

Social Psychology



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This introductory social psychology textbook is unique. It acknowledges the two very different approaches being taken to social psychology -- experimental and critical -- and presents them together in a single, coherent text. No attempt is made to find a cosy 'integration' between them; rather, students explore the benefits and drawbacks of each. The book encourages students to develop their skills of critical analysis by addressing such questions as: * What is social psychology: a natural science, a social science, a human science or something else? * How should social psychology be studied: by doing experiments or by analysing discourse? The book has a number of features that provide a broad context for addressing these questions: * An introduction to the experimental approach, including the study of social influence, attitudes, attribution, groups, language and communication * An introduction to the critical approach, including semiotics, social constructionist and grounded theories, and discourse and narrative analyses * An exploration of the historical origins and development of the two approaches, their philosophical bases and the contrasting 'logics of enquiry' they use to pursue empirical research By studying experimental and critical approaches presented together rather than separately, students gain a richer and deeper understanding of what social psychology in the 21st century is about, where it is going and the issues it must address.

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