CENSORSHIP GUIDANCE

Course code and name:	Semester / Year / Exam type:
PSY2014/PSYPRO4030 – Social psychology II	S-2020/Written home exam, 4 hours

General remarks concerning both assignments

The assignments given in this exam aim at eliciting the students' ability to use (especially) the obligatory literature of the course in such a way that he/she suggests theoretically relevant approaches in responding to the chosen task. The students should also demonstrate the ability to provide good arguments for the selected theories or models. They are further asked to provide several theoretical perspectives in relation to the chosen task. Thus, it would be insufficient to just describe one theory or perspective in detail. We have specified the number of chosen theories or perspectives to 3-5 per assignment for an approved exam. Each assignment has two parts. Usually students respond by using a similar structure, i.e. by orderly responding to each part. However, if both parts of the assignment are sufficiently responded to by using another structuring that should not affect the evaluation.

Regarding the guidelines provided below you will find them quite general with some examples of what can be included in the responses. Students who have taken this course have quite varied knowledge bases, i.e. some are BA-students in their second year of psychology, PSY2014, others have uptake in the clinical psychology programme and complete their 4th year, PSYPRO4030. All students have Social psychology 1 as common background, which is based on an introduction book in social psychology (somewhat different books depending on year). The basic course covers many themes quite superficially, whereas the Social psychology 2 course goes into more depth in relatively fewer domains of the social psychology field, please see the literature list. These remarks are relevant because students have different study time of psychology and we ask you to calibrate a C (good) relative expectations of the 2nd year course. Nevertheless, we want the students' replies to an assignment to reflect a deeper understanding of the specific course literature, e.g. show an ability to choose and use theories in relation to the specified problem or situation, and show some understanding of how various theories interact, complement or compete with respect to explaining certain phenomena. Therefore, it is not sufficient for approval of an assignment that it just describes or summarizes phenomena based on basic social psychology. The assignment should sufficiently explain or elaborate on central points of chosen theories or perspectives, and when relevant include reference information in the text, but the student does not need to provide a full reference list. Note that the reply to an assignment should not include or refer to links, power-point presentations, webpages etc., and if such referring is found you as a censor shall disregard it. We also ask you to be aware of the possibility to "copy and include" in this digitalized home exam even though the digital exam format facilitates such control. Below you will find the expected learning outcome of the course. These aspects should be taken into consideration when evaluating an assignment. You find a verbal translation of the evaluation scale, A-F, further below.

- **Learning outcome**
- **Knowledge**
  The student has good understanding of social psychology which emphasises selected themes in the areas of social influence, social behaviour, group processes and verbal language communication.
  The student has obtained substantial knowledge in the chosen areas of study which include for example the development and change of attitudes, judgement and decision making, social justice, violence, aggression, and pro-social behaviour, as well as language as a social tool.

- **Skills:**
  The student is able to present and use central ideas and theories within the area as well as able to independently reflect on individuals' and groups' behaviours and the behaviours' developments and origins.
- **General competence:**
  The student has developed the ability to reflect on and critically evaluate how humans think and function as social beings in groups as well as in society at large.

Relevant course literature for Assignment 1 & Assignment 2:

Course parts and related obligatory literature (see also separate literature list)
Introduction and course overview; Webber et al. (2018)
Attitude theory: Ajzen (1991); Stern, Abel, Guagnano & Kalof (1999); Rosenstock (1974)
Social cognition and mental representation; Howard & Renfrow (2006)
Emotion and cognition; Zajonc (1998)
Self and identity; Swann & Bossom (2010)
Social influence; Cialdini (1995)
Social stigma and social exclusion; Crocker, Major & Steele (1998)
Communication models; Krauss & Fussel (1996)
Group behavior and performance; Hackman & Katz (2010)
Social inference and decision making; Gilovitch & Griffin (2010)
Social justice and social movements; Tyler & Smith (1998)

Respond to only one (1) of the two assignments below

The assignment can be responded to in English or a Scandinavian language.
Respond in your own words. Do not copy and paste from any source.

Assignment 1:
In a hypothesised scenario, a vaccine for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) is developed and launched in 2021.

Discuss (1) how social psychology theories can explain the intention of the general public to be vaccinated, and (2) how social psychological theories could help predict public behaviours in a situation where there are shortages of the vaccine.

Assignment 2:

The spring of the year 2020 has involved social distancing measures and sometimes severe social isolation for individuals or families due to measures taken to prevent the spread of an infectious virus.

Elaborate on (1) which social psychology theories that could help predict effects of severe social isolation on individuals, and (2) discuss how issues related to social influence and social justice could be affected by a long-term severely restricted social interaction situation.

Assignment guidance:

Assignment 1:

<u>The first part of the assignment task "(1)</u> Discuss how social psychology theories can explain the intention of the general public to be vaccinated" aims at eliciting theories articulated to explain behavioural intention and behaviour.

A valid approach could be to first operationally define what constitutes intention (i.e. a motivational readiness and antecedent of behaviour). Thereafter the students may dwell into the two main theoretical approaches which focus prediction of health behaviour and intention in the mandatory readings; The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Health Belief Model (HBM). Other theoretical approaches may be relevant as well, but need to be justified. The students should demonstrate capability of defining, explaining and outlining the different components in the TPB and HBM.

The core components of the TPB are briefly; Attitudes towards the behaviour (the extent to which an individual has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour or object in question, in relation to COVID-19 this may be perceived positive or negative health effects of the vaccine), Subjective norm (perceived social pressure or appraisal of taking the vaccine among significant others), perceived behavioural control (the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour, e.g. access to the vaccine/health centers, access to personnel administering the vaccine etc.). The students should further point to that these factors are assumed to be positively associated with behavioural intention (the motivational component of the TPB), with perceived behavioural control having both a direct relation behaviour and a mediated association through behavioural intention. The components are shown in Figure 1 for illustrative purposes and the students are not necessarily expected to outline the full diagram in their responses.
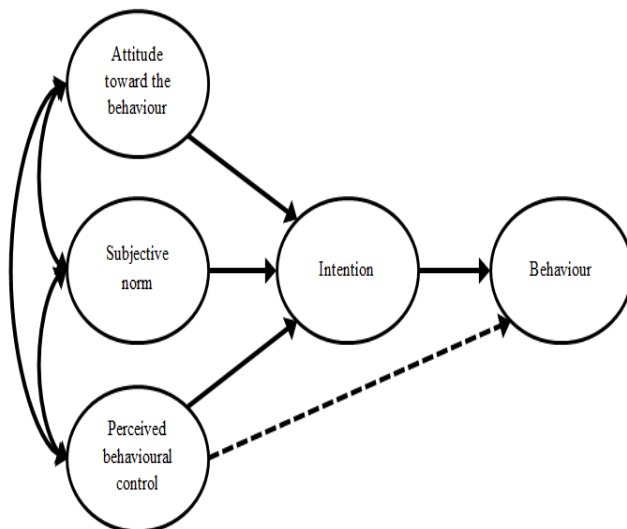

Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

Regarding the HBM the core components are: Perceived Susceptibility (probability component of perceived risk, how likely to get infected by the Covid-19 disease), Perceived Severity (consequence component of perceived risk, severity of consequences being infected by the Covid-19), Perceived Benefits (perceptions of whether or not the vaccine protects against the disease), Perceived Barriers

(potential negative effects of taking the vaccine). In later revisions, Cues to Action (e.g. information that promotes or hamper vaccination behaviour, general public health vaccine information, conspiracy thinking promoted through the Internet etc.) and Self-Efficacy (whether or not the individual can successfully execute the behaviour) have been added to the model as well (see also Figure 2 for an illustration of the model).

A strong A, B type response could show awareness that there are several overlaps between the two theoretical models in question. For instance, between the self-efficacy (HBM) and perceived behavioural control (TPB). A major strength of the HBM is that it explicitly incorporates demographics, which is highly relevant for the Covid-19 pandemic as elderly and males seem to be more susceptible and may vary systematically from young individuals and females in, for instance, perceived benefits. A strength of the TPB lies in its rather parsimonious nature, but a strong assignment response acknowledges that the models may to some extent complete each other when explaining social cognition underlying behaviour.
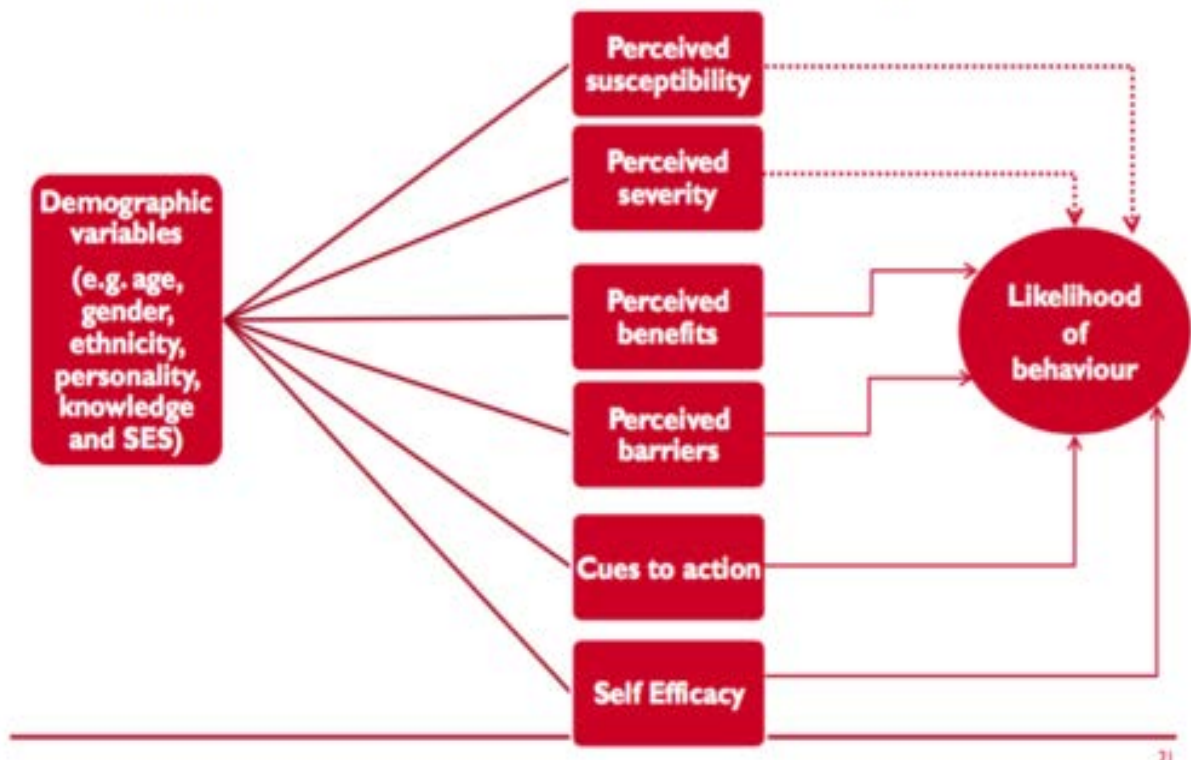
Figure 2. Health Belief Model

The second part of the assignment task "(2) how social psychological theories could help predict public behaviours in a situation where there are shortages of the vaccine" invites the students to explain social psychological processes in the public in a scenario of vaccine shortages.

 Possible approaches in this task could be to integrate a discussion of social stigmatization in relation to the vaccine. Social stigmatization represents an attribute or characteristics that conveys a devalued social identity. The nature of social stigmatization involves pervasiveness of stereotypes related to specifically labeled groups or individuals perceived to be members of such groups. This

could serve several functions for the stigmatizer, including **system justification** (to legitimize unequal group status in society; that one deserves a valued object such as a vaccine more than others. Cf. «hierarchy-legitimating myths», **self-enhancement** (to enhance self-esteem through downward comparison or by buffering self-threat on self-esteem), and **ingroup enhancement** (to maintain a positive social or collective identity, aligned with the Social Identity Theory, or to maintain ingroup bias) (see also Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998 for details).

Another relevant approach to the task is to discuss public behaviours in relation to theory regarding social justice and social movements (Tyler & Smith, 1998). Research shows that recognition of injustice (to self or others) produces an uncomfortable and distressful emotional state (e.g. cognitive dissonance). To reduce anxiety people may a) restore actual equity, viz. actual restoration, or b) reframe the situation psychologically, viz. psychological restoration. Personal-level behaviors (including responses, reactions) to injustice include **not to act**, just accept, due to loyalty or resignation. This does not mean that one denies the injustice. It is associated with depression and physical stress, sometimes even self-destructive behavior. "Triggering events" may reveal strong reactions. **To act** includes several possibilities: **To try to verify the injustice**, e.g. by gaining social support. **To seek to restore fairness** e.g. by compensation (however, compensation may lead to perceptions of legitimizing the done injustice, although compensation by third party is not as satisfying as that from the wrong-doer). **To retribute**, for example use "the silence treatment", absenteeism, or to do harm to the perpetrator or to others.

A third approach could be to discuss social psychological processes in relation to the scarcity principle in Cialdini's (1995) six weapons of influence. When there is a shortage of supply people may react by valuing rare opportunities even more, and are motivated to avoid "losing out". When top-down control exerts limitations on individual control regarding a desired object or activity, people may demonstrate psychological reactance by desiring vaccination more than they would have if there were no shortages of vaccine supply. The reciprocity principle could also be relevant, for instance young individuals in the population may refrain from vaccination to the benefit of risk groups, such as the elderly, but expect favorable treatment in return at a later stage. Also *social proof* could be relevant, as one's actions are guided by others' actions, especially under uncertain circumstances.

The answer may also include additional aspects related to the above, such as emotional reactions resulting in aggression, fear, destructive behaviours or sympathy and related positive behaviours, or perspectives that include communicative behaviours (e.g. searching information, encountering disinformation) as well as inferences or decisions related to how one should act. As a censor you use your own knowledge to evaluate the answers. Strong responses (A and B) ought to include 3-5 perspectives illustrating a broad overview of the literature and examples from different domains, and the chosen perspectives should be sufficiently elaborated in depth as well. As a censor you use your own knowledge to evaluate the answers.

Assignment guidance:

Assignment 2:

The first part of the assignment task "Elaborate on (1) which social psychology theories that could help predict effects of severe social isolation on individuals" aims at eliciting theories and theoretical perspectives that foremost consider individual experiences, thoughts and behaviors.

A possible strategy in responding might include to start with considerations on what "effects" that could be expected, or at all possible. Then continue to present theories and models related to such effects and for each theory or model shortly explain how it could be useful for predictions.

Effects could be considered from the perspectives of emotional experiences (feelings), cognitive reactions (thoughts), as well as behavioral reactions (behavior).

Regarding emotional experiences (feelings), the obligatory literature includes a chapter on emotions (Zajonc, 1998) which also considers the distinctiveness, as well as interaction, of affect and cognition. Basic emotions, such as fear, sadness, anger, disgust and maybe contempt, could be expanded on. Theories related to how the self and personal identity aspects are developed and influenced (Swann & Bossom, 2010) could illustrate both emotional and cognitive perspectives of effects on the individual, such as changes in self-esteem and self-concept. Such argumentation could include e.g. William James' views on the continuity of self-knowledge, the social interactionists (Mead and Cooley) emphasis on interpersonal interaction to create and view the self, and social identity theorists (e.g. Taifel & Turner) accounts of personal as well as relational self-views. Also self-expansion theories and the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954 and later) can be relevant, as well as attributions, disengagement and disidentification perspectives, and terror management theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1980s, -90s).

The course literature that focuses more on cognitive aspects include the chapters on Social cognition and mental representation (Howard & Renfrow,2006) and Decision making (Gilovitch & Griffin, 2010). The lecture presenting the former chapter included extra materials on schema and categorization (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), and the latter planned lecture also included literature on "Social inference" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991); both these chapters were supplementary. Regarding how these perspectives could help predict effects of severe social isolation on individuals there are possibilities that a response dwells on situational influence and changes of schemas, prototypes or categories (related to self or group), of what is perceived as normal, how generalizations and social judgements are made. There may also be discussions on the "social construction" of reality, or the social exchange theory (Thibuat & Kelley, 1959).

Regarding behavior, and behavioral reactions, the student may include theories and models related to predicting behavior in the response. The obligatory literature included Theory of Planned Behavior and Health Belief Model (see explanations under assignment 1). (A parallel course, which were taken by about 80 of the students in the Social psychology 2 course, also presented The extended protection motivation theory, The extended parallel process model and The terror management health model. Thus, some responses may include these models, which can be found in Beatson, R., & McLennan, J. (2011). What applied social psychology theories might contribute to community bushfire safety research after Victoria's "Black Saturday". *Australian Psychologist, 46*, 171-182.) Since this is a course of psychology students they may certainly relate to health and behavioural effects such as various aspects of positive or negative well-being, including abuse and suicidal thoughts. Several of the mentioned theories included or can be related to such an approach.

The second part of the assignment task "(2) discuss how issues related to social influence and social justice could be affected by a long-term severely restricted social interaction situation" expects mainly a focus on inter-individual, group or social interaction perspectives. The background to the task is, of course, the current situation where people have been forced to, or have complied to, leading isolated or socially very restricted daily lives, including "social distancing". However, the question is not restricted to the current situation. There is considerable social psychology research related to isolation effects (social exclusion, imprisonment, etc.) as well as communication by other means than direct personal communication (e.g. social media), on individuals as well as on group levels.

The assignment of how social influence and social justice could be affected by the described situation refers directly to Cialdinis six "weapons of influence" (Cialdini, 1995), and the chapter on social justice and social movements (Tyler & Smith, 1998). However, also the chapter on social stigma could be seen as relevant (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998) as well as how cooperation or other types of group endeavors could be affected, e.g. Group behavior and performance (Hackman & Katz, 2010). All these perspectives involve personal experiences or feelings as well as decisions and behavior so such aspects would be relevant.

Phenomena related to social influence categories such as reciprocation, consistency, social proof, liking, authority and scarcity could all be affected by a long-term severely restricted social interaction situation since the situation would reframe expectations of "normal" behavior. For example, aspects such as decreased interaction and familiarity with others may affect feelings and thoughts as well as behavior relative others. Social distancing may affect 'social proof' due to decreased expectations of helpful behavior since people are restricted to interact; it could also be related to novel categorizations of 'we' and 'them' and result in stigmatization of (new) outgroups. 'Reciprocation' may or may not include more negative thinking or actions due to the restrictions. 'Authority' may be more positively important, or become more criticized or mistrusted, depending on also other circumstances, etc. The evaluation of the answers depends on the use and elaboration on such aspects.

Using a wider societal perspective would include reflections on how perceptions and standards related to justice issues may be affected by a long-term severely restricted social interaction situation, e.g. procedural justice (such as availability of information, evidence presentation, influence on decision making, possibility to appeal, etc) could change due to lack of various resources or new bases for priorities. Distributive justice standards could be affected for similar reasons, related to how to make priorities using central principles of equality and equity (Tyler & Smith, 1998). There are also possibilities to reflect on how people relate to perceived injustice, from personal or group level perspectives, and retributive justice issues might be affected, e.g. related to views of intent or personal responsibility. In addition, reflections on how peoples' feelings and thinking affect their judgments in such new circumstances could be relevant, e.g. use of heuristics, inconsistencies in reasoning or in drawing conclusions.

Another possible approach in this assignment could include how information and communication relate to social influence and perceived social justice in daily life. Krauss and Fussel (1996) present four communication models, and how information is presented (or not presented) and how it is understood could be elaborated on. Different communication means (e.g. personal, phone, video, social media, etc.) involve different possibilities and hinderances regarding the transfer of meaning. For example, the "encoder-decoder model" requires that *meaning* is fully specified by its components (a one-to-one relationship between sender's and receiver's understanding of the significance of the "codes" included in a message). Perceptions of meaning or significance of information could affect evaluations of what is perceived justified or acceptable. In addition, also the intentionalist, dialogic and perspective-taking models have different understanding of how *meaning,* or significance, is transmitted. The differences are related to how different signals (signs and symbols) are used or experienced. Correct, and incorrect, interpretations of meaning has ramifications for experiences, evaluations and actions.

For all responses you as the cencor use your own knowledge to evaluate the quality of the answers.

General description

Symbol	Description	General, qualitative description of valuation criteria
A	Excellent	An excellent performance, clearly outstanding. The candidate demonstrates excellent judgement and a high degree of independent thinking.
B	Very good	A very good performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgement and a very good degree of independent thinking.
C	Good	A good performance in most areas. The candidate demonstrates a reasonable degree of judgement and independent thinking in the most important areas.
D	Satisfactory	A satisfactory performance, but with significant shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates a limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.
E	Sufficient	A performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates a very limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.
F	Fail	A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgement and independent thinking.

Course coordinator:

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Location / date: Trondheim, 20.04.2020