

# Chapter 1

## Introduction to Psychology

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Ch.	Chapter Title	Module	Module Title	Asset Type	Asset title	Connect Learning Objective
01	Introduction to Psychology	02	A Science Evolves - The Past, Present and Future	Interactivity	Perspectives in Psychology	Name and summarize the key characteristics of the major approaches to psychology.

## MODULE 1: PSYCHOLOGISTS AT WORK

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1–1 What is the science of psychology?
- 1–2 What are the major specialties in the field of psychology?
- 1–3 Where do psychologists work?

**Psychology** is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. The phrase “behavior and mental processes” encompasses not just what people do but also their thoughts, emotions, perceptions, reasoning processes, memories, and even the biological activities that maintain bodily functioning.

### THE SUBFIELDS OF PSYCHOLOGY: PSYCHOLOGY’S FAMILY TREE

The subfields of psychology can be likened to an extended family who, although may not interact on a day-to-day basis, are related to one another, because they share a common goal: understanding behavior.

### WHAT ARE THE BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BEHAVIOR?

In the most fundamental sense, people are biological organisms. Behavioral neuroscience is the subfield of psychology that mainly examines how the brain and the nervous system—but other biological processes as well—determine behavior.

### HOW DO PEOPLE SENSE, PERCEIVE, LEARN, AND THINK ABOUT THE WORLD?

Experimental psychology is the branch of psychology that studies the processes of sensing, perceiving, learning, and thinking about the world. Several subspecialties of experimental psychology have become specialties in their own right. One is cognitive psychology, which focuses on higher mental processes, including thinking, memory, reasoning, problem solving, judging, decision making, and language.

### WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF CHANGE AND STABILITY IN BEHAVIOR ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN?

Developmental psychology studies how people grow and change from the moment of conception through death. Personality psychology focuses on the consistency in people’s behavior over time and the traits that differentiate one person from another.

### HOW DO PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH?

Health psychology explores the relationship between psychological factors and physical ailments or disease. Clinical psychology deals with the study, diagnosis, and treatment of psychological disorders. Like clinical psychologists, counseling psychologists deal with people’s psychological problems, but the

problems they deal with are more specific. Counseling psychology focuses primarily on educational, social, and career adjustment problems.

## HOW DO OUR SOCIAL NETWORKS AFFECT BEHAVIOR?

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Social psychology is the study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by others. Social psychologists concentrate on such diverse topics as human aggression, liking and loving, persuasion, and conformity. Cross-cultural psychology investigates the similarities and differences in psychological functioning in and across various cultures and ethnic groups.

## EXPANDING PSYCHOLOGY'S FRONTIERS

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The boundaries of the science of psychology are constantly growing. Three new additions to the field of psychology are: evolutionary psychology, behavioral genetics, and clinical neuropsychology.

## EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

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Evolutionary psychology considers how behavior is influenced by our genetic inheritance from our ancestors. The evolutionary approach suggests that the chemical coding of information in our cells not only determines traits such as hair color and race but also holds the key to understanding a broad variety of behaviors that helped our ancestors survive and reproduce.

## BEHAVIORAL GENETICS

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Behavioral genetics is another rapidly growing area in psychology. It focuses on the biological mechanisms, such as genes and chromosomes, that enable inherited behavior to unfold. Behavioral genetics seeks to understand how we might inherit certain behavioral traits and how the environment influences whether we actually display such traits.

## CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

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Clinical neuropsychology unites the areas of neuroscience and clinical psychology: It focuses on the origin of psychological disorders in biological factors.

## WORKING AT PSYCHOLOGY

Psychologists are employed in a variety of settings. Many doctoral-level psychologists are employed by institutions of higher learning or are self-employed, usually working as private practitioners treating clients. Other work sites include hospitals, clinics, mental health centers, counseling centers, government human-services organizations, businesses, schools, and even prisons. Psychologists are employed in the military, working with soldiers, veterans, and their families, and they work for the federal government Department of Homeland Security, fighting terrorism. Most psychologists, though, work in academic settings, allowing them to combine the three major roles played by psychologists in society: teacher, scientist, and clinical practitioner.

## PSYCHOLOGISTS: A PORTRAIT

There are close to 300,000 psychologists working today in the United States, but they are outnumbered by psychologists in other countries. In the United States, women outnumber men in the field, a big change from earlier years when women faced bias and were actively discouraged from becoming psychologists. The vast majority of psychologists in the United States are white, limiting the diversity of the field. Although the number of minority individuals entering the field is higher than a decade ago, the numbers have not kept up with the dramatic growth of the minority population at large.

The underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities among psychologists is significant for several reasons. First, the field of psychology is diminished by a lack of the diverse perspectives and talents that minority-group members can provide. Furthermore, minority-group psychologists serve as role models for members of minority communities, and their underrepresentation in the profession might deter other minority-group members from entering the field. Finally, because members of minority groups often prefer to receive psychological therapy from treatment providers of their own race or ethnic group, the rarity of minority psychologists can discourage some members of minority groups from seeking treatment.

## THE EDUCATION OF A PSYCHOLOGIST

Most psychologists have a doctorate, either a PhD (doctor of philosophy) or, less frequently, a PsyD (doctor of psychology). The PhD is a research degree that requires a dissertation based on an original investigation. The PsyD is obtained by psychologists who wish to focus on the treatment of psychological disorders. About a third of people working in the field of psychology have a master's degree as their highest degree, which they earn after two or three years of graduate work. These psychologists teach, provide therapy, conduct research, or work in specialized programs dealing with drug abuse or crisis intervention. Some work in universities, government, and business, collecting and analyzing data.

## CAREERS FOR PSYCHOLOGY MAJORS

An undergraduate major in psychology provides excellent preparation for a variety of occupations. Because undergraduates who specialize in psychology develop good analytical skills, are trained to think critically, and are able to synthesize and evaluate information well, employers in business, industry, and the government value their preparation. The most common areas of employment for psychology majors are in the social services, including working as an administrator, serving as a counselor, and providing direct care.

## STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

### THE SCIENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

**Have students answer these questions about the science of psychology:**

1. Do you agree that psychology is a science? Why or why not?

2. What does it mean to be able to “predict” behavior? Is it ever possible to know in advance how another person will behave?

3. What makes psychology unique among the social sciences?

### PSYCHOLOGY’S FAMILY TREE

Have students complete Handout 1–1, Psychology’s Family Tree.

### LECTURE IDEAS

#### THE SCIENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

Emphasize that psychologists attempt to describe, predict, and explain behavior. Many psychologists see their role as that of helping others change and improve their lives. All psychologists use scientific methods to find answers to questions about the causes of behavior.

To answer the question “What is psychology?” download and show as a slide an image from the APA Web site showing topics of current interest.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ISSUES IN AREAS OF PSYCHOLOGY

For each of the subdivisions of psychology, describe one research question or issue that is addressed by psychologists working in that area, focusing on areas that may be of interest to students. These can be found by going to the APA Web site, PsycINFO, or by looking at a recent issue of the *APS Observer* or *APA Monitor*. It is best for these ideas to be recent and of potential student interest. Below are some examples:

Field	Question
<b>Behavioral neuroscience</b>	What are the genetic contributors to depression?
<b>Clinical psychology</b>	What are the best treatment methods for people who suffer from extreme anxiety?
<b>Clinical neuropsychology</b>	How does brain damage affect an individual’s ability to speak?
<b>Cognitive psychology</b>	Why are some people good at reading maps?
<b>Counseling psychology</b>	How can psychologists help college students make career choices?
<b>Cross-cultural psychology</b>	How can we improve the communication between people from Eastern and Western cultures?
<b>Developmental psychology</b>	What happens to short-term memory as people get older?
<b>Educational psychology</b>	What qualities make for effective teachers?
<b>Evolutionary psychology</b>	What are the origins of human jealousy?

<b>Experimental psychology</b>	What factors influence the size of bets a gambler makes?
<b>Forensic psychology</b>	How can we predict whether a person will commit a dangerous crime?
<b>Health psychology</b>	How can people be encouraged to develop healthier diets?
<b>Industrial/organizational psychology</b>	What factors make a good manager?
<b>Personality psychology</b>	Do lonely people have low self-esteem?
<b>Psychology of women</b>	Are women less likely than men to be hired as executives?
<b>School psychology</b>	What tests are best at identifying children with learning disorders?

#### WHERE PSYCHOLOGISTS WORK

Go to the APA Workforce Studies Web site for the latest data on employment in psychology. The 2007 data are available here but the Web site is updated each year:

<http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/07-doc-empl/index.aspx>

Students are interested in learning where psychologists work. Students would most likely guess that the majority of psychologists are engaged in private practice, but challenge them to think about the roles that psychologists serve in other settings, such as research, schools, businesses, and hospitals.

Many students have been told that they cannot expect to find a job unless they go on to graduate school and earn a master's or doctorate degree. Yet, your experience may be very different in that your students may have earned entry-level positions with only a bachelor's degree. If this is the case, students would be pleased to know that there are jobs for which they can qualify with a bachelor's degree in their majors. You also may wish to discuss the factors accounting for the success of these students in qualifying for these jobs, such as having participated in practicals, internships, or research. If your department has a Psi Chi chapter, find out if they would be willing to organize an alumni panel to talk about their experiences in graduate school and their careers.

#### CURRENT ISSUES FACING PSYCHOLOGISTS

Describe current issues facing psychologists with regard to insurance, health maintenance organizations, and prescription privileges. Ask whether students believe that psychologists should be allowed to prescribe medication or whether this role is best left to psychiatrists (and why).

#### MEDIA PRESENTATION IDEAS

## POPULAR MOVIE OR TELEVISION SHOW: PORTRAYAL OF PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE MEDIA

There are numerous movies and television shows portraying psychologists. Choose one that is relatively recent and likely to be of interest to your students. You also might consider showing an episode from Dr. Phil's television show as a stimulus to discussion of the topic. Possible discussion questions would include: (1) Do you believe that the psychologist is portrayed in a realistic light? Why or why not? (2) How would each psychological perspective explain the main character's symptoms or issues? (3) What is the impression of psychotherapy that is conveyed in this scene?

## EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS

Obtain educational and public information materials from APA including a video on careers in psychology:

<http://www.apa.org/videos/4313060.html>

Other educational videos illustrating the work of psychologists can be obtained from the Discovery Health Channel, the History Channel, and PBS.

## POPULAR MOVIE OR TELEVISION SHOW: PSYCHOLOGISTS AT WORK

Show a movie or television show that illustrates the work of a psychologist from one or more of the disciplines. Most movies that depict psychologists show clinical psychologists, but there are some that go beyond to the broader range. For example, *Law & Order* and *Law & Order: SVU* and the show *Criminal Minds* typically have forensic psychologists who determine competency or are involved in other aspects of solving crimes with psychology. Other examples can come from television news programs featuring the results of researchers in particular areas such as child development or behavioral neuroscience. Look out for possible programs to use via Public Broadcasting System (PBS), Discovery Channel (including Discovery Health), the History Channel, and the network news magazines, such as *Dateline NBC*, *20/20*, *Prime Time*, and *60 Minutes*. One-time use of these for educational purposes does not violate copyright law. The APA Web site often features psychological research including media links.

The *Psych Today* blog also contains frequent updates on a wide range of topics from academic, applied, and media psychologists: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/>, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/fulfillment-any-age>

## POPULAR MOVIE OR TELEVISION SHOW: THE WORKPLACES OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

As noted above, popular television shows, movies, and documentaries can serve as the basis for illustrating the workplaces in which psychologists can be found. If you are not sure which would currently be of most interest to your students, ask your teaching assistant or check with senior psychology majors in your department.

## MODULE 2: A SCIENCE EVOLVES: THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- 2–1 What are the origins of psychology?
- 2–2 What are the major approaches in contemporary psychology?

## THE ROOTS OF PSYCHOLOGY

The formal beginning of psychology as a scientific discipline is generally considered to be in the late 19th century, when Wilhelm Wundt established the first experimental laboratory devoted to psychological phenomena in Leipzig, Germany. Wundt considered psychology to be the study of conscious experience. His perspective, which came to be known as **structuralism**, focused on uncovering the fundamental mental components of perception, consciousness, thinking, emotions, and other kinds of mental states and activities. To determine how basic sensory processes shape our understanding of the world, Wundt and other structuralists used a procedure called **introspection**, in which they presented people with a stimulus—such as a bright green object or a sentence printed on a card—and asked them to describe, in their own words and in as much detail as they could, what they were experiencing. Wundt argued that by analyzing people’s reports, psychologists could come to a better understanding of the structure of the mind. Over time, psychologists challenged Wundt’s approach. Introspection was not a truly scientific technique, because there were few ways an outside observer could confirm the accuracy of others’ introspections. The perspective that replaced structuralism is known as functionalism. **Functionalism** concentrated on what the mind does and how behavior functions. Functionalists, whose perspective became prominent in the early 1900s, asked what role behavior plays in allowing people to adapt to their environments. Another important reaction to structuralism was the development of **gestalt psychology** that emphasizes how perception is organized. Instead of considering the individual parts that make up thinking, gestalt psychologists took the opposite tack, studying how people consider individual elements together as units or wholes.

## WOMEN IN PSYCHOLOGY: FOUNDING MOTHERS

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Margaret Floy Washburn (1871–1939) was the first woman to receive a doctorate in psychology, and she did important work on animal behavior. Leta Stetter Hollingworth (1886–1939) was one of the first psychologists to focus on child development and on women’s issues. She collected data to refute the view, popular in the early 1900s, that women’s abilities periodically declined during parts of the menstrual cycle. Mary Calkins (1863–1930), who studied memory in the early part of the 20th century, became the first female president of the American Psychological Association. Karen Horney (1885–1952) focused on the social and cultural factors behind personality, and June Etta Downey (1875–1932) spearheaded the study of personality traits and became the first woman to head a psychology department at a state university. Anna Freud (1895–1982), the daughter of Sigmund Freud, also made notable contributions to the treatment of abnormal behavior, and Mamie Phipps Clark (1917–1983) carried out pioneering work on how children of color grew to recognize racial differences.

## TODAY’S PERSPECTIVES

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The men and women who laid the foundations of psychology shared a common goal: to explain and understand behavior using scientific methods. Seeking to achieve the same goal, the tens of thousands of psychologists who followed those early pioneers embraced—and often rejected—a variety of broad perspectives. Today, the field of psychology includes five major perspectives. These broad perspectives emphasize different aspects of behavior and mental processes.

### THE NEUROSCIENCE PERSPECTIVE: BLOOD, SWEAT, AND FEARS

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The **neuroscience perspective** considers how people and nonhumans function biologically: how individual nerve cells are joined together, how the inheritance of certain characteristics from parents and other ancestors influences behavior, how the functioning of the body affects hopes and fears, which behaviors are instinctual, and so forth.

### THE PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE: UNDERSTANDING THE INNER PERSON

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Proponents of the **psychodynamic perspective** argue that behavior is motivated by inner forces and conflicts about which we have little awareness or control. They view dreams and slips of the tongue as indications of what a person is truly feeling within a seething cauldron of unconscious psychic activity. The origins of the psychodynamic view are linked to one person: Sigmund Freud, an Austrian physician in the early 1900s, whose ideas about unconscious determinants of behavior had a revolutionary effect on 20th-century thinking, not just in psychology but in related fields as well.

### THE BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE: OBSERVING THE OUTER PERSON

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The **behavioral perspective** grew out of a rejection of psychology's early emphasis on the inner workings of the mind. Instead, behaviorists suggested that the field should focus on observable behavior that can be measured objectively. John B. Watson was the first major American psychologist to advocate this approach. The behavioral perspective was championed by B. F. Skinner, a pioneer in the field. Much of our understanding of how people learn new behaviors is based on the behavioral perspective.

### THE COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE: IDENTIFYING THE ROOTS OF UNDERSTANDING

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Evolving in part from structuralism and in part as a reaction to behaviorism, which focused so heavily on observable behavior and the environment, the **cognitive perspective** focuses on how people think, understand, and know about the world. The emphasis is on learning how people comprehend and represent the outside world within themselves and how our ways of thinking about the world influence our behavior. Many psychologists who adhere to the cognitive perspective compare human thinking to the workings of a computer. In their view, thinking is information processing.

### THE HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE: THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF THE HUMAN SPECIES

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The **humanistic perspective** suggests that all individuals naturally strive to grow, develop, and be in control of their lives and behavior. Humanistic psychologists maintain that each of us has the capacity to

seek and reach fulfillment. According to Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, who were central figures in the development of the humanistic perspective, people strive to reach their full potential if they are given the opportunity. The emphasis of the humanistic perspective is on free will, the ability to freely make decisions about one's own behavior and life. The notion of free will stands in contrast to determinism, which sees behavior as caused, or determined, by things beyond a person's control.

## LECTURE IDEAS

### HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY (SEE BIOGRAPHIES BELOW FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION)

**500,000 B.C.: Trephining to allow the escape of evil spirits.** Emphasize that this method is still used in some areas around the world, particularly in agricultural, developing societies.

**430 B.C.: Hippocrates argues for four temperaments of personality.** Current theories of personality propose that there are five basic temperaments; these are still very similar to those proposed by Hippocrates, and even though personality is not controlled by bodily "fluids," hormones and neurotransmitters are now known to have important influences on behavior.

**1689: John Locke introduces idea of tabula rasa.** Are we born as a "blank slate"? Does our behavior reflect entirely our upbringing (related to the nature-nurture issue discussed below)? John Locke was an important early advocate of the behaviorist perspective.

**1807: Franz Josef Gall proposes phrenology.** The idea that bumps on the skull reflect personality was a fascinating, although inaccurate, attempt to explain variations in human behavior. Some students may have seen the "Phrenology Head" by L. N. Fowler, a white china head with markings corresponding to the main areas of personality and intelligence. Illustrate this discussion with a picture of one (many are available on the Web). My joke about this is that in the days of phrenology, you could get your hair done and receive psychotherapy at the same time!

**1879: Wilhelm Wundt inaugurates first psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany.** This is a major event to highlight, as it is the beginnings of psychology as a formal science. Contrast structuralism with functionalism. See below for an activity involving introspection.

**1895: Functionalism model formulated.** Emphasize this as the development of a model that challenged structuralism. Talk about the importance of William James in American psychology. See below for how to contrast structuralism with functionalism.

**1920: Gestalt psychology most influential.** This perspective also contrasts with structuralism and functionalism. The text emphasizes these three perspectives.

Also point to the development of psychoanalysis, behaviorism, humanistic, and cognitive perspectives, but these can be discussed as separate perspectives in psychology (see below).

**1905: Mary Calkins works on memory.** Calkins also was the first woman president of the American Psychological Association. She invented the paired-associate technique. Having been refused a PhD from

Harvard (she was offered one from Radcliffe, which she declined), she became an ardent spokeswoman for women's rights, including the right to vote.

**1928: Leta Stetter Hollingworth publishes work on adolescence.** In addition to making contributions to the psychology of women in the early part of the 20th century, Hollingworth was known for her work on gifted children, children with "mental defects," and adolescents. Her text on adolescence replaced that of G. Stanley Hall and became the leading work in the field until the late 1940s.

#### HELPFUL HINTS FOR STUDENTS:

Here are a few ways to help students remember names associated with historical achievements:

"F" (for functionalism) comes before "S" (for structuralism), just as "J" (for James) comes before "W" (for Wundt).

For Gestalt psychology, the "whole is more than the sum of its parts" and the letters "al" (for "all") are in the term's name.

#### BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM JAMES (FROM PETTIJOHN'S "CONNECTEXT")

William James was born in New York City in 1842. He was the son of wealthy parents, whose enthusiasm for their children's education sent young James traveling throughout Europe. His formative years were spent in the best schools of France, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. He vacillated from one interest to another, studying painting, chemistry, biology, and medicine. In 1869, he received a medical degree from Harvard University. Finally, at the age of 30, he accepted the teaching position at Harvard that launched his outstanding career in psychology. In 1875, James established one of the first psychology demonstration teaching laboratories in the world at Harvard. Three years later, at the age of 36, he married a Boston schoolteacher and began writing his most famous work, *The Principles of Psychology*, which, to his publisher's dismay, took him almost 12 years to complete. James enjoyed great popularity as a lecturer at Harvard and was remembered by students as a vivacious personality whose extravagant sense of humor and picturesque language set him apart from the typical professor. His interests were tremendously varied: he wrote about topics such as habit, consciousness, personality, emotion, and religion. James continued to write, lecture, and travel until his death in 1910 at his country home in New Hampshire.

**NOTE:** Students would also be interested in knowing that he was the brother of the novelist Henry James.

#### INTROSPECTION EXERCISE (CAN ALSO BE MADE INTO A STUDENT ASSIGNMENT):

##### Read this to the class:

Wilhelm Wundt founded the first formal psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany, in 1879, the date now considered to be the beginning of the science of psychology. A physician and physiologist, Wundt conducted experiments intended to identify the basic nature of human consciousness and experience.

His main focus of research was on the senses of vision, touch, and the passage of time; other topics studied in his laboratory included attention, emotion, and memory.

The approach associated with Wundt is structuralism, which seeks to describe the basic building blocks or “structure” of consciousness. The main technique used by Wundt and his colleagues was introspection or “inner sense.” In this method, trained subjects are given a stimulus. They then are asked to describe the sensations that made up their conscious experience of that stimulus.

Now you can try introspection yourself. Look at the stimulus that will appear on the screen.

**Show a picture of an apple (or hold up any handy object).**

What is your experience of this apple? How would you describe the sensations of each of the parts of the apple—its colors, its roundness, its shading?

In Wundt’s laboratory, you might be asked to reflect on your experience of this stimulus for several minutes or even several hours!

#### FUNCTIONALISM EXERCISE (ALSO CAN BE MADE INTO A STUDENT ASSIGNMENT):

**Read this to the class:**

William James opened a small psychology laboratory in 1870 that he used to demonstrate some of the basic processes he taught in his classes at Harvard University. However, the laboratory was for demonstration, not research. James identified himself as a philosopher, not a psychologist. James published *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890. This massive work (two volumes of almost 1,400 pages) contained his theoretical positions in psychology.

Functionalism was the idea that mental processes were useful as functional activities to living creatures in their attempt to maintain and adapt themselves in the world of nature. James developed this position as a reaction against the view of the structuralists that the mind can be divided into units. James’s focus on the mind’s ability to adapt was derived from Darwin’s evolutionary theory that all characteristics of a species must serve some adaptive purpose. According to James, psychology’s goal should be to investigate the function, or purpose, of consciousness rather than its structure.

James used the concept of “stream of consciousness” to describe the mind.

**Present this instruction:**

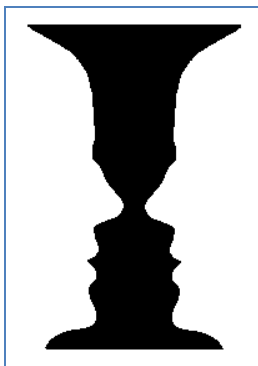
What are the thoughts going through your mind right now? Perhaps you are thinking about the instructor in front of you, but if you let your mind wander, you may start to think about where you are going later today, what you did yesterday, the feeling that you are getting hungry and would like something to eat, or perhaps your concern over whether your roommate is still asleep. According to James, these thoughts cannot be separated into component parts as proposed by the structuralists. Instead, they form a stream of the total flow of thoughts, and are not necessarily tied to direct experience.

**GESTALT EXERCISE (ALSO CAN BE MADE INTO A STUDENT ASSIGNMENT):**

Gestalt psychology is based on the observation that we perceive experiences in ways that cannot be reduced simply to a set of basic sensations. The word “gestalt” comes from the German word for structure, or form. The Gestalt psychologists were represented by, among others, Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, Wolfgang Kohler, and Kurt Lewin, who developed their ideas in the 1920s, having begun their work in Germany and then moving to universities in the United States in the 1930s. They were noted for developing the “laws” of Gestalt psychology, many of which were based on observations derived from studying how people perceived visual illusions.

**Present this instruction:**

Now try this experiment from Gestalt psychology. Look at this picture:

**Show this picture:**

What do you see when you look at this picture? Perhaps you noticed two white profiles looking at each other against a black background. Or perhaps you saw a black vase against a white background.

Whichever one you saw first, now try to find the other. Gestalt psychologists were interested in the patterns that people saw in stimulus objects and invented a number of illusions designed to learn more about the perceptual assumptions (and errors) that follow from the tendency to view “the whole.” Psychologists now call this “top-down” processing.

**BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN B. WATSON (FROM PETTIJOHN’S “CONNECTEXT”)**

John B. Watson was born in 1878 in a rural community outside Greenville, South Carolina, where he attended the local country schools near his parents’ farm. At 16, he entered Furman University, where he earned an MA degree.

Watson received his PhD in experimental psychology at the University of Chicago in 1903. His research was on the sensory cues used by rats in learning to run through a maze. He remained at Chicago for five years.

In 1908 he began teaching at Johns Hopkins University, where he remained until 1920 when a highly publicized divorce forced him to resign. Watson was the driving force for the school of behaviorism, and his approach can be seen in a popular quote: “Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I’ll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select—doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief, and yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors” (1924, p. 82). In 1921, Watson entered the business world and soon became vice president of an advertising agency. He married his former laboratory assistant and continued to write popular articles on psychology for some time. He died in 1958 at the age of 80.

#### BIOGRAPHY OF SIGMUND FREUD (FROM PETTIJOHN’S “CONNECTEXT”)

Sigmund Freud was born in May 1856 to a lower-middle-class family, the son of wool merchants in the Austrian town of Freiburg. When he was 4, his family moved to Vienna. His parents soon recognized and encouraged young Freud’s intellectual capacities. After receiving his medical degree in 1881, he began to practice medicine; shortly afterward he met a young woman whom he eventually married.

Departing from the traditional academic setting of the psychological laboratory, he began to study mental disorders by clinical observation. Initially, Freud’s theories shocked his highly conservative colleagues, most of whom either dismissed him entirely or countered him vehemently with caustic criticism. Freud refused to be discouraged by his adversaries, and continued his investigations with an almost obsessive fervor, gaining the support of only a handful of men who, like Jung and Adler, were themselves destined to make major contributions to psychoanalysis.

Freud spent nearly all his life in Vienna, and when Nazi storm troopers invaded the city in 1938, he was arrested in his home and held in captivity until his stock of unsold books could be retrieved and burned publicly. On his release a few weeks later, he moved to London, where he lived out the last months of his life. In September 1939, Freud died of cancer at the age of 83.

#### IMPORTANCE OF PERSPECTIVES IN PSYCHOLOGY

These five perspectives form a central theme of the course in that the course and many topics within the course are organized around them. Alert students to the fact that if they understand these perspectives, they will be in very good shape to understand material presented throughout the course. It will be easier for students to grasp these concepts if after presenting these briefly and defining them, you show how they would apply to a fictional character (see below).

#### MEDIA PRESENTATION IDEAS

##### ANALYSIS OF A FICTIONAL CHARACTER

Show a brief segment from a movie or television show in which a character displays psychological symptoms. Ask students to discuss the character’s symptoms from the five major perspectives.

## MODULE 3: PSYCHOLOGY'S KEY ISSUES AND CONTROVERSIES

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

3–1 What are psychology's key issues and controversies?

3–2 What is the future of psychology likely to hold?

Nature (heredity) versus nurture (environment) is one of the major issues that psychologists address. A psychologist's take on this issue depends partly on which major perspective he/she subscribes to. However, every psychologist would agree that neither nature nor nurture alone is the sole determinant of behavior; rather, it is a combination of the two. In a sense, then, the real controversy involves how much of our behavior is caused by heredity and how much is caused by environmental influences.

A second major question addressed by psychologists concerns conscious versus unconscious causes of behavior. This question represents one of the great controversies in the field of psychology. For example, clinical psychologists adopting a psychodynamic perspective argue that psychological disorders are brought about by unconscious factors, whereas psychologists employing the cognitive perspective suggest that psychological disorders largely are the result of faulty thinking processes.

The next issue is observable behavior versus internal mental processes. Some psychologists, particularly those relying on the behavioral perspective, contend that the only legitimate source of information for psychologists is behavior that can be observed directly. Other psychologists, building on the cognitive perspective, argue that what goes on inside a person's mind is critical to understanding behavior, and so we must concern ourselves with mental processes.

Free will versus determinism is another key issue. How much of our behavior is a matter of **free will** (choices made freely by an individual), and how much is subject to **determinism**, the notion that behavior is largely produced by factors beyond people's willful control?

The last of the key issues concerns individual differences versus universal principles. Psychologists who rely on the neuroscience perspective tend to look for universal principles of behavior, such as how the nervous system operates or the way certain hormones automatically prime us for sexual activity. In contrast, psychologists who employ the humanistic perspective focus more on the uniqueness of every individual.

### EXPLORING DIVERSITY: UNDERSTANDING HOW CULTURE, ETHNICITY, AND RACE INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR

Broad cultural differences are not the only ones taken into account by psychologists in their attempts to identify general principles of behavior. Subcultural, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic differences are increasingly important targets of study by psychologists. Although the discipline is growing more aware of the importance of taking cultural and subcultural factors into account, progress has not been rapid in actual practice. There is not even a universal agreement on the use of terms such as race and ethnic



group. In contrast, ethnic group and ethnicity are broader terms that refer to cultural background, nationality, religion, and language. To compound the difficulty, there are no universally acceptable names for races and ethnic groups. Psychologists also know that the consequences of race cannot be understood without taking into account environmental and cultural factors. People's behavior is a joint product of their race and of the treatment they receive from others because of it.

## PSYCHOLOGY'S FUTURE

Although the course of scientific development is notoriously difficult to predict, several trends seem likely in the future:

- As its knowledge base grows, psychology will become increasingly specialized and new perspectives will evolve.
- The evolving sophistication of neuroscientific approaches is likely to have an increasing influence over other branches of psychology.
- Psychology's influence on issues of public interest also will grow. The major problems of our time—such as violence, terrorism, racial and ethnic prejudice, poverty, and environmental and technological disasters—have important psychological aspects.
- Finally, as the population becomes more diverse, issues of diversity—embodied in the study of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural factors—will become more important to psychologists providing services and doing research.

## BECOMING AN INFORMED CONSUMER OF PSYCHOLOGY: THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY: DISTINGUISHING LEGITIMATE PSYCHOLOGY FROM PSEUDO-PSYCHOLOGY

In order to separate accurate information, which is backed by science and objective research, from pseudo-psychology based on anecdotes, opinions, and outright fraud, we need to employ critical thinking techniques. Developed by psychologists who specialize in learning, memory, cognition, intelligence, and education, critical thinking procedures provide the tools to scrutinize assumptions, evaluate assertions, and think with greater precision. The following is what you need to consider in order to evaluate information of a psychological nature, whether the source is an advertisement, a television show, a magazine article, or even a book as seemingly reliable as a college textbook.

- For starters, know who is offering the information and advice.
- Keep in mind that there is no free ride. Be wary of simple, glib responses to major difficulties.
- Be aware that few universal cures exist for humankind's ills. No method or technique works for everyone.
- Finally, remember that no source of information or advice is definitive.



## STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

### PSYCHOLOGY'S KEY ISSUES

Have students complete Handout 1–3, Psychology's Key Issues. (Answers are provided on this handout—remove them before making available to students.)

### PSYCHOLOGY MYTHS AND FACTS

Have students complete Handout 1–4, Survey on Facts about Psychology.

## LECTURE IDEAS

### RELATIONSHIPS AMONG DISCIPLINES, PERSPECTIVES, AND ISSUES

By the time you reach this point in the lecture, students will possibly be confused about the differences among the disciplines in psychology, the workplaces in which psychologists are found, the historical perspectives, the contemporary perspectives, and the issues presented here. Review these distinctions, pointing out that the disciplines relate to the areas in which psychologists specialize, the workplaces are where they conduct their jobs, the perspectives (historical and current) are the theoretical positions that psychologists have, and the key issues are substantive ideas about which psychologists have different viewpoints. It is also important to point out the difference between “conscious versus unconscious causes of behavior” and “observable behavior versus internal mental processes.” Conscious versus unconscious refers to whether the forces that drive behavior are available to conscious awareness or whether they lie under the surface and are unavailable to the individual's thought processes (unconscious). Internal versus observable refers to what is considered acceptable data. Those who favor the observable side of the issue regard it as inappropriate to use any data other than those that can be objectively recorded. Those at the internal end of the pole believe that is acceptable and appropriate to find out what is going on inside the person (within the “black box”). Having explained these differences, it is then helpful to use Figure 1 to show how the perspectives view each of the issues. You can then challenge students to decide, by the end of the course, where they fall on each of the key issues and therefore what perspective lies closest to their beliefs regarding human nature.

### EXPLORING DIVERSITY

Ideas for presenting the “Exploring Diversity” box can be developed from resources available through APA. One resource in particular, the CEMRRAT-2 Textbook Work Group on Incorporating Diversity, includes specific suggestions for including areas of diversity (sex, age, race, disability, sexual orientation) into the introductory psychology course: <http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/programs/recruitment/inclusive-textbooks.pdf>

### NEW TRENDS IN PSYCHOLOGY

New trends in psychology can be readily accessed from the APA Web site, the *APA Monitor*, the *APS Observer*, PsycINFO, or the table of contents of any recent psychological journals.

#### DISTINGUISHING PSEUDO FROM SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY

Differentiating between popular and scientific psychology can be done within several areas that would be of natural interest to students, such as whether ESP exists or not, how hypnosis works, theories of dreaming, and interpersonal relationships. Present students with myths about psychology and contrast these myths with facts.

Bring in a recent newspaper or magazine article in which results of research are correctly described to show “good” examples and contrast these with other news stories or articles in less reputable sources.

#### ONLINE LEARNING CENTER: AROUND THE GLOBE

##### **Ancient Greek Ideas of Causation**

We spend much of our time mulling over what causes events to happen: what makes the thief steal the diamonds? What makes an animal a skunk, and not a raccoon? Psychologists often look for common ways of classifying animals or human motives that are universal, and can be found in all cultures. Records from Ancient Greece, though, show that some civilizations have very different ways of thinking about causation from the modern West (Lloyd, 1995). Greek writers from the time of Aristotle (born 384 B.C.) onward distinguished between the matter a thing is made of, the form it takes, the final cause, the function or purpose something serves, and the efficient cause, or “excuse” that brings an event about. A wooden cylinder will roll if pushed (the efficient cause), in part because it is the nature of cylinders to roll (the final cause). The Greeks applied their ideas to medicine, especially the causes of illness, as well as legal disputes. Yet only the efficient cause—the push—looks like a “cause” to most English speakers.

#### SLIDE DEPICTING MAJOR PERSPECTIVES IN PSYCHOLOGY

Use this figure, which has alternative symbols for each of the five major perspectives.

# MAJOR PERSPECTIVES IN PSYCHOLOGY



## MEDIA PRESENTATION IDEAS

### RECENT FINDINGS RELEVANT TO PSYCHOLOGY

Keep your eyes open for recent findings in the news that may be shown on evening news broadcasts, morning shows, news magazines, or documentaries. Use brief clips from one of these sources to show psychology in the news.

### DISTINGUISHING PSEUDO FROM SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY

Find online “psychology” articles or stories that actually represent weak scholarship or unsubstantiated pop ideas and show students how they would decide whether such material is reputable or not. Using some of the media suggestions for Module 1 (Psychologists at Work), ask the class to discuss whether they think that these represent pseudo or scientific psychology. Ask the class whether they think that these media representations improve or weaken psychology’s stature as a science.



Need specific chapters? Create a book that contains only the chapters you want, in the order you want. Create will even re-number the pages for you! Feldman, *Understanding Psychology*, offers five additional modules on the following topic areas:

Chapter 1 Introduction to Psychology

- Diversity and Culture
- Forensic Psychology
- Industrial/Organizational Psychology
- Sustainability/Environmental Psychology
- Statistics