

Science of Psychology

PSY W1001 Section 2
MW 8:40-9:55 Fall 2012



Wednesday, November 14
Personality

Announcements

- Written Assignment
 - Due by 5pm on Friday
 - Late assignments only earn half credit
 - No assignments accepted after 5pm on Nov. 23 for any reason
- Exam grading is underway
 - No more grade changes for Exam #1
- Final Exam
 - Wednesday, Dec. 19th from 9a to 12p.
 - Be on time
 - No one admitted after the first student completes the exam and leaves the classroom.

What Is Personality?

- Important and relatively stable aspects of behavior
- An individual's characteristic style of behaving, thinking, and feeling

We begin with description

- We all do this everyday, right?
- Do we all describe other people's personalities in the exact same way?
 - Like any other branch of science, we must be able to consistently and reliably measure the same thing

Measuring Personality

- Objective vs. Projective Techniques

Objective Measuring Personality

- Personality Inventories
- Self Reports
- Actuarial or approach
 - The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
 - 10 scales measure range of behaviors
 - Hypochondriasis, Depression, Hysteria, Psychopathic Deviate, Masculinity/Femininity, Paranoia, Psychasthenia, Schizophrenia, Hypomania, Social Introversion

MMPI-II Validity Scales

- This instrument can catch cheaters:
 - Faking Good
 - Faking Bad
 - Random Answering
 - Lawyers love this!!!
- Most Globally used personality instrument in the world

More Objective Approaches

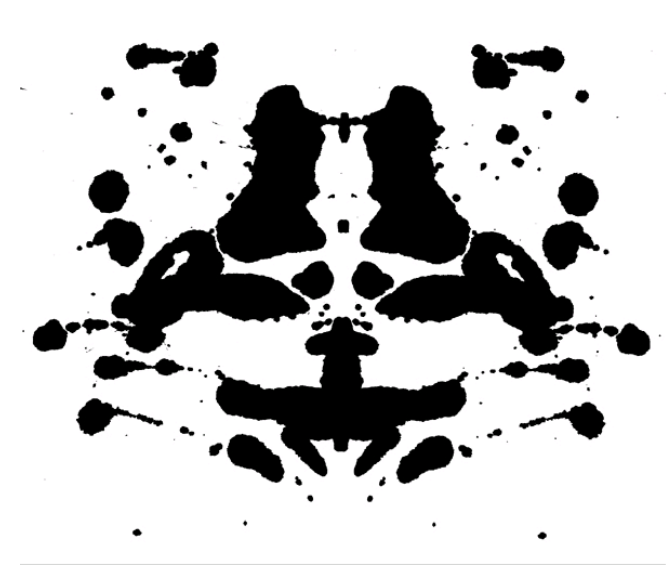
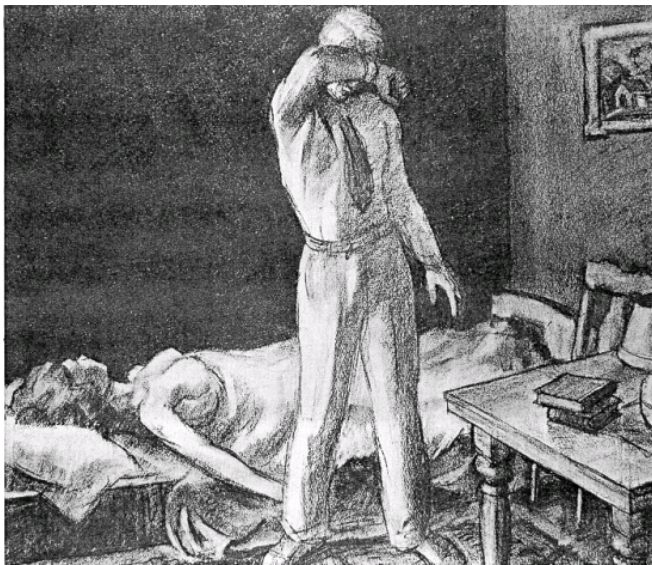
- The California Psychological Inventory
 - Assesses normal personality characteristics
 - 20 dimensions
- The Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory
 - Very popular in occupational settings

Projective Measures of Personality

- These consist of sets of ambiguous stimuli
- The assumption: we will reveal aspects of our personalities as we respond to what these stimuli remind us of
 - Interpretation based....why this is a subjective measure

Examples of Projective Measures

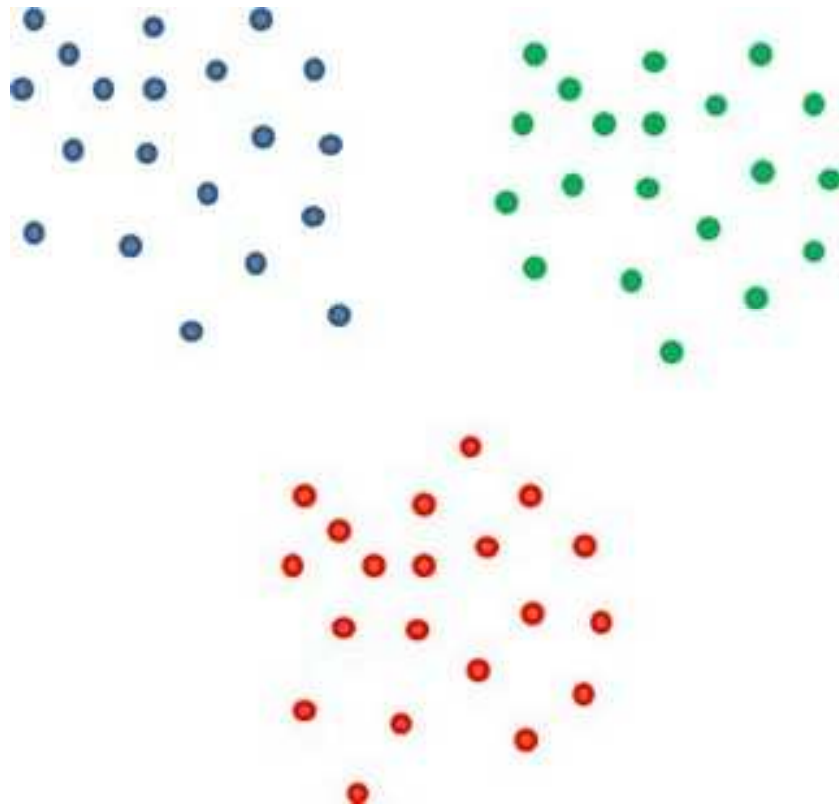
- Rorschach Inkblot Test
- Thematic Appreciation Test
- Sentence Completion Test



The Trait Approach

- **Trait:** a relatively stable disposition to behave in a particular and consistent way
 - Pre-existing disposition that causes the behavior (personality inventories)
 - Motivation that guides the behavior (projective tests).

Factor Analysis- the logic

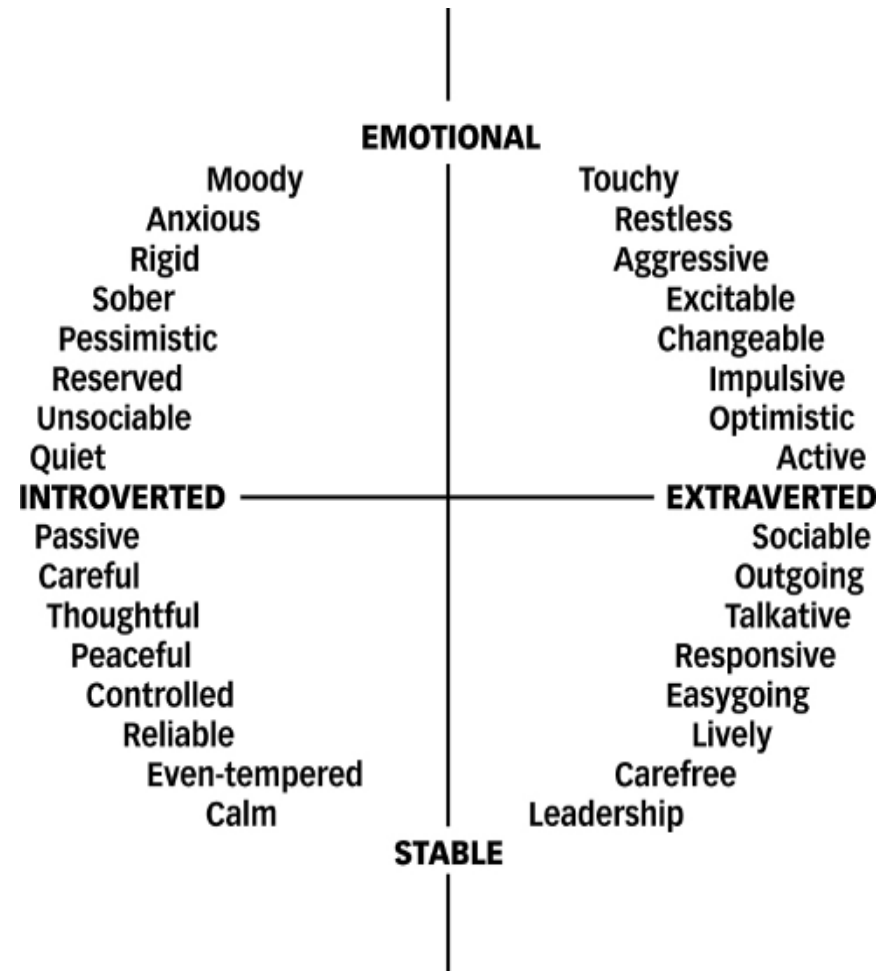


Eysenck's Factor Analysis

- Identified two main dimensions
 - introverted/extraverted
 - emotional/stable

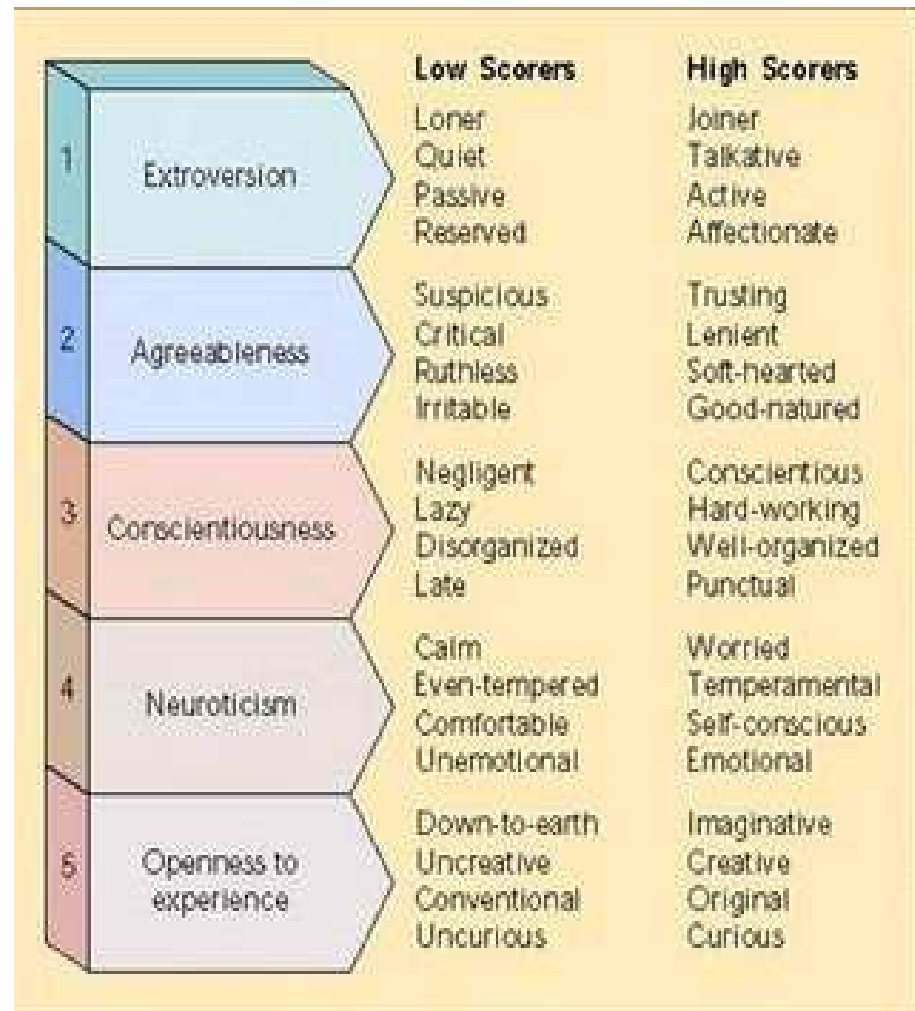


The four basic personality types



The Big Five Dimensions of Personality

- Many factor analyses reveal the same “major” factors that seem to classify the personalities of most people
- The Big Five
- OCEAN
- CANOE



Traits as Biological Building Blocks

- Do immutable brain and biological processes produce the stability of personality?
- Brain changes do sometimes bring on personality changes:
 - Phineas Gage (maybe)
 - Alzheimer's
 - Tumors
 - Drugs and Chemicals

Traits in the Brain

- Reticular formation of extraverts may not be as easily stimulated as that of introverts
- Gray (1970) suggests extraversion/ introversion and neuroticism reflect differences in two basic brain systems:
 - behavioral activation system (BAS)
 - behavioral inhibition system (BIS)

Why are you the way you are?

- Behavioral Genetics

- The Minnesota Twins Family Study

- Twin Studies

- Adoption Studies

- Big Five Factors have a heritability score between
.35-.49

Boys vs. Girls

- Some reliable differences in traits
 - North American gender stereotypes
 - Other traits show no differences
- Biology?
- Evolutionary perspectives
 - social role theory
 - Different cultural standards and expectations

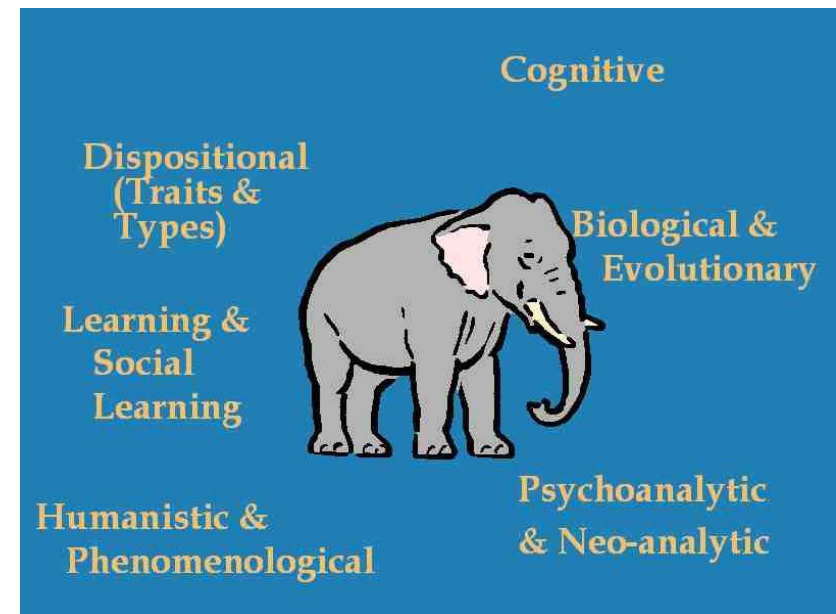
Men and women may be more alike than different.

Are traits stable?

- How well can we predict behavior from knowing trait measurements?
 - Are people consistent?
 - Maybe, maybe not

Theories of Personality

- Psychodynamic Approach
- Humanistic Approach
- Existential Approach
- Social Cognitive Approach



Psychodynamic Approach

- Freud and “psychopathologies of everyday life”
- Freudian slips
 - *When you say one thing but mean your mother*
- Psychodynamic approach
 - dynamic unconscious



Structure of Personality

- Three independent, interacting, and often conflicting systems
 - Id is present at birth
 - pleasure principle
 - Ego is acquired through contact with reality
 - reality principle
 - Superego is learned from caregivers
 - morality principle

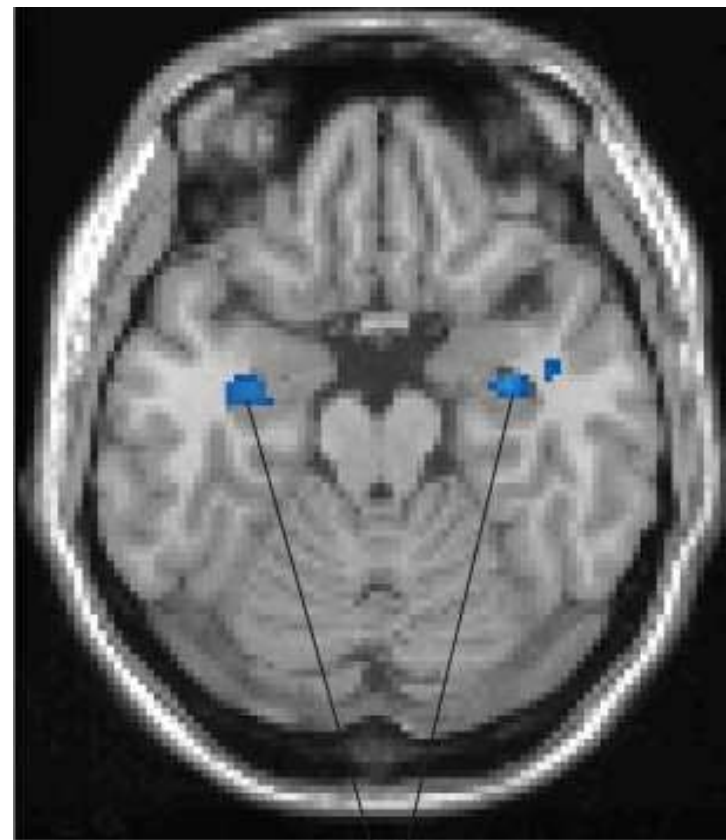
Defense Mechanisms

- Projection
 - attributing one's own unacknowledged unacceptable/unwanted thoughts and emotions to another
 - *I wasn't the one who wanted to break up – it was really my partner.*
- Regression
 - Temporary reversion of the ego to an earlier stage of development
 - *Do you do your own laundry when you go home for the summer?*
- Displacement
 - redirecting emotion to a safer outlet
 - *Do you yell at the cat when you're angry with your father?*

There are more – read and know them from your text

Evidence for defense mechanisms?

- Hippocampus and suppression



Hippocampus

Personality Development

- Psychosexual stages of development
 - Oral stage, Anal stage, Phallic stage
 - Oedipus conflict
 - Latency stage, Genital stage
- Personality formed by age 6 through crucial experiences
- Fixation
 - Source of mental illness

Are we all just one big fat mess?

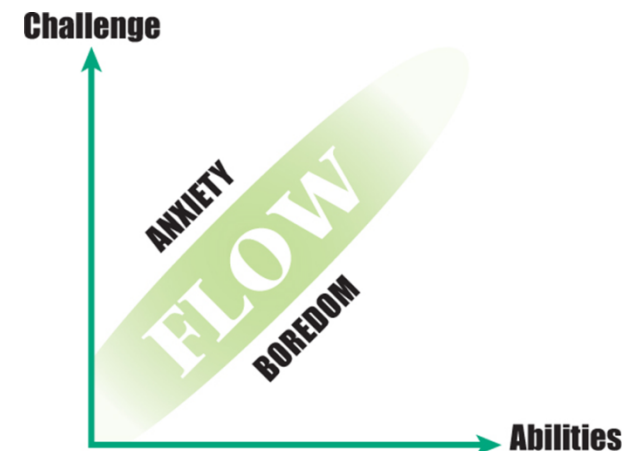
- Freudian Psychoanalysis
 - Find unconscious motives and examine them
 - Get out of developmental stage where you're fixated
- Problem:
 - Very pessimistic outlook on development
 - Very subjective

The Humanistic-Existential Approach

- Healthy choices create personality.
 - Humanistic
 - Positive, optimistic view of human nature; goodness and potential for growth.
 - Existentialist
 - The individual as responsible agent, negotiating the issue of meaning and the reality of death.

Human Needs, Self-Actualization, and Personality as Existence

- **Self-actualizing tendency**
 - The human motive toward realizing our inner potential
 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Engagement in tasks that match our abilities cause a state of focus called flow.
- **Existential approach**
 - Personality governed by an individual's ongoing choices and decisions in the context of the realities of life and death
 - Angst can arise as we find meaning in life and death and take responsibility for making free choices.
 - One must deal with issues head-on instead of using defenses.



The Social Cognitive Approach

- **Social cognitive approach:**
 - Personality in terms of how the person thinks about the situations encountered in daily life and behaves in response to them
- **Person-situation controversy**

The Person-Situation Controversy

- What causes behavior? Personality or situational factors?
 - The situation and learning history are key determinants of behavior
 - open to interpretation
 - how people perceive their environments.
- Walter Mischel-
 - argued that personality traits do little to predict behavior ($r = .30$ on average), and behaviors may not transfer in different situations

Study Questions

- How would you define personality?
- How would you differentiate objective vs. projective techniques for measuring personality? (Think about the main differences between these types of tests, not just examples of the different tests).
- Using the MMPI as an example, describe the characteristics of an objective measure of personality.
- Using the Thematic Apperception Test as an example describe the characteristics of a projective measure of personality.
- What is the trait approach to personality? What is a trait?
- How can factor analysis be used to distinguish the dimensions of personality?
- How many dimensions of personality are there?
- Is personality inherited?
- Are there personality differences between males and females? (base your answer on research, not personal opinion.)
- Are traits stable?
- Describe the main tenets of the different theories of personality: psychodynamic, humanistic, existential, and social-cognitive.

More Questions

- In psychodynamic theory of personality, describe the three systems that interact (and may be in conflict) that make up the structure of personality.
- What is a defense mechanism?
- Is there biological evidence for defense mechanisms?
- According to psychodynamic theories, how does personality develop? What are the stages?
- What are the problems with the psychodynamic theory of personality?
- Differentiate the humanistic and the existentialist approaches to personality.
- What is the self-actualizing tendency?
- What is flow?
- How is the social cognitive approach to personality fundamentally different from the other approaches?
- Discuss the person-situation controversy as it applies to personality.