

Introduction to social neuroscience
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Brief course description:

The aim of the course is to introduce basic concepts of social neuroscience. We will explore processes associated with perception, interpretation and reaction to social stimuli and link them to 'social brain' activity both in individuals from the general population and in patients with neuropsychiatric disorders to grasp the factors affecting human social functioning. Finally, we will focus on the issue of loneliness and its impact on behavioral and physiological processes.

List of topics/classes and bibliography:

1-2. What's so special about social brain? Introduction to social neuroscience

Suggested reading: Ward, J. The Student's Guide to Social Neuroscience, chapters 1-2

3. Social Perception - Reading faces

Suggested reading: Duchaine, Yovel (2015). A Revised Neural Framework for Face Processing. Annual review of vision science.

Suggested reading: Ward, ch. 5 pt 1

4. Social Perception - Reading bodies

Suggested reading: Ward, ch. 5 pt 2

5. Reacting to others – Bottom-up emotion processing

Suggested reading: Ward, ch. 4

Suggested reading: Brosschot et al. (2017). Exposed to events that never happen: Generalized unsafety, the default stress response, and prolonged autonomic activity

6. Reacting to others – Top-down emotion regulation

Suggested reading: Ochsner et al. (2012) Functional imaging studies of emotion regulation: a synthetic review and evolving model of the cognitive control of emotion

Suggested reading: Thayer et al. (2012). A meta-analysis of heart rate variability and neuroimaging studies: Implications for heart rate variability as a marker of stress and health

7. Understanding others - Empathy

Suggested reading: Ward, ch. 6 pt 1

Suggested reading: Hasson U, Frith C., Mirroring and beyond: coupled dynamics as a generalized framework for modeling social interactions Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B, 2016

8. Understanding others - Theory of mind

Suggested reading: Ward, ch. 6 pt 2

Suggested reading: Tamir, D., Thornton, M. Modeling the Predictive Social Mind Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 2017

9. Interacting with others – social decision making

Suggested reading: Ward, ch. 7

Suggested reading: Hari et al. (2015). Centrality of Social Interaction in Human Brain Function. Neuron

10. Interacting with others – morality and antisocial behavior

Suggested reading: Ward, ch. 10

11. Interacting with others - group processes

Suggested reading: Ward, ch. 9

Suggested reading: Amodio, Cikara (2021). The Social Neuroscience of Prejudice

12-13 Loneliness and social connection

Suggested reading: Cacioppo & Cacioppo, ch. 2

Suggested reading: Okruszek et al., (2021). Owner of a lonely mind? Social cognitive capacity is associated with objective, but not perceived social isolation in healthy individuals

14-15 Social cognition across neuropsychiatric populations

Suggested reading: Green et al. (2015). Social cognition in schizophrenia

Suggested reading: Okruszek et al. (2018). Biological motion sensitivity, but not interpersonal predictive coding is impaired in schizophrenia.

Suggested reading: Lee (2013). Decision Making: From Neuroscience to Psychiatry

Assessment methods and criteria:

The final grade depends on the number of points scored during the classes:

- Activity during the classes
- Exam – 20 one-choice questions