RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM
299Y/399Y PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS 2019-2020
SUMMER

Name and Title: Spike Lee, Assistant Professor
Department: Rotman School of Management/Psychology

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Dirty Socks, Dirty Talk, Dirty Thoughts: Psychological Cleanliness and Other Weird Metaphors We Unconsciously Rely on to Conceptualize the World

Number of 299Y Spots: 1 Number of 399Y Spots: 1

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY:
Lady Macbeth was obsessed with washing her hands—perhaps for good reasons. Recent psychological experiments show that hand-washing effectively reduces guilt (Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006). Apparently, physical cleansing makes people feel morally cleaner. People across cultures also use words such as dirty and disgusting to stress their derogation of immoral acts and actors (e.g., "he has all these dirty thoughts," "you're a disgusting person"). Our research explores psychological cleanliness at physical, moral, and aesthetic-intellectual levels. Physical examples are dirt, mud, and vomit. Moral examples are bribery, injustice, and cheating. Aesthetic-intellectual examples are expressions like “the iPhone has such a clean design” and “that’s a clean experiment.” In short, we examine the extent to which physical cleansing can functionally wash away a wide variety of mental residues (Lee & Schwarz, 2010, 2011, in press) such as emotional ups and downs, change basic psychological processes such as priming, and restore people’s positive self-views.

Beyond cleanliness, we are investigating numerous conceptual metaphors fundamental to social life, such as “something smells fishy” (social suspicion), “where do you draw the line” (mental boundary), and “she’s a warm person” (amiable personality). Popular media will be reviewed to deepen our understanding of metaphorical constructs and their psychological effects. The student’s personal, cultural, and research experiences will contribute to hypothesis generation and testing in lab and field experiments.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION:
We offer training and hands-on experience that pave the way for thesis research and graduate school application. Students will
(1) collaborate with graduate students and the faculty advisor to design experiments;
(2) run experiments in lab, on campus, and at public locations;
(3) review popular media;
(4) review scholarly literature;
(5) process experimental data and analyze media, literature, personal and cultural experience.
With these tasks, you will learn
(1) how to turn a thought ("my insight") into an experiment ("my project");
(2) how to deepen your understanding of a concept;
(3) how to use your personal experience to inform research ideas;
(4) how to apply research ideas to your daily experience;
(5) practical skills necessary for research at both undergraduate and graduate levels (e.g., measurement of human characteristics, statistics, conceptualization);
(6) how to apply to graduate school and thrive as a psychological scientist or consumer behavior researcher.

MARKING SCHEME (assignments with weight and due date):
40%: Lab participation in a professional, timely manner throughout both semesters, including various aspects of research (as described in the last section)
10%: Journal, keeping track of your research tasks every week, what you’re learning from these tasks, and the progress of your project(s) throughout the semester (submitted by August 2, 2019 the latest in Summer)
20%: An oral presentation given in lab meeting, about 20 minutes in duration and worth 20%. It will be on the theoretical background, methodological design, findings, and implications of your project, by July 26, 2019 the latest. Tips: the earlier you present, the better it is for you, because it will make your writing of the final report (below) much easier, much stronger, and much more pleasant.
30%: Final report (total 6-8 pages) written in APA style, following the format of a scientific paper, including Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion sections. Specific weightages are as follows.

- 10%: Introduction, including introduction of relevant literature, specific theoretical questions that need to be answered, how the present research addresses these questions, why the methods used in the present research are appropriate for addressing these questions, and what exactly the conceptual hypotheses are. Due by June 7, 2019 for Summer ROP students; by November 30, 2019 for Fall/Winter ROP students.

- 10%: Method, including accurate description of the sample of participants, the present operationalizations of the independent and dependent variables, and the study’s procedure. Due by July 5, 2019 for Summer ROP students; by January 31, 2020 for Fall/Winter ROP students.

- 10%: Results (of each study) and Discussion (of the whole package of studies). Results section needs to present a storyline backed up by all relevant statistical results (rather than just a bunch of statistics without any coherent flow). Discussion section needs to articulate how the present findings address the research questions raised in the Introduction, what new theoretical issues or empirical questions they raise, what methodological limitations the present methods have, how future studies can resolve these limitations, and what the theoretical take-home messages of the whole project are. Due by August 9, 2019.
Name and Title: Spike Lee, Assistant Professor
Department: Rotman School of Management/Psychology

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Morality, Values, Intuitions, and How These are Influenced by Your Bodily Experiences

Number of 299Y Spots: 1  Number of 399Y Spots: 1

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY:
The past 10 years have witnessed a rapidly expanding body of behavioral research that reveals a set of five innate, universal foundations, from which all cultures build their moral intuitions (Haidt & Graham, 2007). But cultures and groups differ in their relative emphases on the different foundations. For example, while both liberals and conservatives emphasize care/harm and fairness/cheating, conservatives give additional emphasis to loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Although these moral foundations have been shown to predict economic behaviors and political attitudes, it remains entirely unclear how they are represented in the human mind. Without understanding how the mind processes moral foundations, the theory has difficulty in extending its explanatory scope and predictive accuracy. Our research addresses this critical gap of knowledge.

Drawing on insights from grounded cognition (Lee, 2016; Lee & Schwarz, 2014, 2016), we propose that the abstract meaning of each moral foundation (care/harm, fairness/unfairness, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation) is represented, processed, and interpreted through a specifically mapped domain of physical experience. In a programmatic series of experiments, we will test the causal influence of five bodily experiences on people’s attitudes towards the five moral foundations and on people’s monetary decisions driven by each moral foundation.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION:
The student will be doing social psychological research on the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral consequences of physical experiences in relation to moral foundations. Specifically, the student will be trained to

1. pilot-test manipulations and measures;
2. write experimental protocols for studies in lab, on campus, and at public locations;
3. follow through the procedures and observe participant behaviors to gain methodological insights and generate ideas;
4. collect and enter data, code qualitative responses, explore datasets using R, and summarize results;
5. conduct secondary research and review both scholarly literature and popular media, especially in areas such as morality, social cognition, grounded cognition, and culture;
6. understand research ethics;
7. prepare materials for dissemination in academic outlets.

The goal of this project is to provide an immensely educational experience for the student. With these tasks, the student will learn
1. how to turn a thought ("my insight") into an experiment ("my project");
2. how to deepen your understanding of a concept;
3. how to use your personal experience to inform research ideas;
4. how to apply research ideas to your daily experience;
5. practical skills necessary for research at both undergraduate and graduate levels (e.g., measurement of human characteristics, statistics, conceptualization);
6. how to apply to graduate school and thrive as a psychological scientist or consumer behavior researcher.

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Name and Title: Spike Lee, Assistant Professor
Department: Rotman School of Management/Psychology

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Do Social Class and Political Orientation Jointly Influence Lay Beliefs and Attitudes? And vice versa?

Number of 299Y Spots: 1  Number of 399Y Spots: 1

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY:
Are rich people, relative to poorer people, less prosocial towards others? Or more prosocial? Recent research in psychology has shown that people’s social class affects their attitudes and behaviors towards others (e.g., Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt, & Keltner, 2012). While some research has found that people with lower social class are more prosocial towards others due to endorsement of egalitarian values (Piff, Kraus, Côté, Cheng & Keltner, 2010), it remains unclear how generalizable this finding is and how exactly social class may influence other attitudes and lay beliefs about the world. In this research project, we examine how social class may influence attitudes and lay beliefs about the social world, and vice versa.

In addition, we examine how our political orientation/beliefs influence the way we think about our social standing in comparison to others and how fixed or malleable we consider human attributes to be. For example, do liberals and conservatives think about human attributes as similarly fixed/malleable, or do liberals think human attributes are more malleable than do conservatives? Through correlational and experimental studies, we will systematically test how these factors relate to one another as well as possible causal directions. The student’s personal, cultural, and research experiences will contribute to hypothesis generation and testing in lab and field experiments.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION:
We offer training and hands-on experience that pave the way for thesis research and graduate school application. Students will

1. pilot-test manipulations and measures;
2. write experimental protocols for studies in lab, on campus, and at public locations;
3. follow through the procedures and observe participant behaviors to gain methodological insights and generate ideas;
4. collect and enter data, code qualitative responses, explore datasets using R, and summarize results;
5. conduct secondary research and review both scholarly literature and popular media, especially in areas such as, social class, political orientation, social cognition, and culture;
6. understand research ethics;
7. prepare materials for dissemination in academic outlets.

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