



# **Social Psychology**

## **Lecture 1**

### **Introducing Social Psychology**

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# Overview of course I

- **Lecture 1: Introducing Social Psychology**
- **Lecture 2: Social cognition & social thinking**
- **Lecture 3: Attribution & social knowledge**
- **Lecture 4: Social influence**
- **Lecture 5: People in groups**
- **Lecture 6: Leadership & decision making**
- **Lecture 7: Prejudice & discrimination**

# Overview of course II

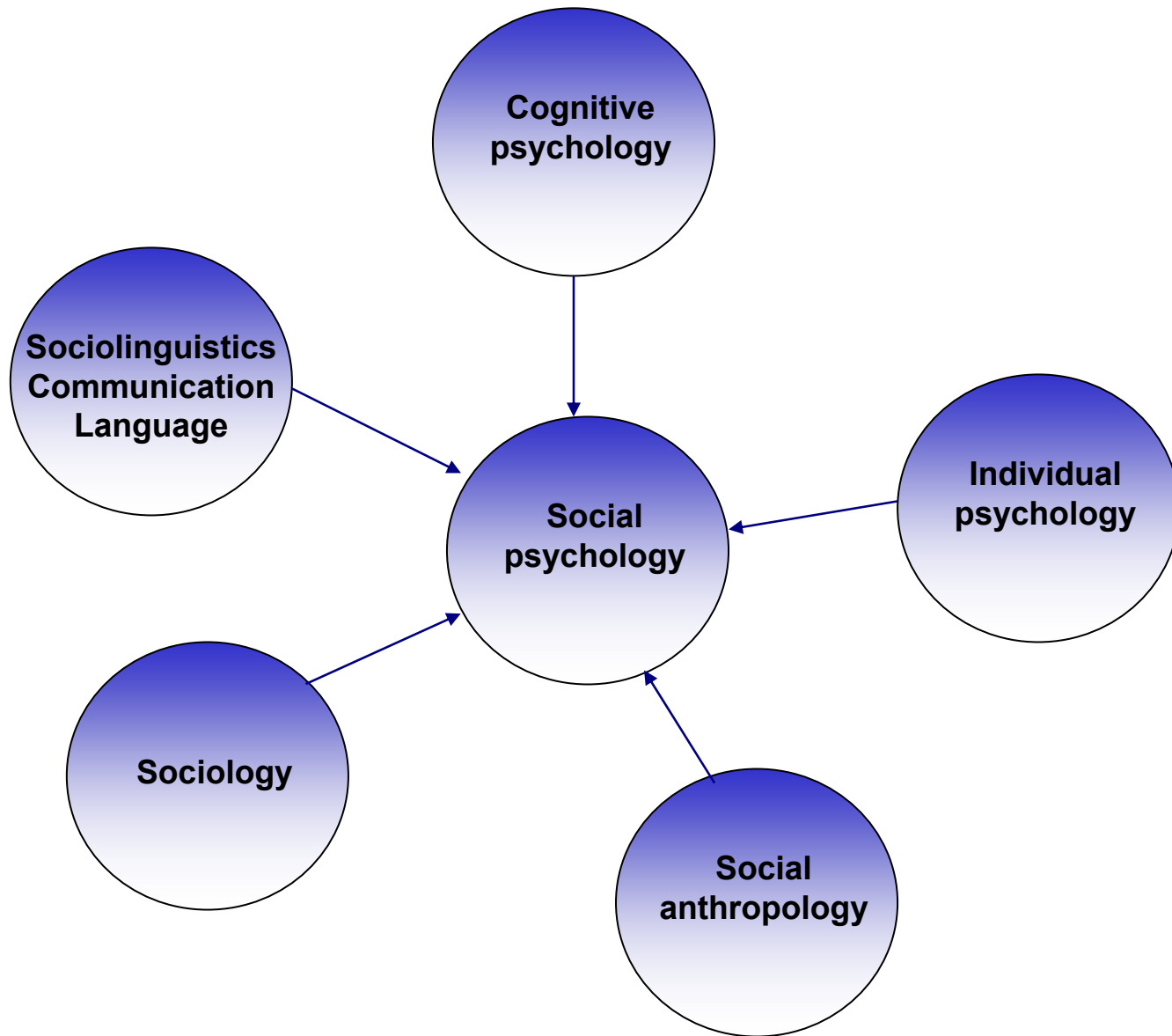
- **Lecture 8: Intergroup behaviour**
- **Lecture 9: Aggression**
- **Lecture 10: Affiliation, attraction & love**
- **Lecture 11: Prosocial behaviour**
- **Lecture 12: Language & communication**
- **Lecture 13: Culture**

## Main sources

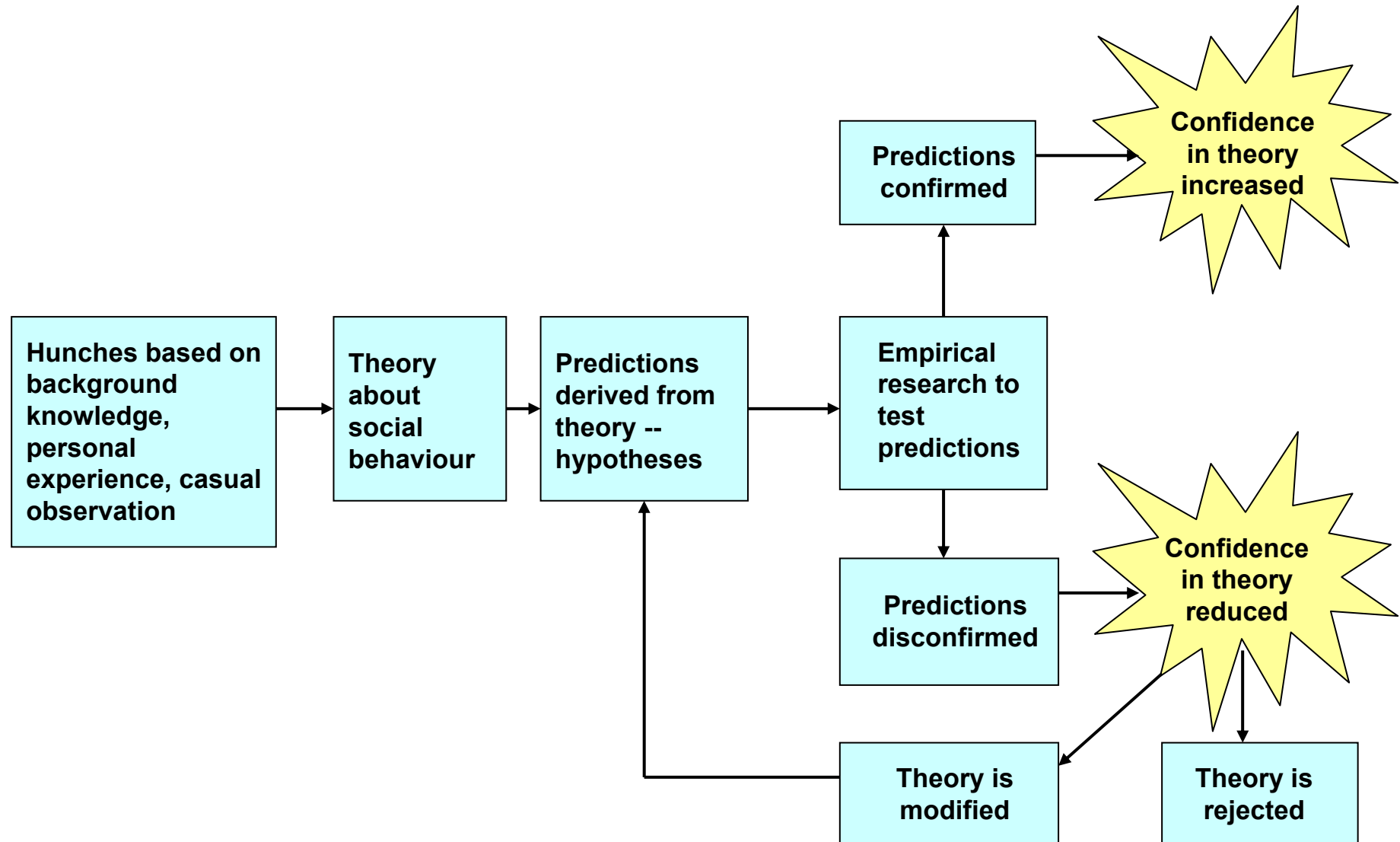
- Carlson, Martin, & Buskist (2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> European edition). *Psychology*. Harlow: Pearson. Chapters 15 & 16.
- Hogg & Vaughan (2005; 4<sup>th</sup> edition). *Social psychology*. Harlow: Pearson.

# What is social psychology?

- “The scientific investigation of how the thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the **actual, imagined or implied** presence of others” (Floyd Allport, 1935)
- Examples: Theatre performance, dropping litter
- *Human, not animal* behaviour
- Overt behaviour, but also feelings, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, intentions, goals
- Science: theory ↔ data



# Model of scientific method



# Scientific method: Experiments

- Experimental vs. non-experimental methods
- Experiments: Manipulating one (or more) **independent variable (IV)** and measuring the effect of the manipulation on a **dependent variable (DV)**
- Example: Effect of smiling at people
- Random assignment
- Avoid confounding
- Watch for **floor** or **ceiling** effects
- Lab vs. field experiments

# Scientific method: Non-experimental methods

- Experimentation = preferred method of science
- But: not always possible (e.g. allocation of biolog. sex) or ethical (effects of crime)
- **Correlation ≠ causation!**
- Archival research (historical analysis)
- Case studies (in-depth analysis of single case)
- Survey research (questionnaires, interviews)
- Field studies (observation)
- **Quantitative vs. qualitative** data analysis

# Research ethics

- **Classic studies in social psychology often unethical (e.g. Milgram's 1974 obedience studies)**
- **Nowadays, clear ethical guidelines of BPS, APA, etc. and ethics committees in universities**
- **Five basic ethical principles:**
  - **Protection from harm (e.g. electric shock)**
  - **Respect for privacy (anonymity, confidentiality)**
  - **Use of deception (50-75% of research uses deception)**
  - **Informed consent (possibility to withdraw at any time)**
  - **Debriefing (full explanation of experiment)**

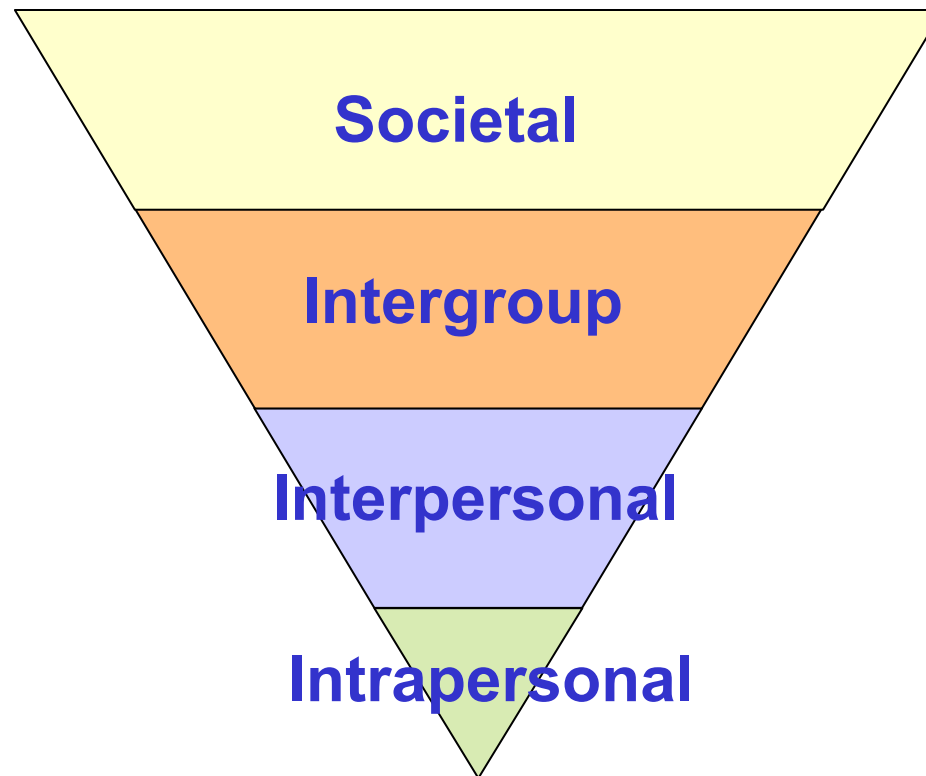
# Theoretical issues I

- **Behaviourism**
  - Going back to Skinner and Pavlov
  - This perspective emphasizes role of reinforcement/learning in social behaviour
- **Cognitive psychology**
  - Going back to Koffka & Köhler's Gestalt psychology
  - Focuses on active interpretation & cognitive processes
  - 1950's & 60's: cognitive consistency theories
  - 1970's: attribution theories
  - From late 1970's: social cognition (meta-theory)

# Theoretical issues II

- **Evolutionary social psychology**
  - Going back to Darwin
  - Behaviour explained by “survival of the fittest” (e.g. attraction to certain sexual mates)
- **Personality theory**
  - Social behaviour explained in terms of enduring attributes (e.g. “the authoritarian personality”)
  - Now seen as only *partial* explanation of behaviour
  - ≠ collectivist theories that take context & social norms into account (e.g. social identity theory)

# Levels of explanation in social psychology



# Social psychology in Europe

- Social psychology started in Europe, but shifted to US with rise of fascism in 1930's
- Post-war period: slow rebuilding, but very influenced by American thinking, then Europeans pushed for more social social psychology
- Since early 1970's: powerful & influential renaissance of social psychology in Europe
- Founding of EAESP & EJSP
- Particularly important: **Henri Tajfel** (Social Identity Theory) & **Serge Moscovici** (social representations)

# Summary of lecture

- **What is social psychology?**
- **Scientific method**
  - **Model**
  - **Experiments**
  - **Non-experimental methods**
- **Research ethics**
- **Theories in social psychology**
- **Levels of explanation**
- **Social psychology in Europe**

# Recommended reading

- **Carlson et al. (2004): chapter 15**
- **Hogg & Vaughan (2005): chapter 1**