

# Emotion and Judgment

Lecture 12  
The Psychology of Emotion  
Professor David Pizarro

# Emotion Colors

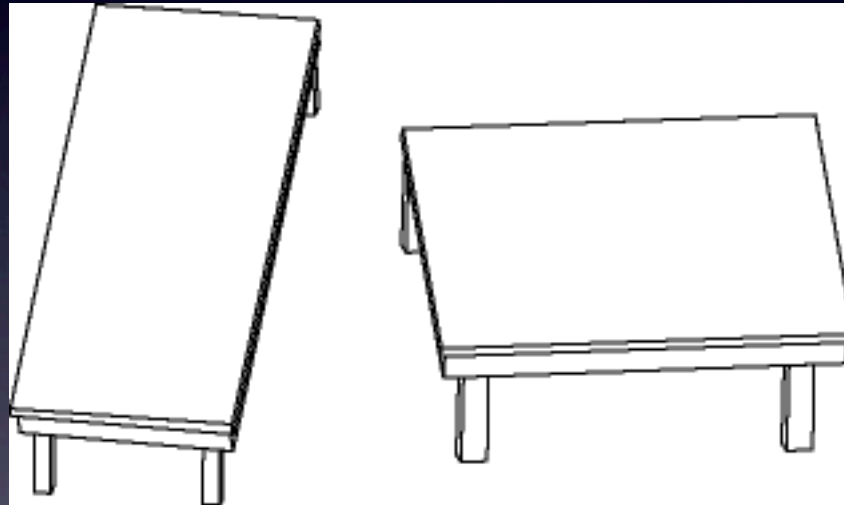
## Judgments and Decisions

- Emotions most likely serve a useful function
  - Activate situationally-appropriate behaviors
    - e.g., run, fight
  - Also change judgment in appropriate ways
    - e.g., fear makes you more vigilant
- We can show this directly, with evidence that emotions elicit the “right” judgments
- We can show this indirectly, with evidence that emotional states “bleed into” other unrelated judgments.

# Misattribution

- Emotion should influence judgment in a way consistent with the functions of that emotion
- But we can “trick” people into having these emotions affect unrelated judgments.
- Much of the research on emotion and judgment uses this strategy to shed light on how emotions work.

Showing “errors” leads to understanding how the system works



# “Affective” influences on Judgment

- I. Arousal--general state of activation
- II. Mood--diffuse good/bad, valenced but with no real “object”
- III. Emotion--discrete emotions with an “object”, e.g., anger, fear, embarrassment
- IV. “Visceral” States--strong states of desire, such as thirst, sexual arousal, hunger, cravings

# I. Arousal

# Exercise and attraction

- Male Ps exercise (high arousal) or not (low arousal)
- Then rated attractive or unattractive female confederate

	Confederate attractiveness:	
Arousal:	High	Low
High	32.4	9.4
Low	26.1	15.1

# Arousal from audiotape

- Male Ps listened to a pleasant, neutral, or unpleasant audiotape
- Then rated attractive or unattractive female confederate

	Confederate attractiveness:	
Audiotape:	High	Low
Pleasant		
Neutral	23.0	17.4
Unpleasant		



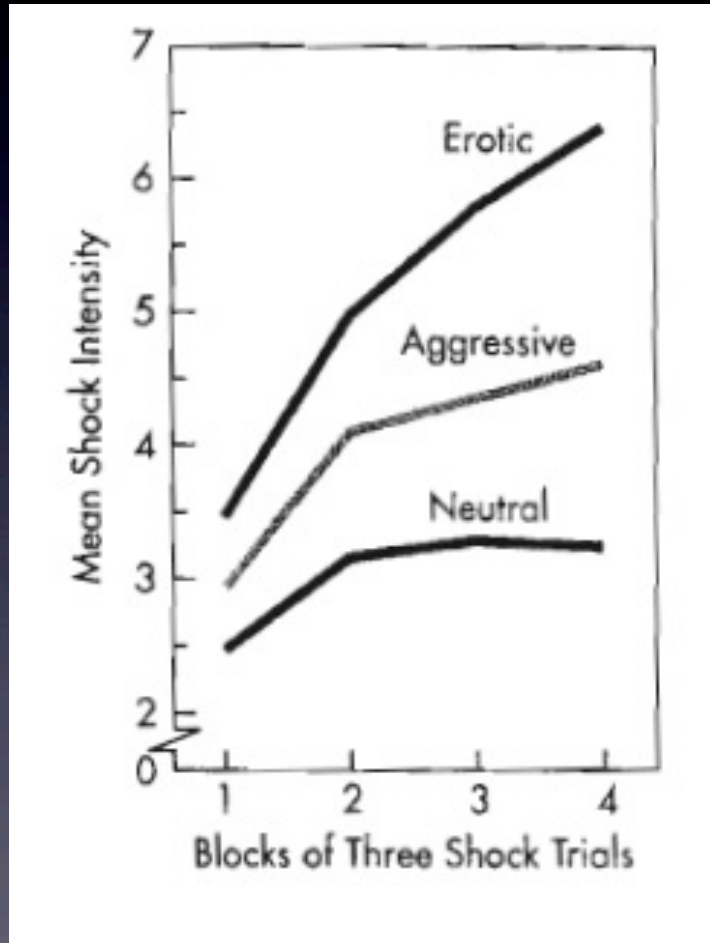
# Arousal from audiotape

- Male Ps listened to a pleasant, neutral, or unpleasant audiotape
- Then rated attractive or unattractive female confederate

	Confederate attractiveness:	
Audiotape:	High	Low
Pleasant	28.6	11.2
Neutral	23.0	17.4
Unpleasant	28.3	11.2

# Misattribution and Aggression

Zillmann, 1971



- Mean shock intensity delivered to an insulting confederate as a function of film P watched prior to insult.
- Note that erotic film contained no aggression

# Transfer of Arousal

- Male Ps watch erotic film 1, 5, or 9 minutes after stepping off of an exercise bike
- Pretest:



Minutes post-exercise	Actual arousal	Perceived arousal
1	High	High
5	High	None
9	None	None

# Transfer of Arousal

Ratings of the film:

Minutes post-exercise	Arousing	Exciting	Aesthetically pleasing	Entertaining	Involving
1					
5					
9					

# Transfer of Arousal

Ratings of the film:

Minutes post-exercise	Arousing	Exciting	Aesthetically pleasing	Entertaining	Involving
1	28	29	28	23	31
5	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>61</b>
9	31	38	35	35	29

# Summary:

- We seem to use our arousal levels as a cue for how to make our judgments.
- While this might be a good strategy overall, it can misinform us fairly easily.

# II. Mood

# Mood as an (In)valid Signal



I'm calling from Chicago today to ask you a few questions.

[How is the weather down in Champaign-Urbana today?]



1. How happy are you in general?
2. How satisfied with your life are you?

Results: Weather-induced mood affected happiness ratings, unless the interviewer first asked how the weather was.



# More Bad Moods

- Negativity now, negativity forever (Johnson & Tversky, 1983):
  - read about death of boy
  - judge negative life events as more probable
- Judge political candidates consistent with the emotion aroused by movies they had just seen



# Mood congruency re-visited: The accessibility of mood congruent concepts



concepts

Lexical Decision Task

2 (Valence)

x

2 (Emotion-relevant?)

Sad: Piano Concerto in C minor

Happy: Eine Kleine and Concerto in C major



Performance was facilitated on emotion-congruent words (e.g., *cry* and *smile*), but not merely valence-congruent words (e.g., *ambulance* and *soothing*)

# Mood changes processing “style”

- Mood is a signal to one’s needs
  - **Bad** mood can signal concern and the need for more effortful, *systematic* reasoning; *systematic* processing
  - **Good** mood can signal one is psychologically “OK,” and can lead to a more “*global*” (and creative) processing style

# Moods affect systematic processing



Randomly choose a participant to read an essay.

Either: 1) Pro-Life or 2) Pro-Choice

When in a happy mood, commit the *fundamental attribution error* even more.

When in a sad mood, commit the *fundamental attribution error* less.

# Positive moods and Persuasion

People in a negative mood are much more sensitive to the *strength* of an argument.

People in a positive mood are much more sensitive to *heuristic-based cues* like whether the source is an expert, famous, or attractive.

