

12 Angry Men Capstone Activity

This file contains the handouts, student information, and other materials needed for a capstone activity in an introductory psychology class.

Contents:

- 1) Writing assignment with Weiten text
- 2) Writing assignment, non-Weiten text
- 3) The back of the writing assignment, containing a list of possible psychological phenomena with room to take notes
- 4) List of psychological phenomena displayed in the 1957 version of the film
- 5) Simple rubric for writing assignment

12 Angry Men Writing Assignment (50 points)

You will see a lot of psychological phenomena exhibited in the movie *12 Angry Men*. Many of these phenomena are listed in the boxes on the next page (note though that this list is not exhaustive). Your task for this assignment is to watch the movie, take note of these various psychological phenomena, and then write a cohesive 2-3 page paper discussing these themes.

In Chapter 1 of our text, Weiten lists and discusses a handful of themes regarding psychology. Four of them relate to psychology's subject matter:

- 1) Behavior is determined by multiple causes
- 2) Behavior is shaped by cultural heritage
- 3) Heredity and environment jointly influence behavior
- 4) People's experience of the world is highly subjective

Pick one of these themes and write a 2-3 page paper in which you relate it to the movie *12 Angry Men*. In your paper, you must tie at least 4 incidences in the movie to your theme. Also, be sure to use concepts from across all of psychology to support your theme. Do not, for example, just pick examples from social psychology (such as conformity and stereotyping); use examples from cognition, memory, sensation and perception, etc. as well.

12 Angry Men Writing Assignment (50 points)

Due: December 7, 5 pm (via Blackboard)

You will see a lot of psychological phenomena exhibited in the movie *12 Angry Men*. Many of these phenomena are listed in the boxes on the next page (note though that this list is not exhaustive). Your task for this assignment is to watch the movie, take note of these various psychological phenomena, and then write a cohesive 2-3 page paper discussing these themes.

In writing your paper you must pick at least 4 separate incidences from the movie. For each incidence, describe how it relates to a psychological phenomenon. Be sure to use concepts from across all of psychology. Do not, for example, just pick examples from social psychology (such as conformity and stereotyping); use examples from cognition, memory, sensation and perception, etc. as well.

In order to construct a cohesive essay, you should structure your discussion of the 4 incidences around a central idea. That is, your paper needs to be more than just a loose collection of summary points. Consider how you can tie all the incidences together around a central psychological idea. Here are four central ideas you can use (these are taken from another introductory Psychology text, *Psychology: Themes & Variations* by Wayne Weiten):

- 1) Behavior is determined by multiple causes: For any complex human behavior, multiple reasons exist as to why that behavior was done. For example, consider your study behavior. It is determined by intelligence, memory and attentional constraints, and social factors.
- 2) Behavior is shaped by cultural heritage: At several points in the semester we discussed how the people we grow up with, our culture, shape our thoughts and behavior.
- 3) Heredity and environment jointly influence behavior: This is the classic nature v. nurture argument that we touch upon throughout the course.
- 4) People's experience of the world is highly subjective: How I see the world is different than how you see this world. This is true not only of more abstract principles like beauty, but also very basic perceptual processes as well (think about the visual illusions we observed back in Chapter 5).

You may use any of these 4, or feel free to construct your own unifying idea. As we watch the movie, you can use the matrix on the next page in order to keep track of events and topics. Look over the items in the matrix (they all occur in the movie, along with others) before watching the movie, and reacquaint yourselves with the unfamiliar ones.

Conformity	Hearing	Memory/ Forgetting	Persuasive Message	Decision Making
Fundamental Attribution Error	Vision	Personality	Stereotypes	Representative Heuristic
Prejudice	Homeostasis	Decision Making	First Impressions	Confirmation Bias
Attitudes	Motivation	Psychodynamic	Obedience to Authority	Availability Heuristic
Bystander Effect	Reaction Time	Nature/Nurture	In-group/Out- group	Change of Representation

#	Topic	Quote / Description	Time	Vote
1	Homeostasis	Getting the fan to work / opening the windows	0:04:25	
2	Stereotype	"I'll slap those kids down before they start any trouble"	0:06:39	
3	Obedience to authority	Obeying the foreman	0:08:35	
4	Motivation	"I have tickets to the ballgame."	0:08:42	
5	Anonymity	No names are mentioned, sit in order of juror number	0:09:10	
6	First impressions	"What were your impressions of the prosecuting attorney"	0:09:22	
7	Stereotype	"They let those kids run wild out there"	0:09:45	
8	In-group/out-group	"Are you a Yankee fan." "No, Baltimore"	0:10:04	
9	Conformity	First vote (raise of hands, not all raise hands at once)	0:11:24	11-1
10	In-group/out-group	"There's always one." "What's there to talk about?" "11 men here think he is guilty."	0:11:50	
11	Groupthink	"I don't know whether I believe it or not."	0:12:29	
12	Nature of knowledge	"Couldn't change my mind if we talked for a 100 years"	0:12:38	
13	Attitudes/persuasion	"This kid has been kicked around all of his life."	0:12:58	
14	Nature/nurture	"I've lived among them all my life."	0:13:46	
15	Stereotype	"It's up to us to convince this gentleman that he is wrong and we are wrong"	0:14:32	
16	Decision making	"Claimed he was at the movie theatre, but one hour later couldn't remember the names of the films he saw..."	0:15:32	
17	Memory/forgetting	Discussion of elevated train	0:17:15	
18	Perception	"She's one of them too, isn't she?"	0:18:05	
19	Stereotype	Could hear the argument	0:18:19	
20	Perception	"The kid has been hit so many times that violence is a normal state of affairs with him." (observational learning)	0:19:24	
21	Nature/nurture	"Everyone has a breaking point."	0:19:47	
22	Aggression	"Look at his record" (then list of confirming evidence)	0:19:58	
23	Confirmation bias	"Ever since he was five years old his father would beat him up regularly, he used his fists."	0:20:20	
24	Observational learning	"It's these kids nowadays."	0:20:38	
25	Stereotype	"You know it and I know it" (born in slum)	0:20:48	
26	Representativeness heuristic	"I've lived in slums all my life."	0:22:13	
27	In-group/out-group	"Oh, I forgot about that."	0:22:30	
28	Memory/forgetting	"Those two witnesses were the entire case for the prosecution. Supposing they're wrong."	0:23:02	
29	Eyewitness testimony	"Nobody could know a thing like that."	0:25:14	
30	Nature of knowledge		0:25:35	

31	Evaluation of evidence	Discussion of how Fonda's character found the knife	0:25:59
32	In-group/out-group	"There are still 11 of us here who think he is guilty."	0:29:49
33	Motivation	"Let's get done and get out of here."	0:30:34
34	Conformity	"If there are 11 votes for guilty, I won't stand alone."	0:31:13
35	Anonymity	Secret Ballot	0:31:20 10-2
36	Attitudes/persuasion	"Then some golden-voiced preacher starts tearing your poor heart out."	0:33:10
37	Personality trait	"He's very excitable."	0:33:33
38	Conformity	"This gentleman has been standing alone against us."	0:34:03
39	Homeostasis	Person goes to bathroom	0:34:23
40	Psychodynamic-reaction formation	Juror who tells jokes to cover anxiety and to fit in	0:35:00
41	Attitudes/persuasion	"I'm glad you're not one of those who lets emotional appeals influence them."	0:35:58
42	Foot in the door	"Do you know what the soft sell is?"	0:36:37
43	Altered consciousness	Smoking in bathroom	0:36:45
44	Personality	"Nice bunch of guys." "Oh, about the same as anyone else."	0:38:07
45	Perception	Coin trick	0:39:16
46	Audition	"I'm wondering how clearly he could have heard it"	0:39:50
47	Vision	"She said she saw the killing through the windows of a moving el train"	0:40:12
48	Memory	She remembered the most insignificant details	0:40:20
49	Psychophysics	"You're talking about a matter of seconds, no one could be that accurate."	0:43:04
50	Aggression	"If you say stuff to him like that again, I'm going to lay you out."	0:43:45
51	Psychodynamic-Identification	Rationale for old man's testimony	0:44:20
52	Memory	"He wouldn't really lie."	0:45:21
53	Fundamental Attribution Error	"Bright? He's a common, ignorant, slob; he don't even speak good English."	0:46:44
54	Conformity	Juror changes vote	0:46:54 9-3
55	Bystander effect	"Two, if he did hear it, he may not have connected it with his own act."	0:50:40
56	Eyewitness testimony	"Witnesses can make mistakes."	0:51:15
57	Aggression	"Maybe what we need is a little yelling."	0:51:23
58	Conformity	Juror changes vote	0:52:10 8-4
59	Psychophysics-reaction time	Discussion of old man running to door	0:53:30
60	Change of	"I'd like to see a diagram of the apartment."	0:53:52

	representation		
61	Effect of aging	"He was an old man, half of the time he was confused."	0:54:24
62	Memory	"And assumed it was the boy."	0:58:11
63	Aggression	"You're a sadist." "I'll kill you."	0:59:00
64	Nature/nurture	"For the same reason you're not; it was the way I was brought up"	1:00:07
65	Homeostasis	"Boy, oh boy it's really hot out."	1:01:20
66	Conformity	Call for open vote	1:01:55 6-6
67	Analogy	"We're going into extra innings here"	1:03:07
68	Autobiographical memory	Coach's memory about playing in the rain "It must have been on the same switch as the lights"	1:05:23
69	Deductive reasoning	(about the fan)	1:07:01
70	Personality trait	"I'm a pretty excitable person."	1:08:03
71	Stereotype	"They're all alike."	1:08:56
72	Actor-observer bias	"The arrogance of this guy."	1:09:04
73	Memory/forgetting	Discussion of memory	1:09:20
74	Personality	Juror who doesn't sweat until the end (maybe physiological response to stress)	1:11:50
75	Homeostasis	"It's 5 after 6, let's get some dinner."	1:12:35
76	Psychodynamic- repression	Juror who remembers knife fights only when he sees the knife (maybe autobio memory)	1:14:30
77	Memory-forgetting	"I guess you try to forget those things."	1:14:32
78	Conformity	Juror changes vote "There are some baseball tickets burning a hole in your pocket."	1:15:43 5-7
79	Motivation	Another vote (raise of hands)	1:16:02
80	Conformity	"You know how these people lie." (long diatribe)	1:17:09 3-9
81	Stereotype	"I know a couple who are okay."	1:17:58
82	Availability heuristic	"We have to keep personal prejudice out of this."	1:18:39
83	Prejudice	"We're just gambling on probabilities, we may be wrong."	1:20:22
84	Base rates	Discussion of lady's testimony	1:20:45
85	Perception	"She tossed and turned for over an hour."	1:21:21
86	Insomnia/sleep	Another vote (raise of hands)	1:21:55
87	Conformity	Woman not wearing eyeglasses	1:22:54 4-8
88	First impressions- vanity	"I'm so sick of your yelling."	1:25:40
89	Aggression	New vote	1:26:11
90	Conformity	"You're alone." "I don't care if I'm alone."	1:28:26 1-11
91	In-group/out-group	Rips up picture of son	1:29:21
92	Psychodynamic- displacement	"He's not guilty."	1:32:00
93	Conformity		1:32:18

Grading Rubric for the *12 Angry Men* Paper

Student: _____

<i>Criteria for Grading</i>	Maximum Points	Your Points
Description of psychological theme	10	
Relating movie to psychological phenomena	10	
Variety of psychological phenomena	10	
Cohesiveness of Paper	10	
Grammar / Punctuation / Presentation	10	
Total	50	