. The course will be announced in four versions, focusing on different aspects of competition and cooperation in each semester. Topics covered will include the relationship between competition and cooperation, various forms of competition, esp. constructive vs destructive, the psychology of winning and losing as well as gender and cross-cultural differences in competition. After these, the course will be focused on conflict, social emotions related to cooperation and competition, social dilemmas and the psychology of citizenship.

Readings:
Due to the wide range of topics covered, the list of readings can change between semesters.


3. MOTIVATION IN SOCIETY: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIETAL PROCESSES
György Hunyady, Márta Fülöp

In accordance with the module which it is part of, this course considers both the macro-structural conditions in society and motives working at the level of the individual (cumulating in macro-level social processes) which keep society in motion and set the course of its movement. The notion of a ’motivated society’ may not entirely be mainstream, but it is well supported by social psychological research in Hungary, drawing on well-known social psychological theories of the forces moving or hindering societal groups, the motive for and the use of power, as well as the level of aspirations and the dynamics of the economy. In this context, special concern shall be given to perceptions of norms and social (in)justice, the motivation to collective action, the ubiquitous topic of the authoritarian personality (and society) and symbolic politics, the dynamics of economical enterprise and consumerism, and, as an important factor influencing these processes, the psychology of trust. Models in the literature will be reviewed about the factors influencing well-being and discontent in society as well as its emotional atmosphere, also considering the societal consequences. The analysis of macro-structural (inter-group and inter-class) changes will be accompanied by the more detailed and specific study of the emotional aspects and dynamics of inter-personal relationships, based on both international and Hungarian research.

Readings:


Ideological public opinions, their personal relevance and related political behavior are important subjects of social psychological research as they reveal the bonds between the individual and political community. Studying historical processes, especially the power relations of past dictatorships is essential to develop the conceptual background for political psychology. Acknowledging these backgrounds, the processes of governance and political elections in democracies are in the focus of our course. It is in our special interest to study the quarter-century of Hungarian democracy after the fall of communism. It provides a possibility to study long term tendencies with dedicated methodological tools and on a well-constructed theoretical-conceptual basis. Theories about intergroup relations are central to contemporary social psychology. They are relevant to the Hungarian context too, but need certain reconsiderations. Justification of the system and counter-selection processes are seen in a specific light here, as interestingly interconnected to public views about the rule of law and about the democratic political system on the one hand, and to value systems and political ideologies on the other. Popular conceptions of the nation, motivations for social equality, and social/societal well-being – latter being a key concept for social psychology – are to be considered for understanding the shades of conservative, socialist, and liberal ideologies in Hungary. Thus the course deals with classic topics of political psychology but extends its scope to other traditional fields of social psychology that are closely related to political processes and adds the specificities of the Hungarian case to them.

Readings:


There is a steadily growing interest towards policy evaluation in our days. The interest in policy evaluation is substantiated – inter alia – by the recognition that some public policies are highly vulnerable to politics. It is especially true in case of public policies aiming at tackling social problems which are wicked problems (problems interpreted in the moral space, R. Room, 2005) or try offer interventions for them. In this regard studying certain realms of social attitudes and belief systems can be seen as an important starting point; one of the basic questions is: how the public opinion, their patterns may have an impact on the evolution of the aforementioned vulnerability. Another specific aspect of policy evaluation is that we do not have appropriately defined methodology for its implementation. This situation is very much different from that of the evaluation of interventions and/or programmes. The proposed course will try to become informed regarding the above mentioned topics on the borderline of social psychology and political sciences. As evaluation related questions are scarcely mentioned during the BA and MA courses the students would become familiar with some basic theoretical and practical considerations regarding this issue. The students will become familiar with some basic considerations related to policy analysis and policy evaluation. As there is a general expectation according to which in our educational system at all levels the students should be empowered with skills and competencies which can be utilised either during their research activities or in practice the course will provide the opportunity to get an insight into the everyday practice of policy development and evaluation/analysis. The content will be structured according to 4 main domains: (i) public policy processes, (ii) public policy development; (iii) ex-ante evaluation, (iv) ex-post evaluation. The robust applied social psychology related knowledge can be well utilised in many different aspects, among them in relation to the communication of evaluation results and also in the course of producing policy briefs. As far as the course related research activities are concerned the development of a well-grounded and reliable set of instruments appropriate for policy evaluation would be an important task.

Readings:

5. APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES –VERSION B.

György Fábri Ph.D.

The course is studying public policies, institutional practices and their impact on performance measurement and public perceptions in the field of higher education and media. Students would become familiar with the epistemological background and social psychology related aspects of evaluation techniques currently in use. Another important task of the course to introduce the ideological, public opinion and social sciences related underpinnings of public policies, social programmes.
Topics:

a) Public policy development as a cognitive and community based process;
b) The interpretation of being efficient and successful in the context of societal and community perceptions
c) The interpretation of scientific achievements – institutional solutions (citations, impact factor, patents, progress, etc.)
d) University rankings, their interpretation from communicational and substantial perspectives.
e) Functions of public media, methods of evaluation
f) Development of indicators, underpinning considerations, operationalisation.
g) The strength of the market orientated and meritocratic aspects, the social background of their utilisation.
h) The ethos of measurement, historical antecedents, scientific and methodological considerations.

Readings:
Habermas, J. (1989): The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere MIT Press, Boston


