

Lecture Notes:① **Action and interaction:**

- action is the core of who we are and how we should be studied
 - **event:** any change in state
 - **action:** any change of state initiated by an actor
 - **covert action:** any mental event, like thought, feeling, etc.
 - **overt action:** any physical behavior (including vocalizations)
 - **social action:** any communicative act or behavior involving another actor
 - **social interaction:** a simultaneous stream of social actions performed by two or more actors responsive to the other's actions and taking the other's role

□ interaction requires communication media (substances or agencies through which information transmittal occurs):

- face-to-face (direct):
 - verbal communication using spoken language or gestural communication using standardized hand signs
 - nonverbal communication using other (extralinguistic and paralinguistic) channels:
 - appearance characteristics: attractiveness, height, body type, facial dominance or facial babyishness, grooming, and clothing style
 - facial expression: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, surprise, and (possibly) contempt (micro-expressions: often subconscious, split-second signs and less subject to deliberate control)
 - paralinguistics: pitch, loudness, stress, cadence (rhythm or tempo), intonation, pauses, fluency
 - visual cues: eye movement or eye contact, especially length and intensity
 - proxemics (spatial relationships): touch, space, arrangement
 - kinetics/kinesics (body language): gestures, gesticulations, posture, body movement (soft and round vs. angular and hard)
 - olfaction: control or masking of body odor
 - we also rely on set, costume, props, & shared cultural capital (Goffman, 1959)
 - interchannel consistency is a primary resource for judging the veracity and nature of a relationship
 - we pay more attention (maybe subconsciously) to channels we think harder to control (Goffman, 1959)
 - functions of nonverbal communication (Patterson 1991) include: providing information, regulating interaction, expressing intimacy, exercising influence, managing affect, and facilitating service and task goals
 - both verbal and nonverbal channels of communication are interdependent and their encodings and decodings may range from automatic to reflexive and deliberate, but verbal communication is typically more cognitively demanding and focus on one or more elements may preclude the decoding of all channels
- mediated (indirect) forms of communication include: written (symbolic), oral-auditory (oral-aural), visual-graphic, visual-sign, interactive multimedia and hypermedia

- ③ “Symbolic interactionists” and “microsociologists” give us a different perspective on how and why we interact:
- Mead’s “**four stages of the act**”:
 - I **impulse**: a “generalized disposition to act” motivated by “disequilibrium,” “discomfort,” or “disruption” —this may be internal (a goal, need, etc.) or external (another’s actions, an environmental state, etc.)
 - II **perception**: attention is apportioned, functions are ascertained, possibilities are assessed, and consequences are interpreted within a symbolic framework
 - III **manipulation**: the environment is altered toward goal attainment through (especially vocal and manual) overt actions by coming “into contact with relevant aspects” [Shibutani, 1961:68].
 - IV **consummation**: the goal is achieved and equilibrium is temporarily restored; but this is transitory as new impulses or unsuccessfully consummated acts give rise to new actions
 - humans exist in a “**stream of action**” in that they are multidimensional, complex, dynamic, each action leads to the next, and there is often no clear point of demarcation; streams are both **overt** (physical) & **covert** (mental)
 - we are not merely reactive (as behaviorists contend), we are **proactive** and affect our surroundings
 - actions are caused or motivated by our **contemporaneous definition of the situation** which develops and refines itself through self and social interactions
 - some actions become **habituated**, and thus have no covert element; these actions are functional to the extent that they consist of effective, immediate responses and dysfunctional when they preclude us from recognizing unique or changing aspects of the situation
 - **social interaction** is the most important form of behavior by continually:
 - motivating new actions and interactions
 - creating and recreating individuals, social objects, self, identity, mind, etc.
 - creating and recreating societies

Key Ideas:

Action, interaction, symbolic interactionism, habit, ritual, motivation, communication, communication medium.

