

**Psychology 020-Lecture 1**  
**Tues. Sept.11, 2007**  
**Introduction to Psychology 020**

Website: webct.uwo.ca OR owl.uwo.ca

Most startup information can be found in the very extensive course outline (available on WebCT if you were not at the first class)

**•Exam Policies**

Make-up exams are based on compelling medical or compassionate grounds

*Make-ups for midterm exams*

→Contact Professor Fazakas-DeHoog

→Official documentation

*Make-ups for final exams*

→Contact Professor Fazakas-DeHoog

→Permission of the Dean's representative (e.g., an academic counsellor)

→Official documentation

**•Text Books**

→Complementary

→Keep up with the chapters; don't get behind in reading. It usually helps to read chapters in advance of the corresponding lecture.

→Read actively; e.g., highlight and write summaries

→Use additional resources if necessary

**•Lectures**

→Take notes

→Ask questions

→Pay attention to theories, conceptions, and research findings; this course is not just about facts, it's about ideas and how you integrate the information you learn.

**•What is Psychology?**

Psych: soul, spirit, self, or life

-ology: branch of knowledge

Scientific study of the brain/mind and behaviour

→actions, thoughts, feelings, and reactions

Goals are to:

→describe, understand, predict, and control the above

**•Roots and Influences of Psychology**

Philosophy: Ideas of how knowledge can be acquired

Natural Science: Progress in understanding the nervous system, senses, etc.

= The idea of applying the methods of science to the study of human behaviour: Modern Psychology

## **Philosophy**

**Nativism:** Knowledge is *innate*, with the focus on hereditary factors

→NATURE

**Empiricism:** Knowledge gained through observation and our senses/experiences

→Study only what could be observed

→NURTURE

**Rationalism:** Knowledge gained through logic and reasoning (close relation to nativism)

## **•History of Studying Behaviour**

The Philosophers:

Aristotle:

→Empiricism is born

→ Knowledge through experiencing the environment

John Locke: (Radical empiricist)

→Nothing can exist within the intellect that did not have its origins in the senses

→ “Tabula Rasa”(Blank slate); experience ‘writes’ on the brain’s originally blank ‘chalkboard’

Gall:

→Phrenology: different brain areas control different aspects of personality and behaviour

→Cranioscopy: understanding someone’s personality from bumps in the skull

→*Localized* brain regions for behaviour

Flourens:

→Entire brain (NOT localized areas) worked in synchrony to produce general functions

Both of these thinkers’ ideas have merit; the brain has regions which control different things, but it is not as simply compartmentalized as Gall believed.

## **The Scientists:**

Charles Darwin:

→Evolution through Natural Selection: The “Survival of the fittest”

→Nothing special about humans, and thus humans can be studied scientifically

Ivan Sechenov: (Physiologist)

Believed that all complex behaviour can be explained by reflexes

## **Cognitive Psychology is born:**

Wilhelm Wundt:

→1<sup>st</sup> psychology lab (1879): Leipzig, Germany

→Founder of *Structuralism* (studied structure and components of consciousness and the mind )

→Used introspection (talk about the process as it was happening) instead of observation

→Studied the same phenomena cognitive psychologists study today

Hermann von Ebbinghaus:

→First rigorous empirical study of cognitive phenomena

→Memory & Forgetting (Nonsense words)

### **North American Influences:**

William James:

→Functionalism: Rather than focus on structures, focus on the purposes of processes. (“Why” instead of “What”)

John Watson:

→Rise of Behaviourism→Observable behaviour only

→All behaviour is learned (Empiricism)

Wolfgang Kohler:

→Gestalt Psychology: How the elements of experience are organized into whole experiences

→The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

### **Psychodynamic perspective is born:**

Sigmund Freud:

→Austrian physician who focused on mental illness

→Psychoanalytic theory of mental disorders

→The importance of unconscious processes and early childhood experiences (Diametrically opposed to behaviourism; psychoanalysis deals with what CANNOT be observed or measured)

### **•Now...**

#### **Cognitive Revolution:**

→Returning to scientific study of mental processes→Thoughts, feelings

#### **Social Influences in Psychological Research:**

WWII→Research on obedience & conformity

Desegregation→Research on prejudice and racism

Multiculturalism→cultural differences, how broad society affects development

### **•Psychology as a Science**

-Focus on developing and testing theories

#### **Basic Research**

-Quest for knowledge for its own sake, e.g., how does problem solving develop in childhood?

#### **Applied Research**

-Knowledge is applied to solve practical problems, e.g., what behavioural incentives promote high productivity in the workplace?

### **•What do Psychologists do?**

Majority work in private practice (Must be clinical psychologist, certified with college of psychologists)

→Assessment and treatment of mental disorders

College/Universities

→Focus on research

→Teaching

→Administration

Hospitals

→Assessment

- Treatment
- Research
- Administration

### ●**Psychiatry vs. Psychology**

#### Psychiatrists

- M.D., focus on diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders through psychotropic medications

#### Psychologists

- Ph.D.
- May NOT prescribe drugs
- Clinical Psychologists are the group of psychologists who are interested in mental disorders

### ●**Modern Psychology**

#### Six Major Perspectives

- 1.) Biological: understand behavior in terms of biological processes, evolution, genetics.
- 2.) Cognitive: information-processing and how thoughts influence emotions & behavior.
- 3.) Psychodynamic: unconscious processes, conflicts & defenses; childhood experiences
- 4.) Behavioral: external environment shapes behavior through consequences
- 5.) Humanistic: focus on conscious motives, freedom of choice, and need to be ‘better’
- 6.) Sociocultural: how culture is transmitted to its members, and study of cross-cultural differences

### ●**Modern Psychology.....**

Do these perspectives conflict? Recently, theory has shifted toward a **biopsychosocial** approach; that is, the importance of integrating the perspectives to understand how each has a role in thought and behaviour.

### ●**Major Themes in Psychology**

#### ●Psychology is Empirical and Objective

- favors direct observation vs. intuition
- However, our view of the world is subjective
- our thoughts, motives, expectations, shape our perception of reality.

#### ●Nature vs. Nurture

- Biology vs. Environment
- Nativism vs. Empiricism

#### ●Mind vs. Brain

- Monism (mind and brain are one in the same)
- Mind-Body Dualism

#### ●Behavior is Determined by Multiple Causal Factors

- Biopsychosocial (this is important!)

