



PSY100H:

Introductory Psychology

Fall 2021

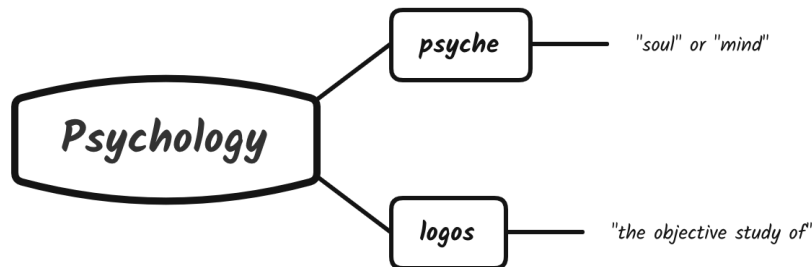


Week 1





What Is Psychology?

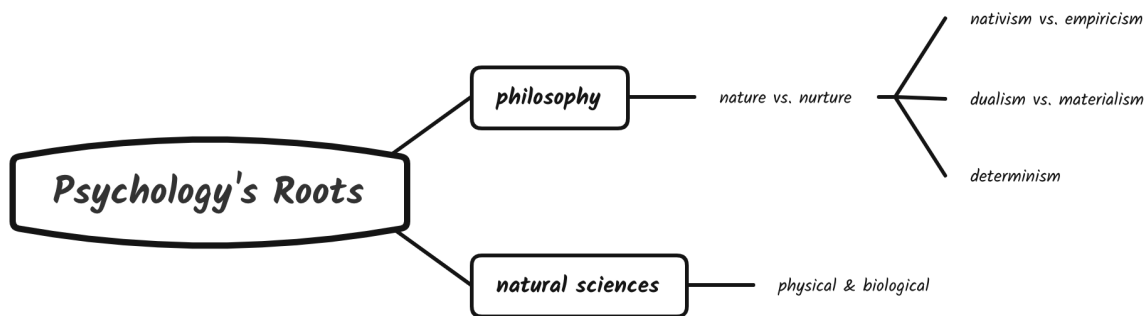


- **psychology**: the **scientific** study of behaviour, mental processes, and brain functions
 - **mind**: the **brain** and its activities, including thought, emotion, and behaviour
 - **behaviour**: any action that we can **observe** (human & animal)
 - **introspection**: personal observations of your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours
- psychology explains **general principles** that govern behaviour while recognizing **individual differences**
- psychology is a **hub science**: it is closely connected to several other sciences
 - psychology is all about people, and nearly all occupations require an understanding of people and their behaviour
- *“The purpose of psychology is to give us a completely different idea of the things we know best.” — Paul Valéry*





What Are Psychology's Roots?



- **philosophy** systematically examines basic concepts
 - **nature vs. nurture**
 - **nativism**: all human knowledge is **pre-programmed** with the **innate** quality, we are determined once we are born
 - **empiricism** (John Locke): the mind as a “**blank slate**” at birth, which then was filled with ideas gained by observing the world
 - Aristotle: all knowledge is gained through **sensory experience**
 - **dualism**: there is a body **and** there is a separate soul
 - **materialism**: consciousness is created by the body in your brain (nothing exists except **matter**)



- **determinism**: the doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by **causes external to the will**
- **natural sciences** study the physical and biological events that occur in nature
 - ancient Greek philosophers: observations can be accounted for by natural, not supernatural, explanations



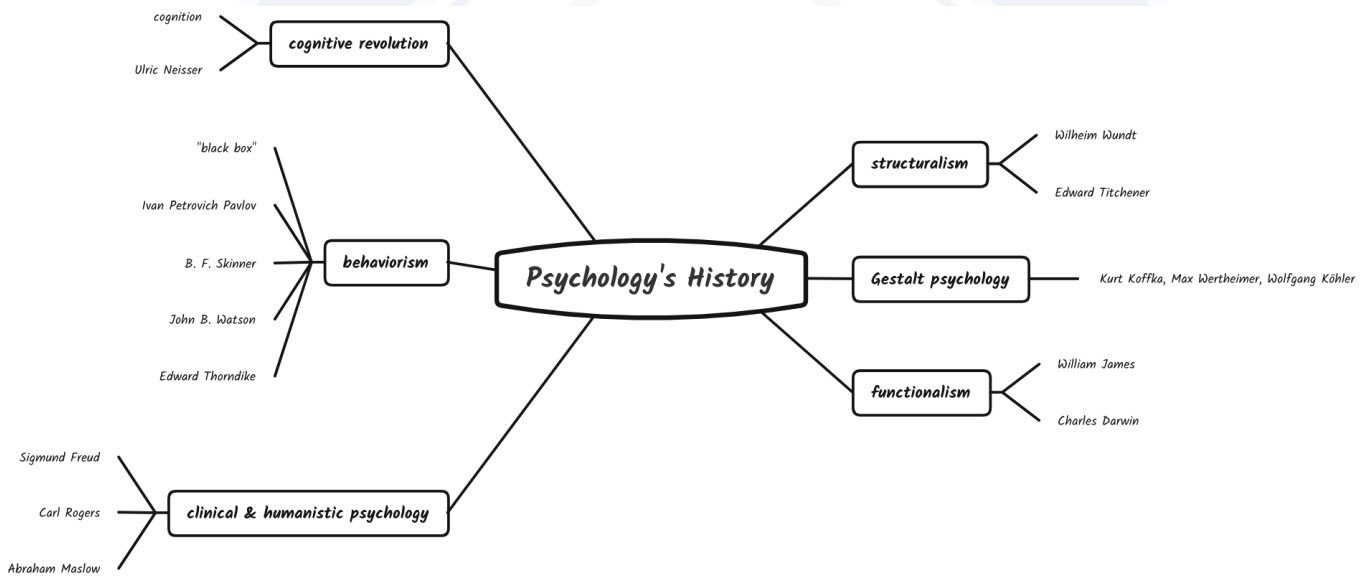
- 17-18th century natural scientists: mind is physical
- **Hermann von Helmholtz**: reaction time → physical mind

👉 Practice

Andy believes that Albert Einstein can be a successful scientist only because of his inborn qualities. How hard he has worked throughout his life does not matter. What perspective can best describe Andy's view on human nature?

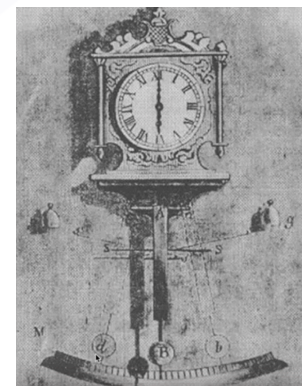
- A. Empiricism B. Nativism C. Naturalism D. Determinism

How Did the Science of Psychology Begin?



• **structuralism**: the mind could be **broken down** into the smallest elements of **mental experience**

- **Wilhelm Wundt**: the **first psychologist** who conducted the first documented psychological **experiment** in Germany (formally founded experimental psychology)
 - his “thought meter”, he refers reaction time as “mental chronometry”
 - **voluntarism**: the principle or system of doing



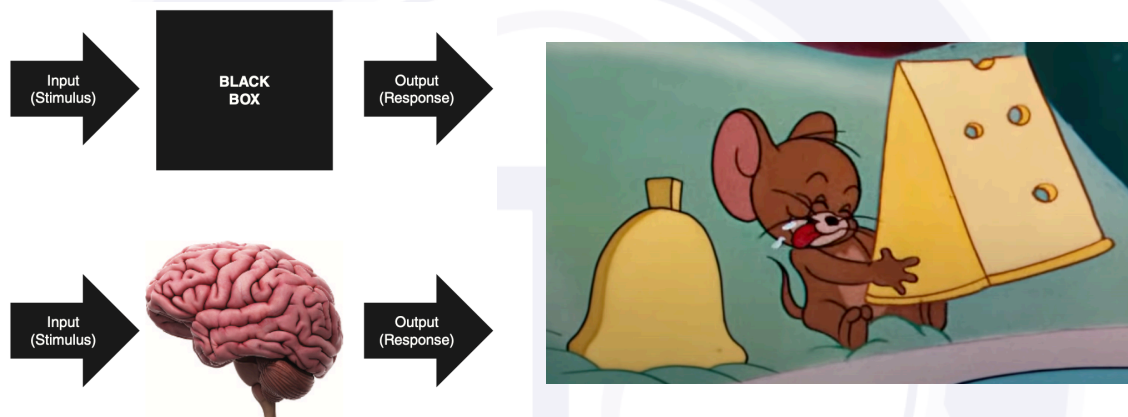


- something by or relying on voluntary action (**free will**)
- *Edward Titchener* expanded and officially **established** this theory
 - **Gestalt psychology**: experience is different from the sum of its elements
 - *Kurt Koffka, Max Wertheimer, and Wolfgang Köhler*
 - rejects structuralism: breaking a “whole” perception into its building blocks would result in the **loss** of some important psychological information
 - **“the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”**
 - **functionalism**: behaviour is **purposeful** and leads to **survival** and **reproduction** (the basis for evolutionary psychology)
 - “why behaviour and mental processes worked in a particular way?”
 - a response to *Charles Darwin’s The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*
 - **natural selection**: **adaptive** traits will be **selected** and help an organism to better survive and reproduce
 - *William James*: emphasized the role of evolution, stream of consciousness (the flow of ideas that people experience while awake)
 - *Sigmund Freud*: society has a **civilizing** function on the **otherwise** selfish and aggressive human
 - psychodynamic theory, unconsciousness, psychoanalysis (free association & dream analysis), the study of personality
 - greatly enhanced the public awareness of psychology
 - but his methods were not scientific, theories are based on observations of his patients, not falsifiable, his focus is too narrow and exaggerated
 - **humanistic psychology** sees people as **inherently good** and **motivate** to learn and improve, behave badly only when **corrupted** by society
 - *Abraham Maslow*: motivation





- **Carl Rogers** introduced **client-centered therapy**: the people receiving treatment are called clients rather than patients, reflecting their **equal** standing with the therapist and their **active** role in the therapy process
 - **unconditional positive regard**: showing **complete support** and **acceptance** of a person no matter what that person says or does
 - emphasis on **active listening** and the use of “**I hear** what you’re saying”
- **behaviourism** concentrate on **observable, measurable behaviours** (the mind as a “**black box**” that cannot be measured)



- **Ivan Petrovich Pavlov**'s **classical conditioning**: many of our emotional responses associated with environmental cues are the result of this type of learning
 - **experience** is the primary source of behaviour
- **John B. Watson** echoed the **black-slate** approach of the British empiricist philosophers in his emphasis on the role of experience in forming human behaviour
 - focus on the relationships between **environmental cues** and **behaviour**
 - product must be associated with an appealing image
- **Edward Thorndike** was interested in the effects of consequences on behaviour (derived from basic functionalism)



- **law of effect**: behaviours followed by **pleasant** or helpful outcomes would be **more likely** to occur in the future, whereas behaviours followed by **unpleasant** or harmful outcomes would be **less likely** to occur
- **B. F. Skinner's operant conditioning** (behaviour and outcome, reinforcement and punishment)
- **cognitive revolution**: cognition **can** be studied **scientifically**, and cognition **affects** our behaviour
 - **cognition** covers the **private** and **internal** mental processes, including information processing, thinking, reasoning, and problem solving
 - **Ulric Neisser** and his *Cognitive Psychology*

Practice

Like Carl Rogers, I believe people choose to live more creative and meaningful lives, my name is _____.

- A. Wertheimer B. James C. Skinner D. Maslow

What Are Psychological Perspectives?



- **biological psychology**/behavioral neuroscience focuses on the relationships between **mind and behaviour** and their underlying **biological** processes, including genetics, biochemistry, anatomy, and physiology
 - i.e., physical mechanisms associated with behaviour
 - **evolutionary psychology** investigates how physical



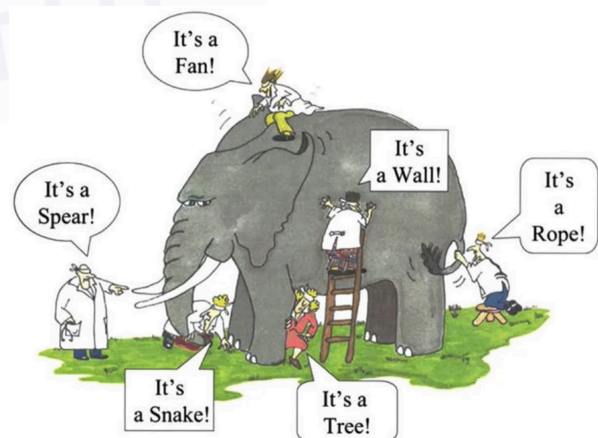


structure and behaviour have been **shaped** by their contributions to **survival** and **reproduction**

- **cognitive psychology** investigates **information processing**, **thinking**, **reasoning**, and problem solving
- **developmental psychology** explores the **normal** changes in behaviour that occur across the **life span**



- **social psychology** examines the effects of the **sociocultural context** and **biology** on the behaviour of individuals
 - **cultural diversity**: **variations** in the practices, values, and goals shared by **groups** of people
 - **personality**: an individual's **characteristic** way of thinking, feeling, and behaving
 - our perceptions and biases **filter** our experiences of the world through an imperfect personal lens
- **clinical psychology** seeks to explain, define, and treat **abnormal behaviours**
- **single** perspectives are **insufficient** for fully describing and explaining psychological phenomena
 - psychological, biological, social, and cultural factors influence behaviour and mental processes





- **comparative psychology** studies the similarities and differences in the behaviour of organisms
- some assumptions/biases of Western psychology
 - **individuality**: the individual is the focus of behaviour and the unit of analysis
 - **experiment-based empiricism**: emphasis on laboratory experiments (control & manipulation)
 - **quantification**: constructs should be able to be quantified and to be measured
 - **“objectivity”**: we should identify and understand the world in an unbiased way (however, it’s hard!)
 - **nomothetic** approach: psychologists looking for **generalized principles** that can be applied to various groups of people/situations
 - (White) male dominance in this discipline: favour particular topics, methods, and participants
- the clinical or counselling track includes extensive internships and supervised training prior to government-regulated licensure that usually add at least 1 year top students’ graduate studies
- PhDs or PsyDs: therapists with doctoral degrees in psychology
- MDs: psychiatrists who are medical doctors
 - can prescribe medication (but psychologists usually cannot)