Chapter 2 Outline

(Italicized words are key words)

I. *Perception*, the process of attending to, organizing, and interpreting the information that we receive through our senses, forms our understanding of reality.
   A. The process of perceiving begins with attending to stimuli.
      1. *Needs* are those things we feel we need in order to survive.
      2. *Interests* are things that prompt our curiosity but are not vital to our survival.
      3. *Expectations* are things that we notice because we are in the habit of noticing them.
   B. Once the stimuli are selected, our brains organize them.
      1. *Simplicity* is the organization of stimuli into easily recognizable forms.
      2. *Pattern recognition* is the organization of stimuli into easily recognizable patterns.
   C. Interpretation of stimuli occurs after they are organized, and each individual may arrive at different interpretations.
   D. Dual processing in perception occurs when the brain handles a variety of cognitive tasks.
      1. *Automatic processing* is a fast, top-down subconscious approach to perceiving that draws on previous experience to make sense out of what we are now encountering using shortcuts called *heuristics* for how something is to be viewed based on our past experience with similar situations.
      2. *Conscious processing* is slow, deliberative approach to perceiving during which we examine and think about the stimuli.

II. Perception of others often leads to perceptual inaccuracies, but there are ways to reduce uncertainty and the ways in which we are inaccurate in our perceptions of others.
   A. Reducing uncertainty is important because uncertainty in social situations is uncomfortable.
      1. *Uncertainty reduction theory* explains the ways in which individuals monitor their social environments in order to know more about themselves and others—in other words, people seek information to reduce uncertainty so that they can become more comfortable in their communication.
      2. Impression formation of others is often based on physical appearance, the implicit theories we form about personality, and assumed similarity.
         a. Physical appearance is the first thing noticed about other people and has consequences for how we think of and interact with someone.
         b. *Implicit personality theories* are inaccurate perceptions of others based on the association of physical or other characteristics with personality traits.
         c. Assumed similarity is thinking that others who share one characteristic with you also share others.
      3. *Attributions* are reasons we give for others’ and our own behavior.
         a. *Situational attribution* is attributing behavior to an external situation.
b. **Dispositional attribution** is attributing behavior to someone’s internal disposition, or personality.

B. **Selective perception** is the tendency to inaccurately pay attention only to what we expect to see or hear and to ignore what we don’t expect.
   1. **Stereotyping** is applying the beliefs you have about the characteristics of a group to an individual whom you identify as a member of that group.
      a. **Prejudice** is exhibited when inaccurate perceptions of people are based simply on the groups of which they are members.
      b. **Discrimination** is a negative action toward people based on the groups of which they are members.
      c. **Racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, and able-ism** are various forms of prejudice.
   2. A **halo effect** is inaccurately perceiving that a person has a whole set of related personality traits when only one trait has actually been observed.
   3. **Forced consistency** involves inaccurate attempts to make several of our perceptions of another person agree with each other.
   4. **Projection** is the perceptual bias that occurs when we incorrectly think that someone who is like us in one respect will share other characteristics and attitudes.
   5. The **fundamental attribution error** is the tendency to attach internal attributions to others’ negative behavior by believing that they could have acted differently while making external attributions to our own negative behavior by viewing it as the result of a situation over which we had no control.

III. Improving the accuracy of social perception can be accomplished by following some guidelines.
   A. One should question the accuracy of perceptions.
   B. One should seek more information to verify perceptions.
   C. Choose to use conscious processing as you get to know people.
   D. One should realize that one’s perceptions of a person will change over time.
   E. Use **perception checking**, which is sharing the perception of another’s behavior to see if the interpretation is correct.

IV. Self-perception, self-concept, and self-esteem are all linked.
   A. **Self-perception** is the overall view people have of themselves.
      1. **Self-concept** is the description of our competencies and personality traits.
      2. **Self-esteem** is our evaluation of our overall competence and personal worthiness.
      3. People with independent self-perception view their traits and abilities as internal and universally applicable to all situations, whereas people with interdependent self-perception perceive their traits, abilities, and personality within the context of their relationships, self-perception varying with the situation.
4. Accuracy of self-concept and self-esteem depends on the accuracy of our perceptions and how we process the reactions and responses of others.
   a. *Incongruence* is a situation in which there is a gap between self-concept and reality.
   b. *Self-fulfilling prophecies* are events that happen as a result of being foretold, expected, or talked about and may be self- or other-imposed.
   c. *Filtering messages* occurs when we distort messages we receive in order to reinforce what we already think.

V. Self-concept and self-esteem are enduring characteristics of self-perception, but they can be improved.
   A. Self-perception influences how you talk to yourself.
      1. *Self-talk* is communication to yourself through thoughts.
      2. People with positive self-esteem tend to have more accurate self-talk, while those with negative self-esteem are less accurate in their self-talk.
   B. Self-perception influences how you talk about yourself with others; if we have positive self-perceptions we are likely to communicate that we like ourselves and take credit for our successes—the opposite is true as well.
   C. Self-perception affects how you talk about others with yourself because the more accurate our self-perception, the more accurately we are likely to perceive others.
   D. Self-perception influences how you communicate with others since we communicate our self-concept and self-esteem when we interact with others.

IX. There are human factors in using social media.
   1. Our orientation toward social media is our *online communication attitude*.
   2. *Digital self-disclosure* is the degree to which individuals self-regulate what they reveal about themselves using social media.
   3. *Digital social connection* refers to the belief that electronic communication enables social contact.
   4. *Convenience* is the level of appreciation and enjoyment that a user associates with social media.
   5. *Digital apprehension* involves the anxiety and nervousness associated with communicating through social media.
   6. *Miscommunication* refers to when misinterpretations arise when deriving meaning from communication.