Chapter 1
WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

Science of human behavior and mental processes

Section 1: Why Study Psychology?
Section 2: What Psychologists Do
Section 3: A History of Psychology
Section 4: Contemporary Perspectives
Chapter 1

Section 1: Why Study Psychology?

Behavior and Mental Processes

Behavior – any action that can be observed or measured.

Cognitive activities – mental processes such as dreams, perceptions, thoughts and memories.

Psychological constructs – things we cannot see, touch or measure directly.
CHAPTER 1

What is Psychology?

Goals of Psychology:
- Observe
- Describe
- Explain
- Control (change)
- Predict
Question: What are the goals of psychology, and how is psychology a science?

THE SCIENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is a social science but has its foundation in the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics).

It deals with the structure of human society and interactions of individuals who make up society.
Theory – attempts to explain why things are the way they are.

Principle – a rule, or law, such as: You will probably get better grades if you study more.

End Section 1
Homework – p. 6, #1-3
Question: What do psychologists do, and what are their areas of specialization?

PSYCHOLOGISTS
- Test - ideas using various research methods such as surveys and experimentation
- Consult - apply knowledge as therapy to help people change behaviors
- Teach
AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

- **Clinical** – largest group: help people with mental disorders, evaluate with interviews & testing. Work in prisons, hospitals, colleges, and private practice.

- **Counseling** – treat adjustment problems (decision-making, conflict with others) Businesses and colleges.

- **School** – identify and help students who have problems (home, peers, learning disorders) Give intelligence tests.
Question: What do psychologists do, and what are their areas of specialization?

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION (continued)

- **Educational** – focus on course planning and instructional methods; how students learn (motivation, emotions, beliefs, income level)

- **Developmental** – study changes that occur throughout a person’s life (cognitive, emotional, physical, social) Influences of heredity and environment on development. Challenges of adolescence.
Question: What do psychologists do, and what are their areas of specialization?

**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION (continued)**

- **Personality** – identify characteristics or traits (origins of psychological disorders) Anxiety, aggression, gender roles
- **Social** – behavior in social situations (attraction to others, conformity in groups, mob mentality, prejudice, aggression)
- **Experimental** – conduct research into basic processes (nervous system, thinking, memory, learning, perception)
Question: What do psychologists do, and what are their areas of specialization?

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION (continued)

- **Sports** - help athletes
- **Industrial and Organizational** – focus on people in work and business (improve conditions and output – applicant testing)
- **Environmental** – focus on ways in which people influence and are influenced by physical environment
- **Consumer** – study the behavior of shoppers to explain and predict behavior
Question: What do psychologists do, and what are their areas of specialization?

**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION (continued)**

- **Forensic** – are concerned with how psychological problems give rise to criminal behavior. (Is defendant competent?). Often hired by police depts.

- **Health** – study the ways in which behavior and mental processes are related to physical health

QuickTime Movie (4 min.) – “What is Psychology?”

End Section 2. Homework – p. 11, # 1-3
Question: How has the study of psychology developed over time?

PSYCHOLOGY DEVELOPED OVER TIME

- Began in ancient Greece
- Aristotle – “know thyself”
- introspection – looking within
- associationism – learned connection between ideas or events
- Ancient Greeks – confusion and madness punishment from gods
- Hippocrates – caused by brain abnormalities.
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Section 3: A History of Psychology

Question: How has the study of psychology developed over time?

PSYCHOLOGY DEVELOPED OVER TIME

- Middle Ages – possession by demons
  Water-float test – pure metals sink, impure float
- Revived during the scientific advances of the 1500s, 1600s and 1700s
- Contributions were made by modern psychologists such as:
  
  * *Wilhelm Wundt* – Structuralism (introspective - consciousness is objective sensations and subjective feelings)
Question: How has the study of psychology developed over time?

PSYCHOLOGY DEVELOPED OVER TIME

*William James* – Functionalism (observation and introspection – What are the purposes of behavior and mental processes?)

*John B. Watson* – Behaviorism (scientific study of observable behavior)

*B.F. Skinner* – Reinforcement (influences behaviors)

*Sigmund Freud* – Psychoanalysis (unconscious motives and internal conflicts) Freudian slip
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PSYCHOLOGY DEVELOPED OVER TIME

- Gestalt Psychology – learning is active and purposeful. Problem solving is accomplished by insight, not mechanical repetition

End Section 3. Homework – p. 17, # 1,3
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Section 4: Contemporary Perspectives

Question: What are the seven main contemporary perspectives in psychology?

SEVEN MAIN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES IN PSYCHOLOGY
(emphasize different topics of investigation and different approaches)

- Biological – influence of biology on behavior - nervous system, glands, hormones, genetic factors
- Evolutionary – evolution of behavior and mental processes – aggression has a hereditary basis
Question: What are the seven main contemporary perspectives in psychology? (continued)

- Cognitive – emphasizes thoughts in determining behavior – study of the mind – behavior influenced by values, perceptions, and choices

- Humanistic – self-concept and personal experiences most important factors – inner experiences not observable or measurable but vital to understanding human nature
Question: What are the seven main contemporary perspectives in psychology? (continued)

- Psychoanalytic – unconscious influences on human behavior
- Learning – effects of experience and observing others on behavior
- Sociocultural – influences of ethnicity, gender, culture, socioeconomic status on behavior and mental processes
## Contemporary Psychological Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>Key Assumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>Nervous system, glands and hormones, genetic factors</td>
<td>Biological processes influence behavior and mental processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Mental images, information processing, thinking, language</td>
<td>Perceptions and thoughts influence behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic</td>
<td>Subjective experience</td>
<td>People make free and conscious choices based on their unique experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoanalytic</td>
<td>Unconscious processes, early childhood experiences</td>
<td>Unconscious motives influence behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Environmental influences, habitual behavior, observational learning</td>
<td>Personal experience and reinforcement guide individual development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>Ethnicity, gender, culture, socioeconomic status</td>
<td>Sociocultural, biological, and psychological factors create individual differences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 1.3** Contemporary psychologists differ in their approaches to psychological thought. These six broad perspectives are the most common ways to view behavior today.

End Chapter 1. HW – p. 21, # 1,2 and p. 22, I.P.I and U.M.I, #1,2