The History and Scope of Psychology

Module 1

OBJECTIVE 1-1 Define psychology. To questions like, Who are we? From where come our thoughts? Our feelings? Our actions? Discipline of psychology comes to our aid. This discipline of psychology is defined as the scientific study of behavior and mental processes.

“I have made a ceaseless effort not to ridicule, not to bewail, not to scorn human actions, but to understand them.”
Benedict Spinoza, A Political Treatise, 1677.
The History and Scope of Psychology

Description
- The Case Study
- The Survey
- Naturalistic Observation

OBJECTIVE 1-2! Trace psychology’s prescientific roots from, from early understandings of mind and body to the beginnings of modern science. Throughout human history thinkers have wondered: How do our minds work? How do our bodies relate to our minds? How much of what we know comes built in? How much is acquired through experience?

Psychology’s Roots
Prescientific Psychology

In India, the Buddha pondered how sensations and perceptions combined to form ideas.

Prescientific Psychology
Confucius (551-479 BCE)

In China, Confucius stressed the power of ideas and of an educated mind.
Prescientific Psychology

Hebrew Scriptures

Hebrew scriptures linked mind and emotion to the body.

Prescientific Psychology

Socrates (469-399 BCE) and Plato (428-348 BCE)

Socrates and his student Plato believed that the mind was separate from the body, that it continued to exist after death, and that ideas were innate.

Prescientific Psychology

Aristotle (384-322 BCE)

Aristotle suggested that the soul is not separable from the body and that knowledge (ideas) grow from experience.

“The soul is not separable from the body and the same holds good of particular parts of the soul.” Aristotle, De Anima, 350 B.C.
**Prescientific Psychology**

Rene Descartes (1596-1650)

Descartes, like Plato, believed in soul (mind) body separation but speculated on how the immaterial mind and the physical body communicated.

Descartes like Plato believed the immaterial mind and physical body were separate but communicated in the brain at pineal gland. Animal spirits moved from the brain to act on the muscles and experiences lead the nerves to open up “pores” in the brain to form memories. Descartes was right about the nerves connecting the inside and the outside worlds but had no notion of how these nerves functioned.

**Prescientific Psychology**

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Bacon was one of the founders of modern science, especially the experimental method.

**Prescientific Psychology**

John Locke (1632-1704)

Locke held that the mind is a *tabula rasa* or blank sheet at birth and experience writes on it.
Prescientific Psychology
What is the relation of the mind to the body?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mind and body are connected</th>
<th>Mind and body are distinct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Hebrews</td>
<td>Socrates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>Plato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine</td>
<td>Descartes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prescientific Psychology
How are ideas formed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some ideas are inborn</th>
<th>The mind is a blank slate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socrates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plato</td>
<td>Locke</td>
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OBJECTIVE 1-3 | Explain how early psychologists sought to understand the mind’s structure and functions, and identify some of the leading psychologists who worked in these areas. Structuralism: Wundt and his student Titchner focused on the elements of mind, and studied it by using introspection (self-reflection). Wundt established the first laboratory of psychology in 1879 at Leipzig, Germany, and wrote the first textbook of psychology.
Psychological Science is Born

**Functionalism**

Influenced by Darwin, William James established the school of functionalism, opposing structuralism.

**Psychological Science is Born**

**The Unconscious Mind**

Sigmund Freud and his followers emphasized the importance of the unconscious mind and its effects on human behavior.

**Psychological Science Develops**

**Behaviorism**

Watson (1913) and later Skinner emphasized the study of overt behavior as the subject matter of scientific psychology.

**Functionalism:** James suggested that it would be more fruitful to consider the evolved functions of our thoughts and feelings than simply studying the elements of mind. Based on the theory of evolution, he suggested that the function of these thoughts and feelings was adaptive. James admitted the first woman student Mary Calkins to Harvard and tutored her. Despite his efforts she was not able to attain her PhD from Harvard.

**OBJECTIVE 1-4** Describe the evolution of psychology as defined from 1920s to through today. Ivan Pavlov a Russian Physiologist, James Watson and Skinner were all instrumental in developing the science of psychology and emphasized behavior instead of mind or mental thoughts. From 1920 to 1960, psychology in the US was heavily oriented towards behaviorism.
Psychological Science Develops
Humanistic Psychology

Maslow and Rogers emphasized current environmental influences on our growth potential and our needs for love and acceptance.

Psychology Today
We define psychology today as the scientific study of behavior (what we do) and mental processes (inner thoughts and feelings).

Psychological Associations & Societies
American Psychological Association is the largest organization of psychology with 160,000 members world-wide, followed by The British Psychological Society with 34,000 members.
Darwin states that nature selects those traits that best enable the organism to survive and reproduce in a particular environment.

OBJECTIVE 1-5 | Summarize the nature-nurture debate in psychology, and describe the principle of natural selection.

OBJECTIVE 1-6 | Identify the three main levels of analysis in the biopsychosocial approach, and explain why psychology's varied perspectives are complementary.

Biopsychosocial approach considers the influence of biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors on behavior. Each approach provides an incomplete explanation of behaviors.

Although debates arise among the psychologists working from differing perspectives, each point of view addresses important questions.
Psychology’s Current Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychodynamic</td>
<td>How behavior springs from unconscious drives and conflicts.</td>
<td>How can someone’s personality traits and disorders be explained in terms of sexual and aggressive drives or as disguised effects of unfilled wishes and childhood traumas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>How we learn observable responses.</td>
<td>How do we learn to fear particular objects or situations? What is the most effective way to alter our behavior, say lose weight or quit smoking?</td>
</tr>
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Psychology’s Current Perspectives

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<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>How we encode, process, store and retrieve information.</td>
<td>How do we use information in remembering? Reasoning? Problem solving?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-cultural</td>
<td>How behavior and thinking vary across situations and cultures.</td>
<td>How are we — as Africans, Asians, Australian or North American — alike as members of human family? As products of different environmental contexts, how do we differ?</td>
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Psychology’s Subfields

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychologist</th>
<th>What s/he does</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>Explores the links between brain and mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Studies changing abilities from womb to tomb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Studies how we perceive, think, and solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Investigates our persistent traits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>explore how we view and affect one another.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

OBJECTIVE 1-7 Identify some of the psychology’s subfields, and explain the difference between clinical psychology and psychiatry.
Psychology’s Subfields: Research

- Biological: 24.8%
- Developmental: 9.9%
- Cognitive: 8.0%
- Psychometrics: 14.1%
- Experimental: 11.5%
- Social: 4.8%
- Personality: 5.5%
- Other: 11.5%

Data: APA 1997

Psychology’s Subfields: Applied

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Psychologist</th>
<th>What s/he does</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial/Organizational</td>
<td>Studies and advise on behavior in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>Helps people cope with academic, vocational, and marital challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>Study, assess, and treat people with psychological disorders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Psychology’s Subfields: Applied

- Clinical: 67%
- Counseling: 15%
- Educational: 9%
- Industrial: 6%
- Other: 3%

Data: APA 1997
Clinical Psychology vs. Psychiatry

A clinical psychologist (Ph.D.) studies, assesses, and treats troubled people with psychotherapy.

Psychiatrists on the other hand are medical professionals (M.D.) who use treatments like drugs and psychotherapy to treat psychologically diseased patients.

Close-up

Your Study of Psychology
Survey, Question, Read, Review and Reflect (SQ3R)

- **Survey**: what you are about to read, including chapter outlines and section heads
- **Question**: Ask questions. Make notes.
- **Read**: Make sure you read outlines, sections and chapters in entirety.
- **Review**: Marginal definitions. Study learning outcomes.
- **Reflect**: On what you have learnt. Test yourself with quizzes.

Close-up

Additional Study Hints

- Distribute your time
- In class, listen actively
- Overlearn
- Be a smart test-taker