

# Psychology

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- Definition: Scientific study of behavior and mental processes and how they are affected by an organisms' physical state, mental state, and environment.
- Main Goals:
  - Describe: different ways organisms behave.
  - Understand: causes of behavior.
  - Predict: how organisms will behave in certain situations.
  - Control: modify behavior by changing conditions.

# Psychology as a Social Science

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All encourage us to analyze human problems objectively and search for reliable patterns of behavior: look for similarities and differences among groups.

# Psychology as a Social Science

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- Sociology: The study of groups and institutions within society, family, religious institutions, workplace, and social cliques.
- Social Psychology: Study how individuals' behavior is effected by social and group
- Anthropology: Studies physical and cultural origins of development of the human race, focus on entire society (Evolutionary Theory)
- Most psychologists study only their own society and specific behavior.

# Psychology as a Science

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Of all of the social sciences psychology relies most heavily on lab research. It most always classified as a science.

# Psychology as a Science

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- Biology: Studies the structure and functioning of all living things. Psychologists use biological research to shed light on behavior or mental activities.
- Psychiatry: (the “sister science”) Medical specialty concerned with mental disorders, maladjustment, and abnormal behavior. More likely to treat mental disorders with drugs.

# Psychology as Common Sense

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- Findings don't have to be surprising to be scientifically important (apple falling from tree is obvious—took Newton to explain why) Most people see hindsight as common sense (“opposites attract;” “birds of a feather flock together”).
- I. e. “Under what circumstances couples who are far away from each other divorce or stay together.”
- I.e. “Good looking people get better jobs.”

# Critical Thinking

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- Analyze assumptions and biases: Have you been presented with only one side of the story? Politics, Ads, etc.
- Avoid personal emotion: Do not allow feelings replace thought.
- Don't oversimplify: Not everything is black and white, or either/or. Do not make broad generalizations based on a study.

# Critical Thinking

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- Thinking takes practice, ability, and willingness to assess claims and make objective judgments on the basis of well supported reasons.
- Look for flaws—the Barnum Effect
- Resist claims that do not provide evidence.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZeQGld5QBU>



# Critical Thinking

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- Ask questions: Be curious, wonder, inquire.
- Define the problem: Identify the issues in clear and concrete terms. Are you successful? How is successful defined?
- Examine the evidence: Don't accept conclusions without ample evidence.

# Critical Thinking

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- Consider other viewpoints: Find the argument with the most evidence and the fewest assumptions.
- Tolerate uncertainty: Not always a concrete answer—do not be afraid to say “I don’t know.” (Assassination of JFK - still speculation/uncertainty.)

# Classification of Psychologists

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- Basic Psychology: Pure research, how adolescents and adults differ in their approach to moral issues such as honesty.
- Applied Psychology: apply psychological findings - how can we use it?
- Practitioners: Provide services such as therapy, counseling, consulting

# Classification of Psychologists

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- Academic: Employed in college/university settings—teachers, researchers, consultants, etc.
- Researchers: Employed by industry, business, government, or administration. Examine things like how coffee breaks effect productivity, ways to change behavior to stop spread of HIV

# Experimental Psychologists

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Conduct laboratory studies—  
experiments to understand  
learning, perception, memory,  
language, animal behavior:  
many other psychologists do  
experiments also.

# Educational Psychologists

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Teach/explain learning using Psychological Principles.

Rewards to encourage achievement, ways to improve learning in educational systems. Can design curriculum.

# Developmental Psychologists

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Study how people change  
and grow over time.

Physically, mentally,  
socially. Childhood,  
adolescence, middle-age,  
adulthood, old age.

# Industrial/Organizational Psychologists

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Concerned with group decision making, employee morale, work motivation, productivity, stress, personnel selection, marketing strategies, product design.



# Social Psychologists

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Study how groups, institutions, and social context influence individuals and vice versa: conformity, obedience, competition, cooperation, learning styles, and prejudice.

# Psychometric Psychologists

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Evaluate tests of mental abilities, aptitudes, interests, and personality. Statistical procedures to develop reliable and valid tests.

# Counseling Psychologists

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Help people deal with  
everyday life problems;  
anxiety, low motivation,  
marital or family  
counseling.

# School Psychologists

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Work with parents, teachers,  
and students to enhance  
students performance and  
emotional development.  
Often test for  
special programs.

# Clinical Psychologists

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Diagnosis, treat and  
study mental or  
emotional problems  
and disabilities.

Interview, test,  
conduct therapy.