

Emotion

Intro Psychology
Georgia Tech
Instructor: Dr. Bruce Walker

Today

- Emotional experience
- Emotional expressions
- Culture and emotion

Emotional Experience

- “Feeling sad” is not the same as “feeling an itch”
- Emotions are too complex to categorize easily
- But very real, shared experience

Theories of Emotion

- “Common sense”
 - Event, interpretation, emotion, action
 - Lose money, get angry, so shout

Theories of Emotion

- James-Lange Theory
 - Event, action, emotion resulting from action
 - Lose money, shout, get angry from shouting
- Problems:
 - Speed of emotions >> speed of autonomic nervous system (see Cannon)

Theories of Emotion

- Attribution-of-arousal
 - Like James-Lange theory, but more cognitive, not focused on autonomic nervous reaction
 - Body arousal contributes raw materials, which are then interpreted, molded into emotion by cognitive appraisal
- Amygdala plays role in emotional appraisal

Expressing Emotions

- Important element in relationships and interpersonal/social interactions
- Cross-cultural commonalities
 - Many have behavior/biological roots
 - e.g., “blech!” face = disgust, and spitting food
- Cultural display rules can modify universality of expressions

Categorizing Emotions

- Is this possible?
(compare to taste, and to smell)
- “Basic Emotions”
 - Fear, anger, happiness, sadness ?
 - Pain, pleasure ?
 - Surprise, anger, sadness, disgust, fear, contempt ?
- What is “basic”, anyway? Some receptor for them?
- Effects of culture are profound, as well!

- ? How can one study this complex subject ?

Upcoming

- Social context
- Psychopathology