Name:_____   SID#_____

University of California, Berkeley
Department of Psychology

Psychology 164
Fall 2015

Midterm Examination

Exam Feedback

On initial scoring, the average score on the exam was 31.63 (63.2.5), $SD =$ 9.15. That's a little low, in my experience, and it's possible that the exam was too long.

However, psychometrically the exam had excellent properties, with a reliability (coefficient alpha) of .79. In order to identify bad questions, I use a dual criterion of (1) extremely low scores and (2) extremely low item-to-total correlations.

The exam analysis followed the procedure described in the Exam Information page of the Lecture Supplements. Some items were worth 3 points and others were worth 4 points, so in order to put all the items on the same scale they were converted to percentage scores. For example, Question #1 had a mean score of 1.99 out of 3, which converted to a percentage score of .66.

(1) The average percentage score was .65, $SD = 15$. A reasonable candidate for a question that is too difficult is to identify items whose percentage score is >2 SD below the mean, or < .35. There were no such items, but there were 4 items whose percentage score was < .50, or >1 SD below the mean: #6, 12, 13, and 15. I don't think it's an accident that 3 of these four items were toward the end of the exam, suggesting that it was, indeed, too long.

(2) With a class this large, even low item-to-total correlations can be statistically significant (for $N = 100$, $r = .20$ yields a p-value of .046). So even with larger classes I employ a cutoff of .20 to identify items with low item-to-total rs. By this standard, each of the individual items had acceptable item-to-total correlations.

Even so, there were those four (4) items with low percentage scores, so I decided to rescore them, giving all students full credit for each of them.

Some students received "half-point" scores like 1.5 or 2.5. When these were summed, some student totals were, e.g., 39.5 or 45.5. These were rounded up to, e.g., 40 or 46.

As a result of the rescoring, and rounding up, scores on the exam improved considerably: $M = 39.06$ (78%), $SD = 6.83$. That's closer to what we like to see in an upper-division course. The following graphic shows the distribution of scores on the rescored exam.

Distribution of Midterm Scores
Fall 2015

$M = 39.06$, $SD = 6.83$

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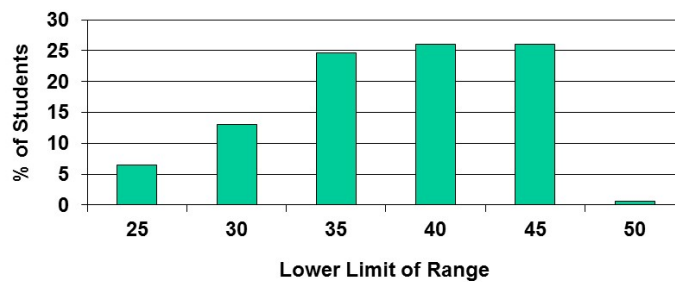
Answer each of the six (6) questions in Section 1 and each of the nine (9) questions in Section 2, for a total of 15 questions.

Be sure to *print* your name and UCB Student ID on every page of the exam.

Your responses should be very concise. In every case, fewer than five (5) sentences will do. Write your answers in the space provided (and they don't even have to be sentences). If absolutely necessary, you may continue on the other side of the page (but if you do, you're writing more than five sentences!). Write legibly in the space provided, and *please use ink*. **Exams written in pencil will not be eligible for regrading.**

Section 1. Answer all *six* (6) questions, for a total of 23 points.

1. What is *social* about social cognition? (3 points)

Mean score = 1.99, item-to-total r_{pb} = .27. Cognition is about knowledge, and social cognition has to do with knowledge of the social world – the people in it, including ourselves, the behaviors exchanged between individuals, and the situations in which social interactions take place. Put another way, social cognition has to do with the role that knowledge and cognition play in social interaction – how that knowledge is acquired through perception and learning, encoded, stored, and retrieved from memory, and used to guide reasoning, problem-solving, judgment, decision-making, and (social) behavior. [Introduction]

2. What is the "Pygmalion Effect" and how is it supposed to work? (4 points)

M = 3.09, r_{pb} = .32. In *Pygmalion in the Classroom*, children who were randomly (thus falsely) identified as "intellectual late-bloomers" made greater gains in IQ over the course of a school year than other children who were not so identified. It is a variant on the self-fulfilling prophecy. Apparently, the teachers developed positive expectations toward these children which led them to treat these children accordingly -- developing a more positive socio-emotional climate, giving more and better feedback, challenging the students more, and helping them more. The children, then, reacted by actually performing better in the classroom, thus confirming the teachers' (false) expectations). [Cognitive Perspective]

3. What is Brunswik's "lens model" and what are its implications for the accuracy of lie detection? (4 points)

2.5, .52. In the lens model, a stimulus provides ecologically valid cues, which may be utilized by the perceiver in forming a judgment. Perception is accurate when the perceiver utilizes ecologically valid cues. There are ecologically valid cues to deception, but they are weaker than perceivers think they are. And perceivers also utilize cues that are not ecologically valid. The result is that people are good liars (providing only weak ecologically valid cues) and people are poor lie detectors (utilizing cues that are not ecologically valid). [Social Perception; F&T Chapter 8]

4. What is priming and what does it tell us about the representation of episodic and semantic knowledge in person memory? (4 points)

2.82, .52. Priming occurs when performance on one task facilitates (or, in the negative case, interferes) with performance on a subsequent task. It has been found (in studies by Klein and others) that retrieval of trait information about a person does not prime retrieval of biographical knowledge about that person; nor does episodic retrieval prime

trait retrieval – at least, this is true for traits that are strongly associated with the person. This lack of mutual influence indicates that episodic and semantic knowledge are represented independently of each other. [Social Memory; F&T Chapter 3]

5. "Stereotypes are erroneous generalizations about social groups". Comment. (4 points)

2.77, .31. Stereotypes are generalizations about social groups, but we don't really know how erroneous they are, because relatively little research has been done on this topic. Judd and Park, in a model study employing the full-accuracy design, found that both Democrats and Republicans had erroneous beliefs about the other's political views. Jussim, by contrast, has argued that consensual stereotypes of various racial, ethnic, and gender groupings are mostly accurate, with little exaggeration of real differences between the groups. However, the methods employed in these few studies do not always use the "full accuracy design, and have other methodological problems, such as representativeness of samples. [Social Categorization; F&T Chapter 12]

6. What is the empirical status of the actor-observer (or self-other) difference in causal attribution? (4 points)

1.99, .51. A somewhat difficult item (but look at that item-to-total correlation!). I *think the discussion of the traditional "actor-observer" difference (there isn't one) got through OK, but the real actor-observer differences, as discovered by Malle's analysis, may have been rushed toward the end of that lecture.* The evidence that observers attribute the behavior of others to personal dispositions while actors attribute their own behavior to the situational context, has always been weak (as in the early review by Watson), and a comprehensive meta-analysis by Malle found only a very weak tendency in that direction. There are asymmetries between actors and observers, but they just don't involve dispositions and situations. For example, analyses of free responses show that actors use more reasons, and especially more "belief "reasons, although they may leave these beliefs unmarked. Observers, for their part, use more causal histories, and more "desire" reasons.

Section 2. Answer all *nine* (9) questions, for a total of 27 points.

7. Briefly distinguish among describe four (4) of the models of social cognition
        described by Fiske & Taylor: Consistency-Seeker, Naïve Scientist, Cognitive
        Miser, Motivated Tactician, or Activated Actor. (3 points)

2.60, .57. The consistency-seeker is motivated to reduce any dissonance between attitudes, and between attitudes and behavior. The naïve scientist engages in a rational analysis of events in the social world. The cognitive miser is motivated to reduce information-processing demand by relying on cognitive strategies that simplify complex

problems. The motivated tactician chooses among available cognitive strategies based on goals. The activated actor relies on automatic, unconscious processes rather than conscious, deliberate ones. [Fiske & Taylor, Chapter 1]

8. What is Zerubavel's notion of "optical pluralism"? (3 points)

1.77, .45. Zerubavel argues that we "see" the world through "mental lenses" which change constantly. Society plays a major role in shaping and organizing individuals' "optical predispositions", or the way we view the world, creating "optical communities" with distinctive "optical traditions". For this reason, our own "visions of reality" are no more valid than those of other times and places. This is true even in science (so he argues), but it is especially true when it comes to matters of morality, religion, and ideology. Optical pluralism means that there are many different ways to view an object or event, depending on the perceiver's standpoint or interpretive position, and we need to appreciate this "optical diversity". [Zerubavel, Chapter 2]

9.   Compare and contrast the two modes in "dual-mode" theories of social cognition. (3 points)

2.07, .48. There are lots of dual-mode theories, but most of them contrast "automatic" and "controlled" processes. Automatic processes are more or less reflexive in nature: inevitably evoked by appropriate stimuli, incorrigibly executed, consume few or no cognitive resources, and cause little or no interference with other ongoing cognitive-behavioral processes; controlled processes are just the opposite. Automatic processes are usually characterized as "unconscious" or "intuitive", while controlled processes are usually characterized as "conscious" or "rational". Automatic processes are also operate more quickly than controlled processes, which is why they so often dominate experience, thought, and action. [F&T, Chapter 2; Kihlstrom (2008)]

10. What problems with the classical view of categorization are addressed by the more recent prototype and exemplar views? (3 points)

2.40, .52. Although the commonsense, classical view of categories is as proper sets, it turns out that many categories do not have "defining" features that are singly necessary and jointly sufficient to identify category members. Thus, the boundaries between categories and their contrasts, and between subordinate and superordinate levels in a conceptual hierarchy, may be "fuzzy" and unclear. As a result, the set of category instances may be very heterogeneous, varying in typicality and related to each other by a principle of family resemblance. [F&T, Chapter 4]

11. Distinguish between attributional ambiguity and stereotype threat. What do these phenomena have in common? (3 points)

1.82, .43. Both of these are effects of stereotyping on the target – the stereotyped individual, rather than the perceiver who holds the stereotype. And both reflect "stigma consciousness" on the part of the target. In attributional ambiguity, the target is uncertain whether to attribute the perceiver's negative behavior to his or her own personal qualities, or to the stereotype. Stereotype threat is a variant on the self-fulfilling prophecy in which awareness of the possibility of being stereotyped leads the individual to behave in a stereotype-confirming manner. [F&T, Chapter 11]

12. What is correspondent inference theory and how does it relate to the fundamental attribution error? (3 points)

1.26, .47. *Another "difficult" but perfectly good item.* Correspondent inference theory argues that perceivers assume that targets have attitudes and dispositions that correspond to their behavior. These attributions are rarely qualified by the situational context in which the behavior occurs. By attributing behavior to actors' dispositions, rather than to situational factors, correspondent inference theory assumes that people are prone to making the fundamental attribution error of attributing behavior to internal, personal dispositions rather than to external, situational demands. [F&T, Chapter 6]

13. What is the illusory correlation, and how does it contribute to stereotyping? (3 points)

1.43, .24. *A difficult item, with a borderline item-to-total correlation.* The illusory correlation is the overestimation of the relationship between two variables, often occurring when two objects or events share some distinctive feature in common – especially when that feature is negative. Outgroups, who are usually subject to stereotyping, are usually in the minority, and thus distinctive; and affectively negative features are also relatively infrequent. Therefore, the illusory correlation can create a false association between outgroup membership and evaluatively negative traits. [F&T, Chapter 7]

14. In making decisions affecting student or personnel selection, how do human judges, acting individually or collectively, compare to statistical decision algorithms? (3 points)

2.25, .40. When information is expressed in quantitative form that can be processed according to a constant decision rule, computers or other statistical aids always do as well, and usually do better, than human judges forming "clinical" impressions. This is because "statistical" decision-making employs empirically valid weightings of various data sources, and is more accurate and consistent in applying the decision rules. [F&T, Chapter 8]

15. How does Zerubavel distinguish among *indicators*, *icons*, and *symbols*? (3 points)

0.90, .29. *I actually thought in advance that this item wouldn't pan out, but I wanted to try it anyway.* These are all forms of mental associations, in which one element (the "signifier" stands for, or represents, another (the "signified). With indicators, the association is natural, intrinsic, and inevitable. With symbols, the association is artificial and largely a matter of social convention. Icons fall somewhere in between, based only partly on natural associations such as physical resemblance. [Zerubavel Chapter 5]

A scoring guide will be posted to the course website by noon, October 22.

Exams will be graded and returned (in discussion sections) as soon as possible.

Requests for regrading must be made to your GSI no later than 1 week after exams are returned. All requests must be made in writing (just a paragraph will do) explaining why your response is as good as, or better than, the one given in the scoring guide.