**Chapter 1**

**PSYCHOLOGY: YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Define psychology, and describe the goals and levels of analysis psychologists use.

2. Describe the influences of early myths and ancient Greek philosophies on psychology.

3. Name important early psychologists and describe their major theories and research methods.

4. Summarize the major principles of the psychoanalytical, behaviourist, humanistic, cognitive, and neuroscience approaches to psychology.

5. Describe the three major branches of psychology and summarize key trends in psychology.

**LECTURE OUTLINE**

I. What Is Psychology?

a. Psychology is the study of mental processes and behaviour.

b. The goals of psychology are to:

i. Describe behaviour and mental processes.

ii. Explain behaviour and mental processes.

iii. Predict behaviour and mental processes.

iv. Control behaviour and mental processes.

c. The study of psychology occurs at multiple levels

i. The brain – biological activity associated with mental processes and behaviour

ii. The person – the content of mental processes

iii. The group – the social and cultural influences on behaviour

II. Psychology’s Roots in Philosophy

a. Early explanations of psychology were rooted in superstition and magic.

b. Beginning with the ancient Greeks, philosophers tried to develop more objective theories of human consciousness and reality.

i. Philosophy is the study of knowledge and reality.

ii. Philosophers’ methods of introducing problems and questioning solutions are the core of today’s scientific method.

c. The works of early philosophers contributed to the later formation of psychology as a natural science.

i. Hippocrates produced one of the first psychological theories, that of the humours.

ii. Socrates and Plato believed that “truth” lies in the mind and is highly dependent on our perceived or subjective states.

iii. Aristotle’s writings dealt with topics important to psychology: sensation, dreams, sleep, and learning.

iv. Aristotle was also one of the first to promote empirical investigations of the natural world.

v. Muller sought to understand how humans process sensory information.

vi. Von Helmholtz was the first to measure the speed of a nerve impulse and laid a part of the foundation for modern physiological psychology and neuroscience.

vii. Fechner published a book that laid out many of the methods and study techniques that would come to be used by those working in psychology.

viii. Rene Descartes thought the brain controlled the body through the movement of fluid through tubes that ran throughout the body.

ix. Psychophysicists began to explain how our bodies sense and perceive the world around us.

x. Charles Darwin proposed the theory of evolution by natural selection.

III. The Early Days of Psychology

a. The development of psychology has been strongly influenced by shifts in the social environment and development of new technology.

b. The first psychology laboratory was founded in Leipzig, German by physiologist Wilhelm Wundt.

i. Wundt was interested in human consciousness and will.

ii. Wundt studied his subjects through use of small, structured activities that could be easily watched and replicated.

c. James Mark Baldwin established the first psychology lab in the British Empire in Toronto.

d. Edward Titchener, one of Wundt’s students, expanded on Wundt’s work and founded the school of structuralism in the United States.

i. Structuralists relied on a method originated by Wundt, known as introspection, which means “looking inward.”

ii. Introspection was aimed at carefully observing the details of mental processing in order to find the building blocks of consciousness.

e. William James established the first psychology laboratory in the United States at Harvard University.

i. James’s approach was called functionalism, which focused on what the mind did and not how it was put together or how it worked.

ii. Functionalism emphasized the need for research to include animals, children, and persons with mental disorders, so as to understand normal and abnormal psychological functioning.

f. Gestalt psychology was founded in Germany.

i. Based on the idea that our inborn tendencies to impose structure on what we see cause us to perceive the “whole” or “form” of something and not its parts.

ii. Gestalt psychologists developed over 100 perceptual principles to describe how the brain and sensory systems perceive environmental stimuli.

IV. Twentieth-Century Approaches

a. Psychoanalysis

i. The psychology of the unconscious

ii. Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory focused on the importance of unconscious mental processes.

iii. Freud believed that childhood experiences help set the stage for later psychological functioning.

iv. Psychoanalytic notions have not held up well to rigorous scientific study, yet remain an influential theory of mental functioning and personality.

b. Behaviourism

i. The psychology of adaptation

ii. Behaviourists believed strongly that psychology should restrict its focus to the careful study of observable behaviour.

iii. Major behaviourists were Ivan Pavlov, Edward Thorndike, John Watson, and B. F. Skinner.

iv. The work of the behaviourists, especially B. F. Skinner and his emphasis on the role of reinforcement in shaping behaviour, have been widely used in industry, education, and the military.

c. Humanistic Psychology

i. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow rejected the behaviourists’ approach as too mechanical a view of people.

ii. Emphasized the individual’s potential for growth and self-actualization.

iii. Rogers developed a humanistic approach to psychotherapy called client-centred therapy.

d. Cognitive Psychology

i. Revitalized the study of the mind in the years after World War II.

ii. Compared the workings of the mind to the workings of the computer.

iii. Early founders of the cognitive school were George A. Miller, Donald Herb, and Ulrich Neisser.

iv. Cognitive psychologists focused on the functioning of cognitive mechanisms.

v. Cultural psychology is concerned with the varying cognitive processes of diverse populations.

vi. Cross-cultural research uses cognitive experimental methods.

e. Psychobiology

i. Explores the origins of the mind.

ii. Aristotle, Pavlov, and Freud were interested in the biological bases of psychological phenomena.

iii. The main emphasis of psychobiology is on the workings of the brain and genetic inheritance.

iv. Karl Lashley and Roger Sperry have been at the forefront of learning the basis of cognitive functions of the brain. The Canadian Donald Hebb postulated that neurons must fire together to wire together. He provided the theoretical basis for understanding brain development and neuroplasticity.

v. Psychology has spawned the subfields of behavioural genetics, sociobiology, and evolutionary psychology.

V. Psychology Today

a. The theoretical and cultural diversity of psychology has increased dramatically over the recent years.

b. There are three key branches of psychology: academic, applied, and clinical/counselling.

i. Academic psychology involves research and instruction.

ii. Applied psychology involves the application of psychological principles to solve practical problems in education, marketing, and industry.

iii. Clinical and counselling psychology help individuals cope more effectively or overcome abnormal functioning.

1. Clinical psychologists (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) provide psychotherapy and administer tests and assessments.

2. Counselling psychologists (Ph.D., Psy.D.) and psychiatric social workers (M.S.W. or D.S.W.) help families and individuals deal with life issues.

3. Psychiatrists are medical doctors (M.D.) who prescribe medications for abnormal behaviour.

c. Psychologists in all branches and specialty areas are united by their shared values that psychology be theory-driven, multi-level, and contextual.

d. The diversity in psychology as well as advances in technology (such as brain imaging techniques) have led to the development of new schools and fields of psychology such as cognitive neuroscience and positive psychology.

**LECTURE STARTERS AND EXTENSIONS**

1. Is Freud dead?

Most students will likely have preconceived notions about Sigmund Freud and his theories. Begin a discussion by asking what they think of when they think of Freud. Supplement their responses with questions that require a show of hands. How many have called someone “anal”? What does the term “anal” mean to them? How many have heard of the term “oral fixation”? What does the term mean them? How many have ever said or ever heard said that someone “married his mother” or “married her father.” These stock statements are part of our culture and show just how much Freudian theories have seeped into the mainstream. While Freudian theories may be open to criticism from researchers and others, it cannot be denied that most of us incorporate “Freudianisms” into our talk about others--maybe even ourselves, proving that Freud is not dead by any meaning of the term. You may wish to review the November 29, 1993 article from Time Magazine, “The Assault on Freud” by Paul Gray and others. The issue of the magazine, with features on mental illness and treatment, has a picture of Freud on the cover with the caption, “Is Freud Dead?” If you have computer access in the classroom, you can access the cover and show it as you discuss the issue and/or the article. The cover is at: <http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19931129,00.html> Note that a poster of the cover can be purchased. What does that tell us about interest in Freud?

You may also refer to Time Magazine’s March 29, 1999 issue naming the one hundred most important people of the twentieth century, in which Freud made the list under “Scientists and Thinkers.” Mention that another psychologist who made the list is Jean Piaget, whom we will be discussing in later chapters. <http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19990329,00.html>

Tell the students that you will be discussing Freud in more detail in chapters about memory and repressed memories, personality development, and mental illness and treatment. While his version of psychoanalysis is a dying art, the concept of the “talking cure” is one that has been incorporated into all the talk therapies in existence today, regardless of the school or training of the therapist.

2. Psychology in the Movies

The subject of psychology and psychologists (especially treatment) continues to be a popular theme for movies. This affinity for the topic indicates the significance of psychology for popular culture. Ask students if they can name any movies that have overtly psychological themes at the centre of the film. They may mention (or if they don’t, you may): What About Bob (a hilarious depiction of a therapist and patient), Good Will Hunting (angry young man is helped by therapy—there is even a scene in the movie where a popular psychology textbook is displayed on the therapist’s coffee table!), Antwone Fisher (angry young Navy man ordered to have psychiatric treatment to deal with his anger; during treatment he gets in touch with his abused childhood, setting the stage for healing and recovery. Note that this is a true story.), and Analyze This! and Analyze That! (hilarious comedies parodying treatment for members of the mob). You and your students, given some time, will be able to come up with scores of your own titles. You may mention that the popular HBO series, The Sopranos, features a psychologist. In fact, the plot line is often carried by Tony Soprano’s (James Gandolfini’s) visits with his therapist. Of course, thousands of movies portray psychological issues if not overtly, then covertly. Ask why this is? It is because psychology is about everything that makes us human—all human thought, behaviour, and actions are, on some level, explainable with psychological theories.

3. In Search of Ourselves

Although it may take too much class time to show the entire film (2 hours long), obtain the PBS- produced video from the NOVA series, In Search of Ourselves, narrated by Charles Osgood. It presents the history of psychology in the context of searching for explanations about general and specific issues related to human behaviour. The video is set up so that you can show it in segments if you wish. The video begins with the story of Phineas Gage and goes up to the search for clues to human behaviour in biological and genetic models. Some of the most riveting segments deal with Freud and his discovery of psychoanalysis, the early hospitals for the “insane” in France, how the quest for an explanation for “shell shock” (now known as post-traumatic stress syndrome) in World War I warriors validated Freud’s “talking cure,” and the discovery of medications to treat mental illness. All the major discoveries of psychology (including the work of B. F. Skinner) are portrayed in chronological fashion. Watch the movie yourself first and develop a series of questions you wish students to answer as they watch. The video is available for purchase online at amazon.com and other sites, or you may ask your library to order it. A detailed overview/outline of the program is at this site, along with other teaching resources: [www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/programs/0000\_asoinsea.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/programs/0000_asoinsea.html)

**CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

1. What’s My Line? or Psychology Charades

Create handouts on paper or index cards that have the name of important names in psychology referenced in Chapter 1. As an in-class or take-home activity (depending on the time you have), have students individually, or in groups, write identifying features or scenarios on the back of the handouts that best capture the essence of the person. Then, in class, either play a game like “What’s My Line?,” in which students read the descriptions and have classmates identify them or, to make it harder, play a variant on Charades, where students have to act out what they wrote. Choose the target game before you assign the work, as the descriptions will have to be much more concrete if you are going to play Charades. This website featuring brief biographies of famous figures in psychology may be useful for framing the descriptions. <http://allpsych.com/biographies/index.html>

You might consider bringing a token prize for the winner of the game, which should be the student who correctly chooses the right answer the most time. Suggested names:

Socrates

Plato

Aristotle

Charles Darwin

William Wundt

Edward Titchener

William James

Sigmund Freud

Carl Jung

Ivan Pavlov

Edward Thorndike

James Watson

B. F. Skinner

Albert Bandura

Carl Rogers

Abraham Maslow

Karl Lashley

2. Individualistic vs. Collectivistic Cultures

The movie Mr. Baseball, starring Tom Selleck, is an excellent venue for getting students to see and discuss the differences in individualist vs. collectivistic cultures. Rent or purchase the video and select clips to show to the class that show Selleck running up against the cultural differences. Selleck has to learn the Japanese way, which values the group over the individual. Lead a class discussion of the virtues of each culture, not just in the context of baseball, but in everyday life.

3. See the activities below under Out-of-Class Activities and Assignments, which have in-class components. You can generate some great discussions about theories and how to apply them by using the outcomes of the students’ out-of-class activities.

**OUT-OF-CLASS ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS**

1. TV Talk Shows and Psychological Disorders

Assign students to watch at least one television or radio talk show (many are available online) that deal with a problem behaviour. Oprah, Judge Judy, and Dr. Phil have great potential. Ask students to write a brief essay in which they discuss the problematic behaviour that was the topic of the show or segment and to choose one theory that best explains that behaviour. Here is their chance to play amateur psychologist. They need to point to concrete behaviours and show specifically how one theory, for example behaviourism, explains the behaviour. Ask students to share their work with the class. Generate a class discussion in which you identify which theories were most prominent in students’ explanations. Ask students what this tells them about the theories that were at the top of the list?

2. What Theory Best Explains Your Behaviour?

Have students choose any of their own behaviours that they do often, or that is indicative of their personality. Suggestions: playing with their hair, biting nails, incessant worrying, smoking, over-eating, drinking too much, addictive behaviour relating to playing video games, spending time on Facebook, texting, cell phone usage, or anything else they feel comfortable discussing or writing about. Ask them to attempt to explain the behaviour in a 2-3 page essay, using at least three of the major psychological theories. Encourage some of them to share their “findings” with the class, being careful to steer clear of behaviours that would be overly embarrassing or incriminating. Generate a class discussion in which you identify which theories were most prominent in students’ explanations. Ask students what this tells them about the theories that were at the top of the list?

3. Brave New World

Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel, "Brave New World", which offers a grim view of a future society shaped by eugenics and behaviourism, provides a good opportunity to discuss these issues. Is also gives students the opportunity to examine the historical context in which Huxley wrote. Note that this assignment works well if you show related segments to the reaction against behaviourism and eugenics from the video, In Search of Ourselves. Have students read the first two chapters of "Brave New World" (about 30 pages, available online at [www.huxley.net/bnw/](http://www.huxley.net/bnw/)). Ask them to answer the following questions in a brief essay: What roles do eugenics and behavioural conditioning play in the society Huxley portrays? What predictions did he make about how these new theories would influence society? In what ways does the society Huxley envisions resemble our own? In what ways is it different?

4. Movies and Psychology

Assign one or more of the popular movies listed below (or have students suggest a movie for approval) on which students will write a 5-6 page paper analyzing the psychological content for the theories of behaviour or approaches to treatment portrayed in the movie. Make sure that the movie chosen is overtly about psychology or treatment, and does not just have psychology or treatment as a side story.

**WEB RESOURCES**

American Psychological Association

[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

APA Style Crib Sheet

[www.psywww.com/resource/APA%20Research%20Style%20Crib%20Sheet.htm](http://www.psywww.com/resource/APA%20Research%20Style%20Crib%20Sheet.htm)

Archives of the History of American Psychology (AHAP)

[www3.uakron.edu/ahap](http://www3.uakron.edu/ahap/)

Association for Psychological Science

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/>

Canadian Psychological Association

<http://www.cpa.ca/>

Classics in the History of Psychology

<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/topic.htm>

Encyclopedia of Psychology

[www.psychology.org](http://www.psychology.org/)

Interactive Psychology Timeline from 1975 to 2005

[www.learner.org/discoveringpsychology/history/timeline.103.swf](http://www.learner.org/discoveringpsychology/history/timeline.103.swf)

Positive Psychology Center Online Research Program

[www.ppresearch.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.ppresearch.sas.upenn.edu/)

Psych Central

<http://psychcentral.com/>

Psychology Areas of Specialization

<http://mypages.valdosta.edu/mwhatley/career/>

Psychology Biographies

<http://allpsych.com/biographies/index.html>

Psychology Timeline from 387 B.C. to 2002

<http://allpsych.com/timeline.html>

Scholarly Psychology Resources Online

[www.psywww.com/resource/bytopic.htm](http://www.psywww.com/resource/bytopic.htm)

Young Dr. Freud

[www.pbs.org/youngdrfreud/](http://www.pbs.org/youngdrfreud/)

**PRINT RESOURCES**

Gray, Peter; Blackman, Ann; Hillenbrand, Barry, Horowitz, Janice M., & Ivry, Benjamin. (1993). The assault on Freud. Time November 29, 1993.

Gay, Peter. (1998). Freud: A Life for Our Times. New York: W.W. Norton.

Gay, Peter. (1999). Sigmund Freud. Time, March 29, 1999. Available online at

Goodwin, James G. (Ed.) (2009). Annotated Readings in the History of Modern Psychology. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Hunt, Morton. (2007). The Story of Psychology. New York: Anchor.

O’Donohue, William & Ferguson, Kyle. (2001). The Psychology of B. F. Skinner. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Seligman, Martin E.P. (2006). Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life. New York: Vintage.

**VIDEO RESOURCES**

Discovering Psychology: Past, Present, and Promise. Video discusses the history and future of psychology. Videos and teaching resources available online: [www.learner.org/resources/series138.html](http://www.learner.org/resources/series138.html)

Discovering Psychology: Cultural Psychology. Video explores the use of cultural research in fields of psychology. Videos and teaching resources available online: [www.learner.org/resources/series138.html](http://www.learner.org/resources/series138.html)

A Science Odyssey: In Search of Ourselves. Video from the PBS NOVA series traces the history of psychology from its earliest days to the present. Teaching resources and video outline available at:

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/programs/0000\_asoinsea.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/programs/0000_asoinsea.html)

Young Doctor Freud. Video presents Freud’s life from his birth in 1856 to the publication of his landmark book, The Interpretation of Dreams, in 1900. With Freud's own words, vivid recreations, and the commentary of psychoanalysts and scholars, this two-part special examines how Freud created the revolutionary theories that have become part of the fabric of 20th-century life and thought, shaping contemporary notions of identity, memory, childhood, and sexuality. Available for purchase at: [www.shoppbs.org](http://www.shoppbs.org)

Companion website for the video: [www.pbs.org/youngdrfreud/](http://www.pbs.org/youngdrfreud/)

Popular Movies

As Good As It Gets

Analyze That

Analyze This

Antwone Fisher

What About Bob

The Sopranos (A TV series available on DVD)

What About Bob?

Good Will Hunting

Mr. Baseball

Girl, Interrupted

Matchstick Men

Adaptation

The Deer Hunter

Black Swan

Shutter Island

Side Effects

Inception

A Beautiful Mind

Note: The website [imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) is a great source of lists of movies that highlight themes in different branches of psychology, including psychopathology and social psychology.

One list of psychological movies can be found at <http://www.imdb.com/list/ls000061805/>. Beware, some of these movies on this list are not for the faint of heart and fall into the genre of horror movies.