

Social Psychology (B001643)

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

Credits 4.0 **Study time 120 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)	Dutch	Gent	seminar lecture
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Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Van Hiel, Alain	PP07	lecturer-in-charge
Roets, Arne	PP07	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Science in Criminological Sciences	4	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Social perception, Aggression, Helping others, Sustainability, Group performance, Social influence, Social relations, Diverse society, Psychology and law

Position of the course

The course contributes to the general and multidisciplinary scientific formation of criminology students by acquiring knowledge about the major social psychological concepts, theories and research methods. The course aims to impart knowledge about and insight into the relevance of social psychology for the study of antisocial behaviour and criminality.

Contents

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

Social perception

- The raw materials of the first impression
- Attributions
- Information integration
- Confirmation biases

Social influence

- Automatic social influence
- Conformity
- Compliance
- Obedience

Attitudes

- Attitudes: basic findings
- Persuasion by communication

- Persuasion by behavior
- Advertisement and information

Aggression

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

Group performance

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

Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination

- Prejudice types
 - The roots of prejudice
 - Social categorization and stereotypes
 - Sexism

The diverse 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 able to critically analyze the emergence of and reactions to deviant behavior and criminality in terms of social psychology, and to apply these ideas to criminological questions.
- 4 Dispose of practical and applicable knowledge and insight in the basic concepts, theoretical principles and research methods of social psychology that contribute to the study of deviancy and criminality.
- 5 Command the skills allowing critical reflection on deviancy and criminality and on the individual and social reaction to these phenomena.
- 6 Situate behaviour in its interpersonal, social and cultural context.
- 7 To be able to identify obstacles for successful cooperation in task groups.
- 8 To gain insight into topics of ethnic-cultural diversity.
- 9 To strike a critical-scientific attitude towards (historical) sources, (scientific) literature and (empirical) data pertaining to criminological issues.
- 10 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

Lectures with video demonstrations of how research is conducted in reality and/or illustrations of the 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 & 4. Profiling.

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 : 4de editie

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 Minerva (documentation, demonstrations, feedback).
- Office hours: Kim Dierckx, 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

Written examination comprising multiple-choice and open questions assessing understanding and application of knowledge fitting with the final competencies.

Calculation of the examination mark

15 points can be earned on the multiple choice questions.

5 points on the open question

Facilities for Working Students

Slides and additional information on UFORA

Possibility of feedback by appointment during and after office hours