

Extra Credit Meme Assignment

Due: By Monday June 12, 12:30pm, on Canvas

Instructions: Create an original meme related to any of the social psychology concepts we have covered in this course (in lecture, the textbook, the podcasts, etc; see the list at the end of this document for ideas). Each meme you create is worth 1 extra credit point for your test grade; you are able to turn in 3 memes for a total of 3 extra credit points. To be eligible for the extra credit points, you must write a short explanation (2-3 sentences) for each meme, describing how it references a class concept. Bold, underline, or highlight the concept name in each explanation (see the examples below). Turn in a single Word document with all of your memes to Canvas.

About Memes: Memes are cultural symbols passed from person to person, usually on the Internet. Memes often draw and borrow from each other, so there are several “meme templates” you can use. Some examples are: Distracted Boyfriend (see below), Success Kid, Futurama Fry (see below), First World Problem, Crying Michael Jordan, Kermit Sipping Tea, Bernie Once Again Asking (see below), Ermahgerd, Overly Attached Girlfriend, Scumbag Steve, and more! If you are not familiar with these, I recommend browsing the popular section of/searching [Know Your Meme](#), which explains how these memes are often used.

Doing this assignment successfully means you have to pair the right meme with the right social psychological concept. Once you understand how to use a meme, you can try to find a course concept that will work with it.

For example, the Distracted Boyfriend meme uses a picture that shows a man and woman who are presumably dating. The man is distracted by another woman walking by, and the woman he is dating is upset. Typically, people use this meme to indicate distraction from something more important or legitimate by labeling (with text) the three people in the picture. If I were to use this template to illustrate the fundamental attribution error, for example, I might create the following meme:



Here, the “distracted boyfriend” is “understanding why a person is acting the way they are.” He is getting distracted by “their personal characteristics” from the true cause, “the situation.” This is exactly what the fundamental attribution error says: that we are likely to misattribute people’s behaviors to their personal characteristics, when behaviors are really caused by the situation/environment the person is in. For my short explanation of this meme, I would write: “This meme shows **the fundamental attribution error**. This concept explains that people are likely to incorrectly attribute another’s behavior to their personal characteristics rather than the situation at hand.”

You can create a meme using an app on a smartphone (e.g., Mematic) or one of several websites (e.g., <https://imgflip.com/memotemplates>).

More Examples:



Explanation: This meme describes **self-verification**, or the desire for one’s identities to be verified by others. Because people want their identities (e.g., a political identity) to be verified by others, they engage in certain behaviors (e.g., they post political opinions on social media) that demonstrate their identities.



Explanation: This meme describes how many of our preferences are the result of **socialization**, in this case as the result of our gender. Our preferences, like our favorite colors, are shaped by the people and institutions around us.



Explanation: This meme plays off of a fundamental question in social psychology: **agency versus constraint**. Psychologists often focus more on agency (free will), whereas sociologists focus more on constraint (social structure). Social psychologists try to incorporate both into their research.

A List of Concepts You Can Use: Not all concepts are covered by this list. I recommend revisiting your notes, the lecture slides, the key terms listed in the quiz study guides, or reviewing the “Terms and Concepts for Review” at the end of the textbook chapters.

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| Affect control theory | Moral alchemy |
| Agency vs. constraint | Network-episode model |
| Cognitive dissonance | Phases of personal relationships (initiation, negotiation, maintenance, dissolution) |
| Concerted cultivation vs. accomplishment of natural growth | Power and status theory of emotions (Kemper) |
| Conformity | Prejudice |
| Deindividuation | Pygmalion effect |
| Deviance | Racism (color-blind, institutional, laissez-faire, traditional, symbolic) |
| Differential association theory, differential reinforcement theory | Resource mobilization |
| Differential vulnerability model | Ritual interaction (Collins) |
| Diffusion of responsibility | Role modeling, role taking |
| Discrimination (institutional) | Sapir-Whorf hypothesis |
| Dramaturgical perspective (self-presentation, impression management, etc) | Scapegoating |
| Emotion management (feeling rules, emotional labor, etc) | Second shift |
| Frame alignment | Sexual double standard |
| Free rider problem | Social contagion |
| Fundamental attribution error | Social control (formal, informal, internal) |
| Halo effect | Social control theory |
| Homophily | Social identity theory |
| Identity theory (salience, commitment, verification, threat, etc) | Social influence |
| Identity control theory | Social learning theory |
| Implicit associations | Social norms |
| Interpretive approach to socialization (Corsaro) | Socialization (primary, secondary) |
| Intersectionality | Status characteristics theory |
| Labeling theory (of deviance, mental illness) | Status violation theory |
| Looking-glass self | Stereotype threat |
| Mass hysteria | Stigma |
| Matching hypothesis | Strain theory |
| Medicalization | Tokenism |
| Microaggressions | Total institution |
| | Two-factor theory of emotion |
| | White racial frame |