Perception of Others
The Perception Process

We receive information and then select what we can handle.

Problems:
Repetitious or “loud” stimuli
Oversimplification
Omitting information
The Perception Process

We organize information using a perceptual schemata. This helps us form impressions of others and make generalizations:

- We organize based on:
  - Physical constructs
  - Role constructs
  - Psychological constructs
  - Interaction constructs

A stereotype: Categorizing others on the basis of easily recognized, but not necessarily significant characteristics.
The Perception Process

We make interpretations and decide how to proceed.

How does a perceptual schemata help us?
On first impression, when has someone admitted that their first impression about you was wrong?
When have you been wrong about another person?
Interpretation Considerations

- **Degree of involvement.** Someone who doesn’t call back after a date hurts… but a waitress giving lousy service is simply annoying?
- **Relational satisfaction.** Problems: Fickle, blame, giving up.
- **Past experiences.** How much “baggage” we apply to current situations.
- **Assumptions.** Whether or not you generally view people as good or rotten?
  - **Expectations.** Realistic or not realistic?
  - **Previous knowledge of others.** Ex. Hearing about a rude instructor.
  - **Personal mood.** Having a different perception when you are angry versus when you are happy.
Punctuation

• **Punctuation**: Determination of causes and effects in a series of interactions.

• “Punctuate” the following situations:
  
  a. A person not calling back after a first date.
  
  b. A student copies test answers from the student next to him.
  
  c. A waitress gives you lousy service.
  
  d. A child beats up on other kids.
Attribution

- **Attribution**: Attach meaning to behavior.

- Degrees of process:
  - Judging ourselves and judging others.
  - Self-fulfilling prophecy. Sometimes meant as protection.
  - Clinging to first impressions.
  - Assuming that others should be like us.
  - Clinging to negative impressions.
The Key to More Accurate Perceptions

Perception Checking:

1. Describe the behavior/action/communication observed
2. Choose two possible interpretations for the situation
3. Ask for clarification
Empathy

What is the difference between empathy and sympathy?

What do you need to build empathy?

1. Open-mindedness
2. Commitment
3. Imagination