Implicit Association Test Extra Credit DUE 11/28/11

**Background:** “Psychologists understand that people may not say what’s on their minds either because they are *unwilling* or because they are *unable* to do so. For example, if asked "How much do you smoke?" a smoker who smokes 4 packs a day may purposely report smoking only 2 packs a day because they are embarrassed to admit the correct number. Or, the smoker may simply not answer the question, regarding it as a private matter. (These are examples of being unwilling to report a known answer.) But it is also possible that a smoker who smokes 4 packs a day may report smoking only 2 packs because they honestly believe they only smoke about 2 packs a day. (Unknowingly giving an incorrect answer is sometimes called self-deception; this illustrates being unable to give the desired answer).”

**Implicit Attitude:** An attitude is a positive or negative evaluation of some object. An implicit attitude is an attitude that can rub off on associated objects. The word 'implicit' is used because these powerful attitudes are sometimes hidden from public view, and even from conscious awareness.

**Interpretation:** “The IAT asks you to pair two concepts (e.g., young and good, or elderly and good). The more closely associated the two concepts are, the easier it is to respond to them as a single unit. So, if young and good are strongly associated, it should be easier to respond faster when you are asked to give the same response (i.e. the 'E' or 'I' key) to these two. If elderly and good are not so strongly associated, it should be harder to respond fast when they are paired. This gives a measure of how strongly associated the two types of concepts are. The more associated, the more rapidly you should be able to respond.”

So, you will respond faster for pairings that match your implicit attitude. You will respond more slowly for pairings that challenge your implicitly held attitude.

**Outcome:** The purpose of this exercise is to increase your awareness of implicit attitudes you may hold, as these can influence our behavior.

**The Assignment**

1. Take an Implicit Association Test at [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html). You may select any of the available options.
2. Interpret your results using guidelines found on the IAT website.
3. Briefly answer the following questions in complete sentences and turn in.
   a. How might you use experiences with these various tests to think about the implications of unconscious thoughts and feelings?
   b. What does it mean that we show an automatic association between *social groups* and *positive or negative characteristics*?
   c. What is the source of such knowledge?
   d. Should we be disturbed by the fact that we possess such associations?
   e. If we are, what might we do about it?