

Introduction to Psychology

Introduction to Psychology – Study Notes

1. What Is Psychology?

- **Definition:** The scientific study of behavior and mental processes.
 - **Key Focuses:**
 - How we think, feel, and act.
 - Biological, social, and environmental influences on behavior.
 - **Goal:** Explain, predict, and sometimes change behavior and mental processes.
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2. Historical Foundations

Era / Figure	Main Contribution	Core Idea
Wilhelm Wundt (1879)	Established the first psychology lab in Leipzig	Psychology as an experimental science; introspection.
William James (1890)	<i>The Principles of Psychology</i>	Functionalism – mental processes serve adaptive purposes.
Sigmund Freud	Psychoanalytic theory	Unconscious mind, psychosexual stages, defense mechanisms.
John B. Watson (1913)	Behaviorism	Observable behavior is the proper subject of psychology.
B.F. Skinner	Operant conditioning	Behavior shaped by reinforcement & punishment.
Jean Piaget	Cognitive development	Stages of mental development in children.
Carl Rogers	Humanistic psychology	Person-centered therapy, self-actualization.
Albert Bandura	Social-cognitive theory	Learning through observation; self-efficacy.
Cognitive Revolution (1950s-60s)	Shift back to mental processes	Information-processing models, memory, perception.

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3. Major Sub?Fields

Sub?field	What It Studies	Typical Methods
Biological / Neuropsychology	Brain structures, neurotransmitters, genetics	fMRI, EEG, lesion studies
Cognitive Psychology	Perception, memory, language, problem solving	Experiments, reaction?time tasks
Developmental Psychology	Changes across the lifespan	Longitudinal & cross?sectional studies
Social Psychology	Attitudes, group dynamics, prejudice	Surveys, lab simulations, field experiments
Clinical / Counseling Psychology	Assessment & treatment of mental illness	Psychotherapy, diagnostic interviews
Industrial?Organizational (I?O) Psychology	Workplace behavior, personnel selection	Job analyses, psychometrics
Health Psychology	Interaction of behavior & health	Epidemiological surveys, interventions
Educational Psychology	Learning processes, instructional design	Classroom observations, assessments

4. Research Methods

Method	Description	Strengths	Limitations
Experimental	Manipulate independent variable, control extraneous variables	Causal inference, high internal validity	May lack ecological realism
Correlational	Measure relationship between two variables	Useful for naturalistic data	No causation, possible third?variable problem
Observational	Systematic watching of behavior (naturalistic or lab)	Real?world relevance	Observer bias, limited control

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Method	Description	Strengths	Limitations
Survey / Questionnaire	Self-report of attitudes, experiences	Large samples, cost-effective	Social desirability, recall bias
Case Study	In-depth analysis of a single individual or group	Rich detail, hypothesis generation	Poor generalizability
Neuroimaging	Brain activity measurement (fMRI, PET, EEG)	Direct link to neural processes	Expensive, complex interpretation

5. Core Concepts & Terminology

- **Behavior:** Any observable action or response.
- **Mental Processes:** Thoughts, emotions, motivations, perceptions (internal, not directly observable).
- **Nature**