

Prologue: Introduction To Psychology

What is Psychology?

- “The scientific study of behaviour and mental processes”
- Talking, sleeping, running, eating, reading, aggression, reproductive behaviour
- Sensations, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, judgments
- Utilizes the scientific method
- Method: Systematic observations
- Why do we act and think the way that we do?
- What are the causes of our behaviours, thoughts and feelings?

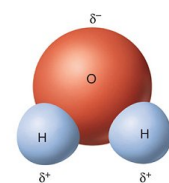
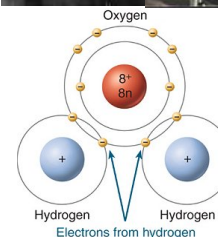


Introductory Videos: Video 1

- Looking at humans from a different pov in order to understand how they work
- Focusing on things that are outside of us effects our behaviour
- What can we change around the environment to alter our behaviour?
- What’s going through your mind when certain things happen to you?
- Evolutionary psychology: understanding the human mind through evolutionary biology
- Psychodynamic theory: the unconscious part of our mind affects us on a daily basis
- Social influences can contribute to our way of thought as well as social culture

The Founding of Psychology

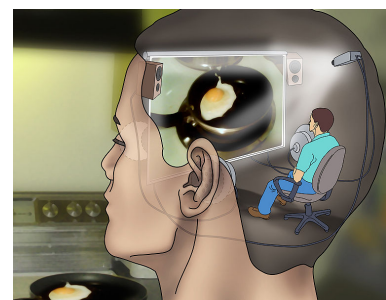
- Wilhelm Wundt
- Philosopher, physiologist
- First psychology laboratory
- University of Leipzig, Germany, December 1879
- Sensory perception
 - ~“How long does it take to react to a sound? A light? A touch?”
 - ~“How different do two lights have to be before one can tell which is brighter?”
- Interested in the composition of mental processes



- “Atoms of the mind”
- E.g., Reaction time experiments
- Speed of the simplest mental processes, such as recognition
- Biology and psychology used to go hand in hand
- Wuldt was known as the father of psychology
- At first, he was working with nerves to see how they function
- Developed a question: what effects the speed of nervous transmission?
- Interested in it from a personal pov as a functioning human
- Possible test: see if humans act faster to a visual or auditory stimulus
 - ~ How fast it took somebody to respond to a visual vs auditory stimulus reveals the sensitivity of the systems
- Another question: difference thresholds — how different do things have to be before you can differentiate them?
- Possible test: present people with two weights that are very similar and keep changing them to see when the subject would be able to recognize the difference (10.1 g-10.9 g)
- At the time physicists were exploring the composition of atoms and molecules. Wundt was also interested in this, he wanted to find out what the different components of mental processes were
- Similarly: components of a car engine — if you know all the components of a car and what each structures function is, you will understand how the car works
- This was the pov that Wuldt had, he wanted to take this approach to understand the human mind

Structuralism

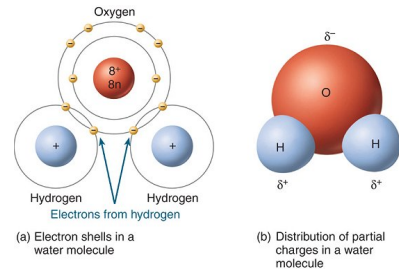
- Edward Bradford Titchener
- Termed the school of thought “structuralism”
- Structuralism:
 - ~ Focused on the basic *structural* elements of conscious, mental experiences
 - ~ Trying to understand the mind by breaking it down into its component pieces
- Introspection
 - ~ Observation and reporting of one’s mental experiences
 - ~ E.g., apple, rose, pencil, bell
 - ~ Report sensations, thoughts, feelings



~ Not reliable: two people can describe the same experience in different ways — it is not consistent, its subjective, which makes it unreliable

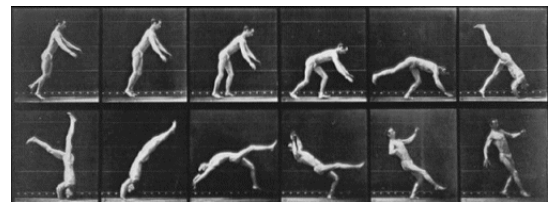
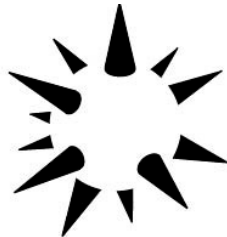
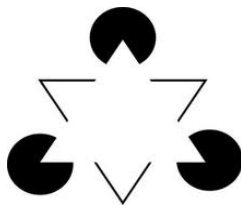
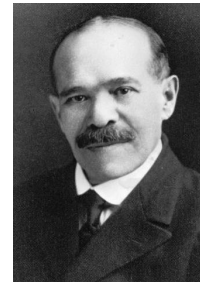
~ Reflecting upon/meditating upon your own experiences, breaking them down into the component parts

~ Objective: regardless of who is making a measurement, everybody can come up with the same thing. ex. measure a given distance — everybody should get the same answer



Gestalt Psychology

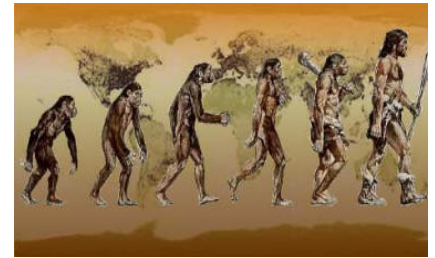
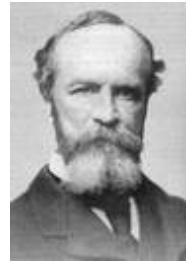
- Max Wertheimer
- Phi phenomenon
- Gestalt Psychology
- German
- Did not believe structuralism was the proper way to study the mind
- Ex. changing the organization of a song — it is no longer organized
- The brain comes up with a solution that relates to the real world. For example, movie stills (we see things as a whole rather than just a bunch of pictures)
- Emphasizes that people's experiences are holistic or unified
 - ~ Gestalt = whole, form, or pattern
- The whole is more than just the sum of the parts
 - ~ Perceptions don't arise just by adding independent sensations
 - ~ If all you know are the component pieces, you can't understand the human mind it's not enough
- Thus, structuralism can not provide the whole answer



The reason why you perceive the images above the way you do is because our brain looks at things as a whole. Things are perceived holistically.

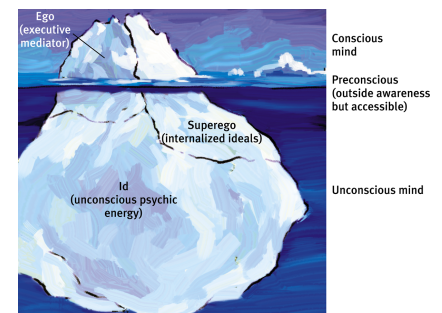
Functionalism

- William James (philosopher)
- Functionalism: focused on the functions of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours
- James was influenced by Charles Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection
 - ~ What is the survival advantage of organisms physical attributes and behaviours?
 - ~ What is the survival advantage of our mental behaviour?
 - ~ Look at the function of mental experiences and processes
 - ~ What is the function of human behaviour and social processes? Why are we social? How does that make us more likely to survive?
 - ~ Group behaviour: it's easier to survive as a group (split up the work, etc.)
 - ~ Humans are superior in being able to step back — we are able to consider the future and the potential consequences of our actions and response to the stimulus
 - ~ We are presented with multiple options and we decide what approach we'd like to take.
 - ~ E.g., conscious thinking: allows one to consider the present in the context of the past and the future
- Authored the first psychology textbook: "The Principles of Psychology"
- This study today is referred to as evolutionary psychology



Freudian Psychology

- Sigmund Freud
- Physician, neurological researcher
- The first to emphasize the importance of the unconscious mind
 - ~ Unconscious mental forces were responsible for human nature (personality)
 - ~ Characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and acting
 - ~ The central component — the biggest part is below the surface and unseeable
 - ~ Most of the thinking going on in the brain is behind the scenes
- Emphasized the importance of childhood experiences



~ His study of growth: he believed people were fully developed at 6 and continue to change as they get older

~ Shape adult personality

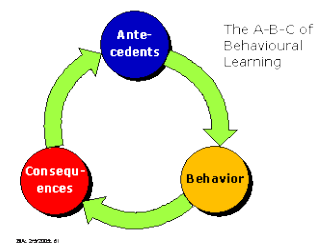
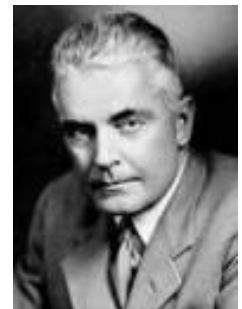
~ Your negative childhood experiences and memories get repressed into your unconscious mind and express themselves as a psychological disorder



- Developed *Psychoanalysis*
 - ~ Theory of personality (human nature) & treatment of psychological disorders (therapy)
- Structuralism and functionalism were competing ideas, and Freudian psychology was around the same time
- Freud was the first to apply psychological nerve damage
- Used some of Aristotle's theories and worked at some new things
- Freud was against the idea of cognitive psychology, as he proposed that most of the elements were in the unconscious mind
 - ~ Cognitive psychology: humans are computers that work through all possibilities, interpret all decisions and probabilities

Behaviourism

- John Watson & B.F. Skinner
- Objected to structuralism and functionalism
- Introspection is NOT science
- Consciousness, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, motivations
 - ~ Subjective, private experiences
 - ~ Not appropriate for science (could not be measured objectively)
- Focus on independently observable behaviour
 - ~ Should study the factors that influence learning and behaviour
 - ~ Goal to predict and influence behaviour
- Promoted the idea that behaviour is primarily determined by environmental factors
 - ~ Classical and operant learning
 - ~ Look outside of the individual
 - ~ What happened in the environment right before the aggression occurred? What was the stimulus? What happened after? What were the consequences?

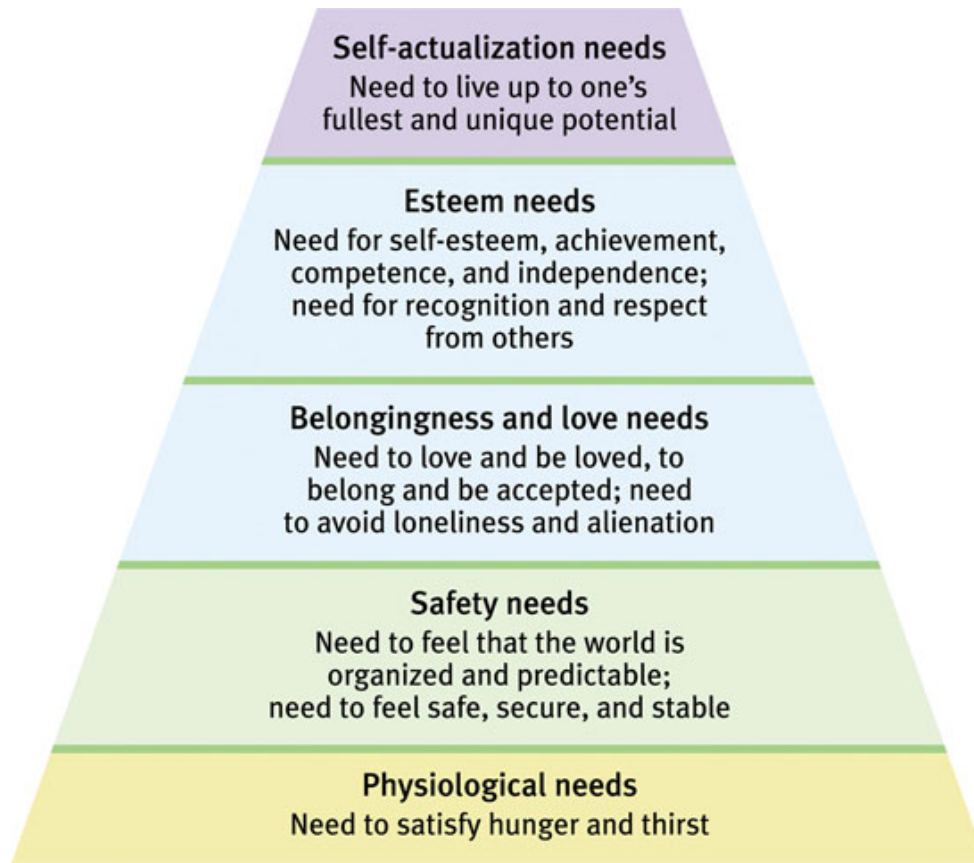


- ~ People are the way they are because of stimuli and the things that happen around them
- ~ We can modify the environment to alter behaviour
- ~ Ex. a dog will repeat actions that reward him with a treat but not the actions that get him punished

Humanistic Psychology

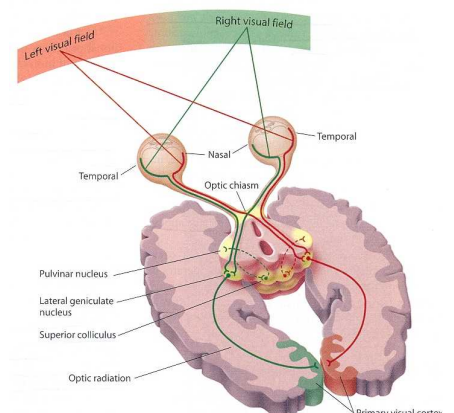
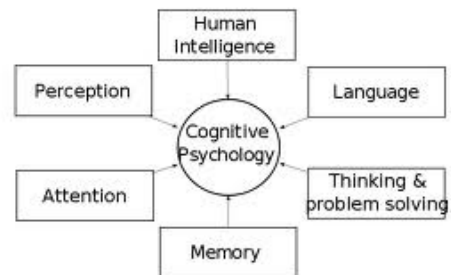
- Abraham Maslow & Carl Rogers
 - Reaction to psychoanalysis and behaviourism
 - ~ Rejected the idea that we are ruled by unconscious forces
 - ~ Rejected the idea that behaviour is completely determined by external influences
 - ~ While Freud was obsessed with sex and obsession (we are animals, these are our drives), humanistic psychology states that there is no humanity and individualism there
 - ~ Humanistic psychology: humans are conscious beings that are constantly thinking about the world
- Humanistic Psychology: emphasizes current environmental influences on our growth potential
 - ~ People are driven towards personal growth
- People make conscious choices
- Highlighted the need for love and acceptance
 - ~ Very positive about humans: all humans are born good, everybody has a growth potential as well as a potential to be a happy and content functioning member of society,
 - ~ Ex. if you take a human and put them in a environment that doesn't have favourable conditions for growth, they will not grow in a positive manner
 - ~ Humans need love and need to know they are contributing to the world
 - ~ The primary motivation towards this compels humans
 - ~ At the time, not everybody believed in free will — however, humanistic psychology emphasized it

- Theory of human nature/personality & therapy



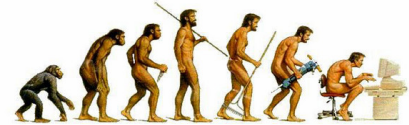
Cognitive Psychology

- Cognitive revolution
 - ~ A return to a focus on mental processes
- Cognitive Psychology focuses on how the mind processes, perceives, and retains information
 - ~ Sensation, perception, memory, language, reasoning, problem solving
 - ~ Also applied to therapy for psychological disorders
 - ~ Humans are machines with an input and output
- Modern brain-imaging techniques allow researchers to observe mental processes
 - ~ Cognitive neuroscience
 - ~ Neuroscience focuses on the functioning of the central nervous system



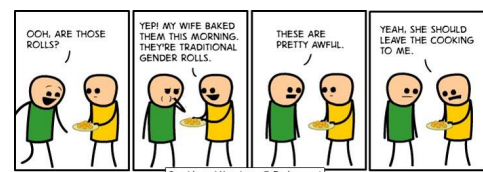
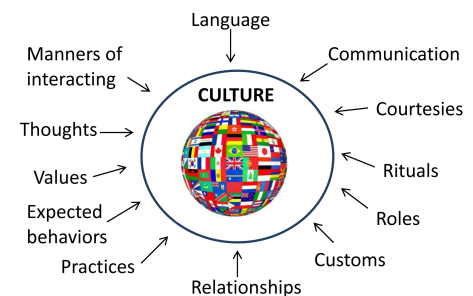
Evolutionary Psychology and Behaviour Genetics

- Evolutionary Psychology
 - Focuses on the common aspects of human thinking, feeling, and acting
 - Based on Charles Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection
- Behaviour Genetics
 - Focuses on the variation of aspects of human thinking, feeling, and acting
 - The relative influence of genes and environment on individual differences
 - Nature vs. Nurture debate
 - ~ Interaction
 - ~ Why are we different? Because of our genes or our environments?



Cross-Cultural, Gender, and Positive Psychology

- Cross-Cultural Psychology
 - Emphasizes the cultural influences on thinking, feeling, and behaviour
 - Culture
 - ~ Behaviours, ideas, attitudes, values, traditions
- Gender Psychology
 - Focuses on the role that gender plays in our thinking, feeling, and behaviour
 - ~ What's the difference between males and females on average?
 - ~ Ex. the average male is taller than the average female
- Positive Psychology
 - Focuses on the factors that influence positive human functioning
 - culture influences our thinking processes
 - ~ Positive psychology is a reaction to clinical psychology: taking people who are suffering with a clinically definable mental

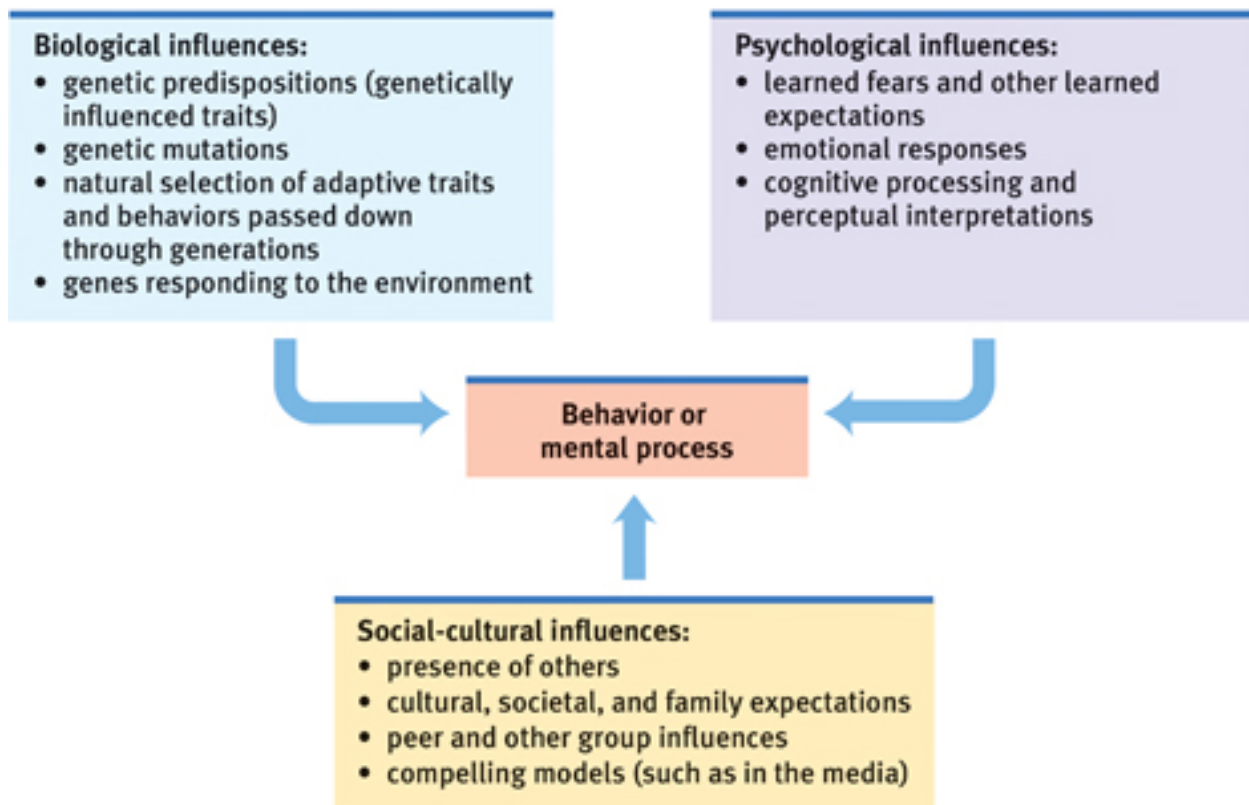


disorder and bringing them back to normal

~ Humanistic psychology - what are the basic human needs and qualities that need to be satisfied in order to be happy? Positive psychology is somewhat related to this — what are the practices people can use to get to that fulfillment?

Biopsychosocial Approach

- We can't just look at humans from a biological point of view, its not the full picture
- We have to look at a psychological perspective as well, thinking patterns and strategies, punishments, social and cultural concepts
- To understand all of the influences, we can take the biopsychosocial approach



Current Perspectives in Psychology

▼ TABLE 1
Psychology's Current Perspectives

Perspective	Focus	Sample Questions	Examples of Subfields Using This Perspective
<i>Neuroscience</i>	How the body and brain enable emotions, memories, and sensory experiences	How do pain messages travel from the hand to the brain? How is blood chemistry linked with moods and motives?	Biological; cognitive; clinical
<i>Evolutionary</i>	How the natural selection of traits has promoted the survival of genes	How does evolution influence behavior tendencies?	Biological; developmental; social
<i>Behavior genetics</i>	How our genes and our environment influence our individual differences	To what extent are psychological traits such as intelligence, personality, sexual orientation, and vulnerability to depression products of our genes? Of our environment?	Personality; developmental; legal/forensic
<i>Psychodynamic</i>	How behavior springs from unconscious drives and conflicts	How can someone's personality traits and disorders be explained by unfulfilled wishes and childhood traumas?	Clinical; counseling; personality
<i>Behavioral</i>	How we learn observable responses	How do we learn to fear particular objects or situations? What is the most effective way to alter our behavior, say, to lose weight or stop smoking?	Clinical; counseling; industrial-organizational
<i>Cognitive</i>	How we encode, process, store, and retrieve information	How do we use information in remembering? Reasoning? Solving problems?	Cognitive neuroscience; clinical; counseling; industrial-organizational
<i>Social-cultural</i>	How behavior and thinking vary across situations and cultures	How are we alike as members of one human family? How do we differ as products of our environment?	Developmental; social; clinical; counseling