Complete Psychology

Take out your notebook, date your page and explain the following in detail:

How do you shake hands?

Wait for more directions.

While you are waiting:

•Write down your objectives from the board:

•Put signed papers on your desk (if you have not turned them in)

•Put your homework on your desk.

HISTORY AND APPROACHES TO PSYCHOLOGY
(2% TO 4%) OF THE AP EXAM

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

• Recognize how philosophical and physiological perspectives shaped the development of psychological thought.

• Describe and compare different theoretical approaches in explaining behavior:
— structuralism, functionalism, and behaviorism in the early years;
— Gestalt, psychoanalytic/psychodynamic, and humanism emerging later;
— evolutionary, biological, cognitive, and biopsychosocial as more contemporary approaches.
• Recognize the strengths and limitations of applying theories to explain behavior.
• Distinguish the different domains of psychology (e.g., biological, clinical, cognitive, counseling, developmental, educational, experimental, human factors, industrial–organizational, personality, psychometric, social).

• Identify major historical figures in psychology (e.g., Mary Whiton Calkins, Charles Darwin, Dorothea Dix, Sigmund Freud, G. Stanley Hall, William James, Ivan Pavlov, Jean Piaget, Carl Rogers, B. F. Skinner, Margaret Floy Washburn, John B. Watson, Wilhelm Wundt).

Psychology has evolved markedly since its inception as a discipline in 1879.

There have been significant changes in the theories that psychologists use to explain behavior and mental processes.

In addition, the methodology of psychological research has expanded to include a diversity of approaches to data gathering.

Issues to Consider

- A brief history of psychology
    - before psychology
    - the emergence of psychology
    - early schools of psychology
- Theoretical approaches
    - Behaviorist
    - Psychodynamic
    - Humanistic
    - Cognitive
    - Physiological
    - Social Constructionist

A Brief History of Psychology

'Psychology has a long past,
but its real history is short.'
Ebbinghaus (1908)

Before Psychology

- Does psychology go back to the Ancient Greeks?
- Certainly it was shaped by Enlightenment philosophy (e.g. Descartes, Locke, Hobbes)
- However, others also asked about human nature, for example theologians and educators
- These questions were all forms of *reflexive discourse*
- Psychology emerged as a new kind of reflexive discourse, using science to find answers
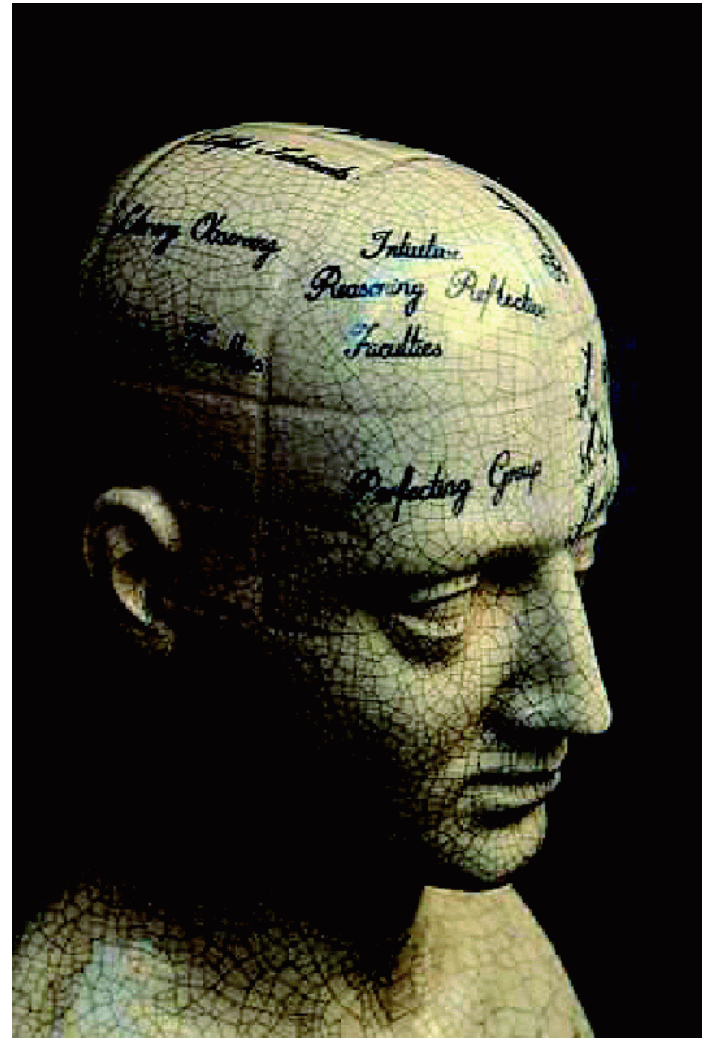
The Emergence of Psychology (1)

- Psychology is usually described as beginning with the opening of an experimental lab by Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig in 1879
- However, it's more realistic to see psychology as emerging gradually over the course of the 19th century
- Psychology emerged as a logical progression from attempts to use science to answer questions about human nature

The Emergence of Psychology (2)

- Psychology had a number of forerunners (people before Wundt)
- These included advances in understanding the brain and in experimental physiology
- Other forerunners included *faculty psychology* and *phrenology*

Phrenology

http://www.phrenology.org/intro.html

The Emergence of Psychology (3)

- Scientific psychology became possible with the acceptance of evolutionary thought, particularly Darwin's *The Origin of Species*
- This located humanity within the animal kingdom, and hence in the realm of natural science
- Evolutionary thought led particularly to forms of adaptational psychology, individual difference psychology, and comparative psychology

The Early Schools of Psychology

- Psychology quickly diversified from the late 19th century, leading to a number of distinct schools:
    - *Structuralism*, which investigated the structure of the mind
    - *Functionalism*, which investigated the adaptive functions of the mind
    - *Behaviourism*, which emphasised the role of the environment in guiding behaviour
    - *Gestalt*, which emphasised holistic aspects of mental processing
    - *Psychoanalysis*, which emphasised the role of unconscious forces in shaping behaviour

Theoretical Approaches

- Since the 1950s, psychologists have adopted a number of diverse approaches to understanding human nature and behaviour
- These different approaches include:
  - Psychoanalytic
  - Cognitive
  - Humanism
  - Neuroscience
  - Evolutionary
  - Sociocultural

Ways of Explaining

- Different approaches exist because there are different ways of explaining phenomena
- For example, emotions can be explained in terms of the thoughts associated with them or the physiological changes they produce
- Psychologists try to explain psychological phenomena from a range of different perspectives, and so use different approaches

Biological Approach

- Behavior understood by describing underlying biochemical and neurological causes
- **Based on:** An organism's functioning can be explained in terms of the bodily structures and bio chemical processes that underlie behavior
- Reductionist: Observable behaviors reduced to psysiological explanations
- Roger Sperry: won Nobel Prize for his split-brain research
- Other Principal Contributors: James Olds, David Hubel, Torsten Wiesel

Cognitive Approach

- Orgins can be traced to Gestalt psychology, as cognitive psychologists study **thoughts and mental processes**
- **Based on:** Human behavior cannot be fully understood without examining how people acquire, store, and process information.
- Significant contributions made in the areas of language, thought, and memory
- Prominent figues include Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget, Herbert Simon, and Noam Chomsky

Humanistic Approach

- Emerged in the 1950s
- **Based on:** Humans are free, rational beings with the potential for personal growth, and they are fundamentally different from animals
- opposed the determinism of behaviorism and psychoanalysis (believed too much emphasis placed on "rat studies" in the understanding of human behavior
- Emphasized the inherent goodness of human beings
- Developed methods of psychotherapy consistent with their views
- Prominent figures include Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, and Gordon Allport

Psychoanalytic Approach

- Developed by Sigmund Freud (other contributors include: Carl Jung & Alfred Adler)
- **Based on:** Unconscious motives and experiences in early childhood govern personality and mental disorders.
- Downside of Theory - not based on experimental evidence; many aspects of Freud's psychoanalytic theory are untestable
- Influential on American psychology

The Behavioral Approach

Based on: Only observable events (stimulus-response relations) can be studied scientifically. Emphasizes the importance of the environment

- Rejects the investigation of internal mental processes
- Behavior is the result of learned associations between stimuli and responses to them
- The main theories are of classical (Pavlov) and operant (Skinner) conditioning

The Behaviorist Approach

Evaluation:

- Its practical focus has led to useful applications
- It has influenced theory development, e.g. in the **area of learning**
- It developed a standard scientific methodology, through the use of hypothesis testing and experimental control
- It's criticized for being mechanistic (ignoring mental processes) and overly environmentally determinist (it ignores biology)

Behavioral Approach

- **First described by John B. Watson, 1913**
- **Emphasized environmental determinants of behavior**
  - Role of heredity greatly deemphasized but not totally denied
  - Environment can be manipulated to change behavior, whereas heredity cannot
- Deal with directly observable behaviors
  - Explain behavior by assessing the effects of external stimuli
  - Behavior is determined by the occurrence of external events
- B.F. Skinner: Prominent advocate for this approach

The Psychodynamic Approach
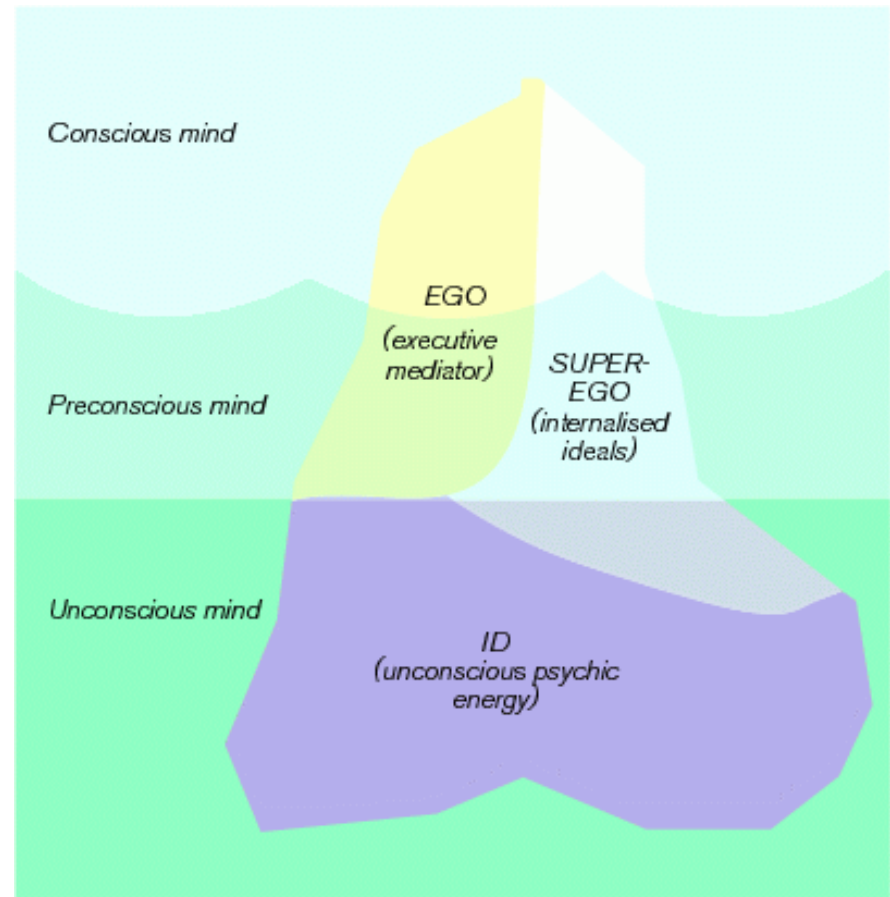
Key features (1):

- Mind has 3 parts: conscious, unconscious and preconscious
  - conscious: thoughts and perceptions
  - preconscious: available to consciousness, e.g. memories and stored knowledge
  - unconscious: wishes and desires formed in childhood, biological urges. Determines most of behaviour
- Personality has 3 components - id, ego & superego
  - id: unconscious, urges needing instant gratification
  - ego: develops in childhood, rational. Chooses between id and external demands
  - superego: conscience, places restrictions on behaviour

The Psychodynamic Approach

Key features (2):

- Freud's 'mental iceberg' view of the mind

Conscious mind

EGO
(executive mediator)

SUPER-EGO
(internalised ideals)

Preconscious mind

Unconscious mind

ID
(unconscious psychic energy)

Five Finger Mnemonic

- Thumb – Psychoanalytic
- Pointer – Cognitive
- Middle Finger – Behaviorism (Learning)
- Ring Finger – Humanism – needs support
- Pinky – Neuroscience(Pinky and the Brain)

Cross-cultural Approach

- How behavior and thinking vary across situations and cultures

- Discuss – How are we as – Africans, Asians, Europeans – alike as members of one human family?
- How are we different?

Evolutionary Approach

- How does evolution influence behavior tendencies?
- Focus – How the natural selection of traits promotes the perpetuation of one's genes.

The Psychodynamic Approach

Key features (3):

Psychosexual stages of development

- Develop through stages in childhood
  - Oral (0−18 months)
  - Anal (18 months−3 years)
  - Phallic (3−6 years)
  - Latent (6 yrs−puberty)
  - Genital (puberty onwards)
- At each stage, libido is focused on different part of body
- Failure to progress (fixating) causes neuroses

The Psychodynamic Approach

Key features (4):

- Ego mediates conflict between id, ego, superego
  - defence mechanisms include repression, displacement, denial, reaction formation
  - repression pushes stuff into unconscious, but it exerts influence from there, may cause problems
- Cure neuroses by bringing material from unconscious to conscious
  - free association
  - dream analysis

The Psychodynamic Approach

Evaluation:

Significant impact:

- theories of personality, motivation, development
- therapeutic techniques in clinical and counselling psychology
- captured the popular imagination, providing an accessible framework for everyday understanding

Unscientific?

- methodologically poor
- untestable (e.g. concept of denial)

Limited impact on scientific psychology

The Humanistic Approach

Key features (1):

- Rejects determinism, and emphasises free will
- Rejects the positivism of science (investigating others as detached objective observers)
- Investigates phenomena from the subjective experience of individuals
- An emphasis on *holism*: the need to study the whole person

The Humanistic Approach

Key features (2):

- People strive for 'actualisation'
  - Rogers: the self-concept consists of a perceived self and an ideal self. Psychological health is achieved when the two match
  - Maslow: people have a hierarchy of needs. The goal of psychological growth is to meet the need to achieve self-actualisation

The Humanistic Approach

Evaluation:
- Considerable influence on counselling
  - development of client-centred therapy
  - helped establish counselling as an independent profession
  - development of research techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment
- Unscientific
- Limited impact on mainstream psychology
- Limited evidence for theories

The Cognitive Approach

Key features:
- The main approach to experimental psychology
  - in cognitive psychology, which investigates memory, language, perception, problem solving
  - but also used for other areas, e.g. social, developmental
- Emphasises active mental processes
  - the brain is seen as an information processor, using the analogy of mind to computers
  - mental processes are based on discrete modules
- Uses experimental methods, but also computer modelling and neuropsychology

The Cognitive Approach

Evaluation (1):

- Has had a significant impact across experimental psychology
- Has led to useful applications, e.g. cognitive therapy
- Has introduced a range of rigorous research methods
  - can compare results from different methods, and so have more faith in research findings

The Cognitive Approach

Evaluation (2):
- Lacks 'ecological validity'
  - based on artificial laboratory research
  - but do the results apply to the 'real world'?
- Has no overall framework
  - there are separate theories in different areas, but there is no one framework for explaining cognition
- Doubts about the underlying metaphor
  - is the mind really like a computer?

The Physiological Approach

Key features:

- Investigates:
  - brain function in healthy and impaired individuals
  - brain chemistry and psychology, e.g. serotonin & mood
  - genes and psychology, e.g. twin studies & intelligence
- The common assumption is that biology underlies behaviour
- Reductionist and deterministic
  - reductionist: explanations at a more basic level
  - deterministic: behaviour directly determined by biology

The Physiological Approach

Evaluation (1):
- Productive
  - has provided explanations in a range of areas of psychology, e.g. mental health, individual differences, social behaviour
  - has provided therapeutic interventions, e.g. drug treatments for depression
- Popular
  - has caught the public imagination
  - genetic theories provide an accessible framework for understanding ourselves

The Physiological Approach

Evaluation (2):

- Overly reductionist
  - it seems to replace explanations at a psychological level
- Problems with evolutionary explanations
  - they ignore or underplay the effects of the environment
  - they may 'naturalise' behaviours that should be discouraged, e.g. sexual violence
  - there is often limited evidence for evolutionary theories

Social Constructionist Approach

Key features:
- Challenges mainstream psychology
  - methodologically, in that it is anti-scientific
  - politically, in that it is anti-status quo
- Believes we construct our view of the world through social interaction
- Believes our constructions affect our actions
  - e.g. construction of 'female' affects view of female behaviour
- Investigates our constructions of the world through the analysis of language

Social Constructionist Approach

Evaluation:
- It emphazises the complexity of human behavior
- It has close links with other disciplines, e.g. sociology
- Its challenge to the status quo has led to change, e.g. in views of homosexuality
- It is anti-scientific and overly subjective
- The theories it produces are constructions of the psychologist