

'Minor Psychology in Society'

Course Year: 2018-2019	Study: Chemistry/Chemical Engineering
Date report: 19.06.2020	Interviewee: Gerben Boerema

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As students in Chemistry or engineering, we sometimes forget to consider that there's another layer to science and the human world than the nature of molecules and reaction vessels. This forgotten layer is, in my opinion, also important to consider, and it is of use to have at least a basic understanding of it. From this knowledge, one enables themselves to make less biased or prejudiced judgements (in the broadest sense), puts errors in a broader perspective, and could help prevent one from making bigger mistakes. It is just as (in)predictable as the works of our molecular friends; and the same rule of thumb applies for it as for chemistry: There's always exceptions to the rule.

What I'm talking about is the (study of the) workings of the human mind, called (human) psychology. By choosing the minor Psychology in Society, you take a look out of our rigid ways of thinking, and you will probably learn to view human behaviour from a new perspective.

My motivation behind studying psychology for my minor was due to my broadened interests. I wanted to do something outside of chemistry and therefore looked into multiple different minors including law, pharmacy or something within the medical field. I finally settled on psychology as I already had a bigger interest in the subject matter, having listened to lectures from Alan Watts and reading popular science-books from the field, as well as wanting to understand the basics of reason and the workings of the human mind. It was also easily accessible, as the only requirement needed was your propedeuse.

During block 1A I followed three courses alongside psychology students; Principles of Psychology, Research Instruments critically considered and The Social Psychology of Communication (SPoC). The Principles of Psychology course really gives you the basics of psychology, think of it as the equivalent of "Molecules" for chemistry. It did cover some interesting topics within biology, such as how neurons work. Research Instruments is all about how to perform research and covers different types of statistics and biases. There were definitely some nice tactics involved and allowed me to see how psychology is considered a practical science. SPoC covers a lot about biases in the mind when communicating with other people such as aspects that are clearly evident (racism) as well as things which are more subtle and not that recognizable within society. It was very interesting to learn about how the mind works and how things like beauty bias can affect this.

In block 1B I also followed three courses; Social Influence, Human Error and Psychology in the Workplace. Social Influence is very focused on advertisement and how you can influence other people, whether this be from a business or governmental point of view. I did find that there was a heavy focus on recognizing and naming the techniques as opposed to applying their practical values. Human error teaches about how we make errors and how these can be well informed or errors arising from biases or small mistakes present in our surroundings/

environment or from our personal perspectives. I would strongly recommend that anyone reads the book that goes along with this course; A life in error by James Reason. I really enjoyed this course, especially due to the guest lecturers from people in the work field such as the lecture from a doctor on medical errors. Psychology in the Workplace is probably the course with the greatest workload/ workload more similar to FSE (Faculty of Science and Engineering) courses. It's centered around how the cultural structures within a company can work to get a better yield in work, profits etc. It also contained some practical work.

Whilst the minor is interesting to follow, its workload is not as high as many FSE courses. I was therefore able to follow two other chemistry courses alongside my minor in 1B. I would thus recommend that it might still be nice to follow other chemistry courses alongside, as there are few lectures within this minor. Whilst there aren't that many lectures, you still have to do quite a bit of reading, so I would definitely recommend keeping up on the reading throughout the block.

I was pleasantly surprised by some of the ways of thinking and learnt how to recognise patterns in human behaviour and increased my awareness in this field. Overall I would definitely recommend for people that study within our field to take a step outside and learn a bit about other studies.

I hope this little writing helps you to make a well-informed decision on your minor, and I hope you take the liberty to take a gander at a different discipline than a deepening minor in chemistry. The academic world is more broad and offers many different disciplines, and such a minor gives you a broader perspective on the academic world and yourselves as a whole. Take the shot and have a look at Psychology, philosophy, or the languages for that matter, to open up your world. The world is more than just chemistry alone!

(Ps. If you do have any questions or want to talk about this minor, or just to discuss your choice on your minor, feel free to contact me: gerbenboerema1012@gmail.com)

Commented [1]: which book was it? there are 2 on the course page on ocasys