

Social Psychology (B001313)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 3.0 **Study time 90 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)	Dutch	Gent	lecture seminar
----------------	-------	------	--------------------

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Van Hiel, Alain	PP07	lecturer-in-charge
-----------------	------	--------------------

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

Bachelor of Laws in Laws	crdts	offering
	3	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Group performance, social cognition, social influence, social relations, multicultural society, sustainability, psychology and law,

Position of the course

- Introduction to empirical social psychological research that is relevant for the study and administration of law
- Introductory review of theories on social perception, social influence, interpersonal relations and the psychology of law

Contents

Introduction

- People are social animals
- Social psychology: definition and related disciplines
- A brief history of social psychology
- Social psychology in the 21st century

Research methods

- The development of hypotheses
- The operationalization of social psychological variables
- Testing ideas: research designs
- Ethics and values in social psychology

Social perception

- The raw materials of the first impression
- Attribution
- Information integration
- Confirmation biases: from impressions to reality

Social influence

- Automatic social influence
- Conformity
- Compliance
- Obedience

Aggression

- What is aggression?
- The origin of aggression
- Social psychological theories of aggression
- The impact of violent media
- Hidden violence

The social psychological basis of groups

- Group characteristics
- Group structure
- Power and leadership
- Intergroup relations

Group performance

- Collective processes
- Disagreement and different opinions
- Small group performance
- Groupthink: losing perspective

The multicultural society

- Diversity
- Interethnic contact reduces prejudice
- Problems with interethnic contact
- Living together in school and the workplace
- Measures, media, laws and regulations

Towards a sustainable world

- Self-interest versus a prosocial orientation
- Ecological behaviour
- Conflict resolution
- To have or to be?

Social psychology and law

- The selection of a jury
- The legal process
- Jury deliberation
- The sentencing process

Initial competences

Final objectives of secondary education

Final competences

- 1 Being able to describe the basic principles and concepts of social psychology.
- 2 Being able to situate, compare and evaluate social psychological theories.
- 3 To be aware that all rules - formal and informal - are strongly influenced by cultural norms, but also by norms in specific groups.
- 4 Gaining insight into the social psychological factors that influence law.
- 5 Gaining insight into the fact that legal rules are applied by people and that typical (social) psychological biases and influences on the application of objective rules occur.
- 6 To be prepared to extend one's knowledge beyond the scientific principles underlying law.
- 7 To be able to identify obstacles for successful cooperation in task groups.
- 8 To be aware that one must work together in groups and that it is difficult to combine expertise.
- 9 Be open to the creative use of law as an instrument of social order, with a sense of pluralism, diversity and tolerance
- 10 To gain insight in the topic of ethnic-cultural diversity.
- 11 To gain insight in the individual and contextual basis of ecological behavior and a sustainable world.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Colleges with video illustrations of research and concepts. Attention is paid to the cross-cultural differences in social psychological phenomena. The chapter aggression explicitly discusses criminal behavior and the effectiveness of punishment to reduce delinquency. The chapter law psychology addresses phenomena that may lead to fault verdicts, like false confessions and mistakes of eye-witnesses.

Digital seminars including 1. Obedience and Milgram, 2. Aggression, & 3. how does it feel to be discriminated against? Video material about the method of Jane Elliot and discussion.

Recordings of lessons are available for one week, and available permanently at the end of the course.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Sociale Psychologie (4de Editie). Academia Press.

Indicative price: € 70

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Author : Van Hiel, A. & Roets, A.

Number of Pages : 720

Oldest Usable Edition : Edition 4

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : Yes

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : intensive

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

References

Caspi, A., McClay, J., Moffitt, T. E., Mill, J., Martin, J., Craig, I. W., et al. (2002). Role of genotype in the cycle of violence in maltreated children. *Science*, 297 (5582), 851-854.

Gawronski, B. (Ed.). (2026). *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 73). Elsevier.

Gilbert, D. T., Fiske, S. T., Finkel, E. J., & Mendes, W. B. (Eds.). (2025). *The handbook of social psychology*, (6th ed.). Situational Press. <https://doi.org/10.70400/NYKH3013>

Üskül, A. K. & van Zomeren, M. (Eds.) (2026). *European Review of Social Psychology* (Vol 37). Taylor & Francis.

van Koppen, P.J., & de Keijser, J. W. (2017). *Routes van het recht: Over de rechtspsychologie*. Den Haag: Boom Juridische Uitgevers.

Course content-related study coaching

- During the intervals and before or after the lecture
- Interactive support using Ufora (documentation, demonstrations, feedback).
- Office hours: Dries Bostyn, Monday 10am to 12am.

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

- Multiple choice and open questions assessing knowledge and application of the acquired knowledge in novel situations.

Calculation of the examination mark

- The multiple-choice section: 50%
- Open questions: 50%

Facilities for Working Students

Study coaching

- Interactive support using UFORA (documentation, demonstrations, feedback).
- Office hours: Dries Bostyn, Monday 10am to 12am.