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# **Module 1 Lecture - Introduction to Psychology**

Introductory Psychology

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# 1 Overview and Introduction

## 1.1 Textbook Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of Wundt and James in the development of psychology
- Appreciate Freud's influence on psychology
- Understand the basic tenets of Gestalt psychology
- Appreciate the important role that behaviorism played in psychology's history
- Understand basic tenets of humanism
- Understand how the cognitive revolution shifted psychology's focus back to the mind
- Define psychology
- Understand the merits of an education in psychology
- Appreciate the diversity of interests and foci within psychology
- Understand basic interests and applications in each of the described areas of psychology
- Demonstrate familiarity with some of the major concepts or important figures in each of the described areas of psychology
- Understand educational requirements for careers in academic settings
- Understand the demands of a career in an academic setting
- Understand career options outside of academic settings

## 1.2 Instructor Learning Objectives


- Appreciate the application of psychology to wide array of scientific questions and areas
- Be able to reasonably discriminate between different perspectives and domains of psychology and explain why a certain study or question fits underneath a particular area
- Critically consider whether you align with a certain perspective or domain of psychology

## 1.3 Introduction

### ! Important

Just because it sound cool on TV, doesn't make it real! Think about times where you have been bamboozled by something that sounded right on the internet


- Watch the following clips from:
  - [Criminal Minds](#)
  - [Sherlock](#)
  - [Spongebob](#)

 Discuss: What do all of these clips have in common? What are they focused on?

## 2 What is Psychology?

### 2.1 Introduction


- **Psychology** is the systemic and rigorous \_\_\_\_\_ study of the mind and behavior to come to understand trends in human emotion, cognition, affect, and behavior
  - Yes, psychology is a science! ... even if it looks a bit different than other, more physical sciences
- We explore our \_\_\_\_\_ scientifically, creating specific questions and prediction about what we believe will happen under certain circumstances, and test these hypotheses to see if they hold.
  - These hypotheses come together into \_\_\_\_\_ that explain a domain of behaviors or cognition
  - Example of a hypothesis: If I drop an apple, it will fall to the ground
  - Example of a theory: Gravity is the reason that an object will move towards the center of mass of a larger nearby object

 Discuss: Try making an example of a hypothesis and theory, but focused on the mind or human behavior somehow

- Our studies and investigations follow the **empirical method**, that is, they focus on carefully observing, measuring, and re-testing phenomena to come to a conclusion. This is what it means to be \_\_\_\_\_, as mentioned earlier
  - I.e., not one event is definitive evidence, we need to focus on the “larger” story

## 2.2 Why Study Psychology

- Psychology is an extremely popular major in college and also a very popular topic in media and popular culture

 Discuss: Speculate for a moment: why do you think psychology is so popular? What is your hypothesis?

- What I see as the main benefits of psychology:
  - Application of scientific principles, not just to objects, chemical, plants, and animals, but ourselves
  - Avoidance of presuming or assuming things about people and behaviors
  - Inward understanding and a stronger sense of reflection and introspection
- I'll share little bit about my own journey in Psychology, think about where yours may lead

## 3 History of Psychology?

### 3.1 Introduction


- For most of history, Psychology was treated more a subfield of \_\_\_\_\_ rather than it's own distinct scientific area.
  - But, in the late \_\_\_\_\_, there began a split so that psychology was investigated as its own discipline
- Traditionally, a lot of introduction to psychology classes was hyper-focused on \_\_\_\_\_ of psychology, and an understanding of all the legacy paradigms and theorists
  - However, we will try to be moving past that more in this class!

#### Important

In discussing the following theories/perspectives there is not one 'best' idea - all of these have different, important ideas to contribute to the broader field of psychology. Focus on being able to distinguish between these different areas.

### 3.2 Wundt and Structuralism

- **Wilhelm Wundt** can be thought of as the first “psychologist” in the sense that he explored \_\_\_\_\_ not purely by rumination or theorizing (like a philosopher), but rather by observation and experimentation
  - One of his major ideas was **voluntarism**, that is, people should \_\_\_\_\_ and of their own free will, participate in research (a surprisingly ethical perspective for the time)
  - He primarily relied upon \_\_\_\_\_ time as his preferred measure in early studies, seeing how quickly a volunteer could respond to a stimulus such as a light blinking, and measuring how long it took them.
- **Edward Titchener** was a student of Wundt’s and established the formal idea of **structuralism**, which was the scientific focus on \_\_\_\_\_ mental processes, rather than simply the visible (and easily measurable) behavior
  - In the previous example of quickly trying to hit a button in response to a light, Wundt and his students were most interested in the \_\_\_\_\_ cognitive process, not simply the reaction time.
- Because of the focus on the internal and non-tangible, Wundt and his students made ready use of **introspection**, to try and have participants \_\_\_\_\_ or understand their abilities by talking out loud about them - but these introspective attempts often did not show agreement between different participants.

 Discuss: Introspection can be easily applied outside of research contexts - for example, take a moment to write what motivated you to come to class today

### 3.3 Functionalism

- **William James**, **John Dewey**, and **Charles Sanders Peirce** were primarily inspired by **Charles Darwin**’s theory of **evolution**, and it’s implications on the human \_\_\_\_\_ and actions
  - For those unfamiliar, the Darwin’s evolution theory posits that our traits are \_\_\_\_\_ by generations of more favorable traits surviving, and less favorable traits perishing
  - In short their focus on **functionalism** was driven primarily by understanding how an organisms (e.g. human’s) behaviors lend to a \_\_\_\_\_ that allows it to prevail in light of natural selection

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*“I don’t mind not knowing. It doesn’t scare me.” — Richard P. Feynman*

- This school of thought did continue use of some \_\_\_\_\_, but diverged in adding more types of measurement, outside of just reaction time. Examples include:
  - Analyzing the \_\_\_\_\_ state of participants
  - Examining \_\_\_\_\_ created by participants (e.g., drawings, writings, etc.)

### 3.4 Freud and Psychoanalytic Theory

- **Sigmund Freud** was likely the first clinical psychologist, in the sense that he had an interest in applying the principles of scientific psychology to the treatment and understanding of mental \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Many of his contributions are on the **unconscious** mind, or that which is part of us and drives our actions, without our conscious \_\_\_\_\_ or understanding of why something is done
- His method by which to explore the unconscious was through methods like dream \_\_\_\_\_, or digging into unintentional behaviors (e.g. Freudian slips).
  - This \_\_\_\_\_ of analysis and orientation towards the unconscious is called **psychoanalytic theory**
- Freud and other psychoanalytic researchers of the time are sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ for their pre-scientific process, doing much speculation rather than concrete measurement - but their contributions remain surprisingly important, relevant, and influential.
  - This is also why Freud (and his ideas) are often referenced in humor

? I plan a study in which I am going to have participants play a pattern-matching game, and then ask them why they chose a certain answer. Of the previously discussed paradigms, which does this best fit?

- A) Functionalism
- B) Structuralism
- C) Psychoanalysis
- D) None of them fit well

Explanation:




### 3.5 Wertheimer, Koffka, Kohler, and Gestalt Psychology

- **Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Kohler** pioneered the \_\_\_\_\_ of **Gestalt Psychology**.
  - This perspective is on understanding how a \_\_\_\_\_ of many parts of perception come together to make a whole experience
  - “Better than the \_\_\_\_\_ of it's parts” - phrase that captures the spirit of Gestalt Psychology
  - Instructor example of a BLT sandwich

### 3.6 Pavlov, Watson, Skinner, and Behaviorism

- **Behaviorism**, in many ways, is a sort of \_\_\_\_\_ to the earlier fields of psychology, choosing to focus only on what could be concretely measured and observed.
  - It did a lot of good in showing psychology as a “hard”-er science, rather than just \_\_\_\_\_ ideas and theories about things that couldn't be seen (e.g., the unconscious).
  - But, as we'll see later with [The Cognitive Revolution](#), some pushed back against this \_\_\_\_\_ notion of scientific science
- **Ivan Pavlov** and his salivating dogs - **classic conditioning** applied to associated a \_\_\_\_\_ and behavior, in a somewhat unconscious manner.
  - First they salivate to food - but later salivate simply to a buzzer that accompanied the food
- **John Watson** first termed and popularized the perspective of behaviorism, and focused his research first and foremost on how organisms learn, behave, and how certain behaviors can be \_\_\_\_\_ or modified.
- **B.F. Skinner** later developed his own brand of conditioning: **operant conditioning** - focused on negative and positive reinforcement and punishment to train and elicit certain behaviors

 Discuss: In your opinion, is this development a good or bad thing for the field; should we only focus on what is apparent and able to be seen?

### 3.7 Maslow, Rogers, and Humanism

- Much like how behaviorism was a reaction to early \_\_\_\_\_ and psychoanalysis, **humanism** came about to rebel against the \_\_\_\_\_ and determinism of behaviorism.
- Theorists of this perspective, such as **Abraham Maslow** and **Carl Rogers**, insist on viewing the human behavior and cognition as oriented towards “goodness” and internal development and a \_\_\_\_\_ to find that “goodness”
- Maslow first proposed his **hierarchy of needs** to explain why a person may be limited in their ability to self-actualize, without first meeting their other needs
- Rogers brought forth techniques such as **client-centered therapy** and **unconditional positive regard**

### 3.8 The Cognitive Revolution

- In line with the humanist rebellion, several psychologists began to once again pivot away from behaviorism and become interested once more in the internal or \_\_\_\_\_ process of people, even when those processes seemed to be hidden - thus starting the school of **cognitivism**.
- A critical figure in this movement was **Noam Chomsky**, not a psychologist, but a linguist (maybe also described as a psycho-linguist).
  - He primarily \_\_\_\_\_ the idea that psychology can and should only be understood from studying behavior without attempting to understand the underlying cognition
- This “revolution” was also accompanied by a wide-range of inter-disciplinary research, such as combining psychology research with \_\_\_\_\_, linguistics, neuroscience, etc.
  - The new technological advancements and techniques afforded by these fields really progressed us past the barriers of the original functionalism and structuralism

? I am studying how humans are motivated to act selfishly as a matter of self-preservation in the interest in continuing their bloodline. With what paradigm is this most strongly associated with?

- A) Behaviorism
- B) Functionalism
- C) Cognitivism
- D) Humanism

Explanation:

### 3.9 Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Psychology

- As history and theories have progressed, there have often been questions of how humans, behaviors, and cognition differ (or are sometimes the same) across \_\_\_\_\_ societies, cultures, groups, etc.
- For example, there have been numerous studies investigating how collectivist cultures (e.g. China) differ in the \_\_\_\_\_ and behaviors from individualist cultures (e.g. America).
  - E.g., Instructor example of differences in child \_\_\_\_\_ and expectations towards “honoring” society and/or family
- There have also been researchers focused on the specific \_\_\_\_\_, such as those are English-as-a-second-language (ESL), immigrants, specific geographic and ethnic communities, etc.

#### ! Important

Humans are not one homogeneous group that can be well-describing by wide-ranging generalizations, always watch for nuances!

### 3.10 Women in Psychology

- Classic texts in psychology are extraordinarily dominated by male contributions, due to historical restrictions and barriers on the ability of women to contribute to science

- However, several women, such as **Margaret Floy Washburn** and **Mary Whiton Calkins** pioneered important extensions and continuations of work in animal research, and memory, respectively
- As some of the more formalized barriers to female participation have been removed, there has been better representation in the research and practice of psychology
  - But as you'll learn this semester, there are still pervasive effects, like implicit bias, that do hinder all individuals from engaging in our field.

## 4 Contemporary Psychology

### 4.1 Introduction

- Moving past the history, there now exists many diverse \_\_\_\_\_ of psychology
- The **American Psychological Association (APA)** is the largest, and most prominent organization in the field, with around 54 distinct \_\_\_\_\_ that represent specific interests among psychology
- As an example, I've particularly enjoyed engaging with:
  - Div 2: Society for the Teaching of Psychology
  - Div 5: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods
  - Div 40: Society for Clinical Neuropsychology
- The **Association for Psychological Science (APS)** is also well established and recognized, and is especially oriented to psychologists doing research, rather than clinical work.
- There are many other smaller organizations, like those for specific \_\_\_\_\_ of the United States, that also serve the community
- Put simply, there are many different areas of psychology, with their foci on different aspects of human cognition and behavior - our goal this semester is to at least briefly introduce many of the largest domains!

#### ! Important

Much like with the historical perspectives, none of the following are a 'right' or 'wrong' way of approaching study of the psychological! Also some psychologists and their research might not cleanly fall under just one of the following categories.

## 4.2 Biopsychology and Evolutionary Psychology

- **Biopsychology** is oriented around understanding of how physiological and \_\_\_\_\_ systems in the body contribute to our thoughts and actions
  - Most research in this area is focused around the \_\_\_\_\_ system, or how other bodily systems (like the digestive system), interact with the nervous system
- **Evolutionary psychology** is a bit more focused on *why* we carry forward certain traits and genes, understanding that there should be some usefulness to even seeming maladaptive traits
  - One downside of evolutionary psychology is that it is very \_\_\_\_\_, making it rather difficult to give definitive evidence of why a certain trait is adaptive.

? What historical orientation does evolutionary psychology seem most related to?

- A) Psychoanalysis
- B) Cognitivism
- C) Behaviorism
- D) Functionalism

Explanation:

## 4.3 Sensation and Perception

- Focus on sensation and perception didn't just stop with the \_\_\_\_\_ and structuralist psychologists - it still continues to this day!
- This field is sometimes, but not always, connected with the [Biopsychology and Evolutionary Psychology](#) orientations, given how our senses are, in part, impacted by the structure of our sensory \_\_\_\_\_.
  - However, this field also explores questions of how different senses are integrated to combine into an experience, or how our prior \_\_\_\_\_ or thoughts contribute to how we perceive things

## 4.4 Cognitive Psychology

- **Cognitive psychology** is a fairly wide subfield, born out of the events and advance-

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*"I don't mind not knowing. It doesn't scare me." — Richard P. Feynman*

ments in [The Cognitive Revolution](#).

- Researchers in this area are often focused on the internal, non-tangible \_\_\_\_\_ that our brain partakes in, such as \_\_\_\_\_, attention, executive function (i.e., problem solving), etc.

## 4.5 Developmental Psychology

- As the name would imply **Developmental Psychology** is all about how we grow, develop, and \_\_\_\_\_ through our lifespan.

### ! Important

Developmental psychologists are not ONLY interested in children! Many psychologists in this area will study adults and older adults, but from the perspective and focus of development.

## 4.6 Personality Psychology

- **Personality psychology** focuses on the longstanding, \_\_\_\_\_ traits that each individual possesses.
  - There is interest in how **personality traits** \_\_\_\_\_ or their etiology
  - There have been several different theorized sets of traits, such as the Big Five model
- More modern research has been mostly concerned with how to \_\_\_\_\_ measure and capture “amounts” of certain traits in individuals, sometimes combining with [Clinical and Counseling Psychology](#).

## 4.7 Social Psychology

- **Social Psychology** is that which is focused on understanding the behaviors and thoughts of individuals/groups in the \_\_\_\_\_ of their social situations.
- This is also the type of psychology that most often ends up in the news and in popular media - but we'll talk later about the trouble in that...

? I am planning a study to see how the structure of the amygdala (part of the brain) may contribute to the character trait of hostility. What TWO domains of psychology might this study be related to?

- A) Biopsychology and Personality
- B) Personality and Cognitive
- C) Personality and Developmental
- D) Social and Cognitive

Explanation:

## 4.8 Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychology

- Sometimes view as an extension of or similar to \_\_\_\_\_ psychology, **Industrial-Organization Psychology** is focused on application and research of psychological concepts specifically within working environments.

## 4.9 Health Psychology

- **Health Psychology** is all about understanding the total contributions of \_\_\_\_\_ that make up a person's physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being.
- Researchers in this area often use what is called the **biopsychosocial model** to understand total \_\_\_\_\_, taking into account the
  - Genes and biology of the person
  - The social determinants and risk factors a person has
  - and the cognitive/mental feelings and thoughts of the person

## 4.10 Sport and Exercise Psychology


- **Sports psychology** can be thought of as similar to [Industrial-Organizational \(I-O\) Psychology](#), but within the context of sports and recreation
- Research in this area will often be on how sports/exercise provide benefits, or how to encourage better mental performance

## 4.11 Clinical and Counseling Psychology

- **Clinical psychology** is the domain specialized in understanding and \_\_\_\_\_ mental and cognitive disorders
- A related field, **Counseling psychology** similarly deals with mental well-being, but tends to be more focused of \_\_\_\_\_ of already relatively healthy individuals

## 4.12 Forensic Psychology

- An extension of [Clinical and Counseling Psychology](#), **forensic psychology** is the application of psychological research and practice to the law system and those who are accused of or victims of crime.

 Discuss: Among students, I've noticed that clinical and forensic psychology are by far the most interesting and popular - why do you think this is?

# 5 Careers in Psychology

## 5.1 Introduction

- You may study psychology at the \_\_\_\_\_ level, usually resulting in a B.S. / B.A., like the options available here at GVSU
  - These degrees will likely be in general psychology or another broad field like behavioral neuroscience, as it is necessary to establish a broad \_\_\_\_\_, prior to specializing.
- You may pursue a \_\_\_\_\_ degree, such as an M.S. / M.A. or a **Ph.D.** / **Psy.D.**
  - These will often be in a more \_\_\_\_\_ sub-field of psychology, e.g., clinical psychology, quantitative psychology, developmental psychology
  - The Ph.D. degree is the \_\_\_\_\_ or pinnacle degree designating a person as having completed a rigorous, extended course of training, probably with a focus on research, and cap-stoned with a **dissertation** - or an extremely



in-depth project and essay comprising original research. Folks with a Ph.D. will choose to teach, research, perform clinical work, or many other options.

- The Psy.D. degree is another terminal degree, but with more focus on skill-building, and less-so research. However, it still often requires a substantial time commitment.

### ! Important

There is some heated debate about whether a Ph.D. or Psy.D. is better - is is useful to just understand that they have different models for training and pathways

- Some may choose to start focusing on psychology, but pivot into a degree, such as being a PA, M.D. / D.O., J.D., etc., where you still use psychology, just to a lesser extent
  - Students that go into these professional domains are expected to be somewhat versed in some psychological concepts

### ? What does the abbreviation Ph.D. stand for?

- A) Doctor of Psychology
- B) Doctor of Philosophy
- C) Doctor of Physics
- D) Doctor of Phenomenology

Explanation:

- When pursuing graduate degrees, we often choose \_\_\_\_\_ areas to focus into, e.g. Social or Clinical Psychology

## 5.2 Other Careers in Academic Settings

- Just because you don't have a Ph.D. doesn't mean you can't teach! (see: me)
  - Ironically, most graduate programs don't explicitly train students as \_\_\_\_\_, it is something often learned by experience and, frankly, self-study (and a lot of reading!)
- However, many folks with Master's level degrees find positions as \_\_\_\_\_ analysts, associates, and assistants within larger labs
- For doctorate-individuals **Postdoctoral training programs** are fairly common as

additional stepping stones in preparing to be full-time \_\_\_\_\_ or researchers, as they continue to train in more specific and advanced topic areas

### 5.3 Career Options Outside of Academic Settings

- Clinical work is an extremely common \_\_\_\_\_ for folks at both the Master's and Doctoral levels.
  - This is often what most people think of when the word “psychologist” is used
- They may also work as \_\_\_\_\_ and researchers to private companies or non-profits, or working in other settings as management or HR.
  - Realistically, psychology degrees, especially at the undergraduate level, are fairly \_\_\_\_\_ and can be taken in many directions.
- Certain applied fields only require Master's level education, like \_\_\_\_\_ psychology and mental health counseling

#### ! Important

Licensing for certain fields, like clinical psychology, is mostly governed state-by-state; do your research before pursuing advanced degrees in the field!

#### ? Pop Quiz!: What is your instructor's job title outside of teaching?

- A) Psychologist
- B) Neuropsychologist
- C) Psychometrist
- D) Psychometrician

Explanation:

## 6 Conclusion

### 6.1 Recap

- Psychology is a broad, scientific field of study, that is focused on rigorous evaluation of trends in behavior, cognition, and affect.

- There are both a lot of historical and modern-day perspectives and orientations towards studying psychology!
  - Not a single one is the “best” - they simply have different contributions and methods, which we’ll see as the semester progresses
- Because of all the different areas of research and applied work, there is not one pre-determined path to integrating psychology in your career - you get to choose how you make it part of your journey!

## **6.2 Lecture Check-in**

- Get into assigned groups for our weekly group work activity!