

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences
9.70 – Social Psychology – Spring 2005
PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM

- 1 Name: _____
- 2 Present Address: (or name of MIT living group):
- 3 Member, MIT Class of 200__
- 4 Officially Enrolled in Course (and/or Degree Program):
- 5 MIT ID#:
- 6 Local Telephone number:
- 7 E-Mail address (in full):
- 8 What do your peers call you?
- 9 How would you hope and expect to be addressed in this context (by the instructors --? by the other students?)
- 10 Please invent an androgynous-sounding “nom de plume” to privately identify yourself.:
- 11 Exchange this completed form for a copy of the BENCHMARK QUESTIONNAIRE

BENCHMARK QUESTIONNAIRE

Enter your “nom-de-plume” HERE:(IN CAPS):

And please reply, as briefly and truthfully as you can to the following series of questions

“Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going?”

After everyone has completed his/her questionnaire (why do we suggest that your “nom de plume” be androgynous-sounding?) they will be collected and randomly redistributed so that everyone has a comparably “semi’anonymous” opportunity for his/her self-description to be read by someone else and is included in the community of peers reading each other’s self-descriptions

1. This is an awesomely diverse academic community. Where were you born/brought up? Please include geographical, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic particulars, as appropriate:
2. Students from myriad backgrounds come to MIT to study. What is your “native tongue”? If not English, how well do you still read/speak/understand it? How well/poorly do you understand, speak, write, read, English?
3. What other language(s) do you speak/write/read? How fluently?

Each of us brings our "default assumptions" (attitudes and expectations) to situations like this one. Poised, as you evidently are, at the point of entry into the first class meeting of a semester-long 12 unit, undergraduate elective subject of instruction, namely, “Social Psychology” what are some of your own default assumptions about what lies ahead? Are you a serious student? Are you looking forward to participating in 9.70?

And, of course, the default assumptions that we bring with us are the ones we have acquired by experience in the course of living our lives among others of “our own kind”. Our assumptions, attitudes and expectations are “socially influenced” (conditioned and constrained) by the particulars of our backgrounds and experiences.

4. What are your present intentions and goals for yourself in this class this term? (e.g. What are prepared to put into 9.70/04? (timewise and attitudewise and effortwise).
5. What of value are you hoping and expecting to gain by participating in this class (gradewise and otherwise)? Please be as specific and detailed as possible. For example, if you are fairly interested but don’t want to have to do a lot of work you can easily get by in this class with a final grade of C. by doing the homework and just showing up and staying at least half-awake at all officially stated 9.70 (e.g. class and study group) meetings. Or you can commit yourself to do more than that (e.g. doing A or B grade work). The upper limit of permissible time/effort required is intended to be the

stipulated 12 hours of time and effort per week. It is up to you to decide for yourself and to let your intentions be known among your peers, so that they both you and they will know what to expect from you and everyone will feel better all around. What do you anticipate (fear? hope for?) from the experience?

6. What do you think/feel about the way we're beginning to enter the process (e.g. by asking you to explore your own thoughts and feelings about the subject? the instructors? your prospective classmates? yourself?).
7. How (in what ways? to what extent?) have your own beliefs, values and practices been "socially influenced" (favorably or otherwise) by the worldviews, valuesystems and lifestyles prevailing in your family of origin?
8. What other sorts or sources of social influences (if any) have significantly contributed to shaping your attitudes and behavior (e.g. friends; peers, neighbors, teachers, and/or mentors or role models or group memberships in the larger local community that you grew up in)?
9. What was their influence upon you (for better/worse)? Compare and contrast your own present worldview, valuesystem and lifestyle with the one(s) described under 7 and 8 above:
10. What are your present Major and Minor Area(s)/Field(s) of Academic/Professional Specialization? Areas of Interest? Study Concentrations?
11. Other things or subjects or topic(s) of particular personal or social interest:
12. Do you as yet have any clearly-defined long term personal/social (incl. academic/professional) goals? "What do you want to be or do when you grow up?"
13. What do you already know about the subject before us? Briefly define the following terms:
 - a. attitude:
 - b. biological vs. social determinism:
 - c. cognitive dissonance:
 - d. conformity

- e. consensual domain
 - f. dispositional vs. situational attributions
 - g. fundamental attribution error
 - h. fundamentalism
 - i. human nature:
 - j. paradigm(s)
 - k. prejudice and discrimination:
 - l. science:
 - m. social influence(s):
 - n. stereotype(s):
 - o. terrorism:
 - p. violence:
 - q. ethics
14. Add any queries, comments, criticisms you wish:

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return the foregoing pages.

The 9.70 Instructors Team