Chapter 1: What is Psychology?

Rick Grieve, Ph.D.
PSY 100
Western Kentucky University
Definition of Psychology

Please note that I do not follow the organization of the textbook

- Undergone many transformations
  - 1st decade of 20th century
  - 2nd decade of 20th century
    - John B. Watson
    - James R. Angell
  - John F. Dashiell
  - Howard C. Warren
  - Howard Nunn
Definition of Psychology

- Early 1960s
  - Clifford Morgan
- Later 1960s
- 1970s
- Today:
  - The scientific study of behavior and mental processes.
Critical Thinking

- Involves 5 questions:
  - What am I being asked to believe?
  - Is there evidence to support the claim?
  - Can that evidence be interpreted in another way?
  - What evidence would help to evaluate the alternatives?
  - What conclusions are most reasonable?
Critical Thinking

Keys to critical thinking:

- Be open minded
- Be intellectually curious
- Look for multiple determinants of behavior
- Think like a scientist
The Scientific Method

- Four Steps:
  - Observation of something of interest in the natural world
  - Formulation of a hypothesis
  - Collection of data
  - Analyze the data
Other Methods of Knowledge Acquisition

- Authoritative Pronouncements
- Democratic Judgments
- Reason
- Feelings
- Sensory Information & Experience
Seven Contemporary Psychological Perspectives

- Behaviorism
  - John B. Watson
  - B.F. Skinner
  - Ivan Pavlov

- Psychodynamic (Psychoanalytic)
  - Sigmund Freud
  - Alfred Adler
  - Carl Jung
Seven Contemporary Psychological Perspectives

- Humanistic
  - Carl Rogers
  - Abraham Maslow

- Cognitive
  - Jean Piaget
  - (Wilhelm Wundt & William James)
  - Ulric Neisser
Seven Contemporary Psychological Perspectives

- Biological/Neuroscientific
- Sociocultural
- Evolutionary
  - David Buss
  - Steven Pinker
What does a Psychologist Do?

- Contemporary psychology has a number of fields of subspecialization
  - Can differentiate between research and applied perspectives
- Differences between a psychologist and a psychiatrist
What does a Psychologist Do?

- How to become a psychologist
- The Boulder Conference
Graduate Programs at WKU

- WKU offers graduate-level psychology programs in:
  - Clinical Psychology (MA)
  - School Psychology (EdS)
  - Industrial/Organizational Psychology (MA)
  - General Psychology (MA)
Graduate Programs at WKU

- Admission Minimum Requirements:
  - GPA: 3.00
  - GRE: 850 (Verbal + Quantitative)
  - 12 hours of undergraduate psychology courses
  - Three letters of recommendation

- Completion requirements
Graduate Programs at WKU

- Averages for FA 2002 WKU Clinical Acceptees:
  - GPA: 3.54
  - Psych GPA: 3.58
  - GRE Verbal: 469
  - GRE Quantitative: 551
  - GRE Total: 1020
Graduate Programs at WKU

- Averages for 1992-1993 Doctoral Level Acceptees:
  - GPA: 3.50
  - Psych GPA: 3.66
  - GRE Verbal: 593
  - GRE Quantitative: 613
  - GRE Total: 1206
Graduate Programs at WKU

- Averages for 1992-1993 Master’s Level Acceptees:
  - GPA: 3.27
  - Psych GPA: 3.42
  - GRE Verbal: 517
  - GRE Quantitative: 533
  - GRE Total: 1033
What if you don’t want to go to grad school?

- Do you have to go to graduate school to get a job with a psychology degree?
Top 10 Skills Employers Like in Psychology Majors

- Listening Skills
- Ability to Work on Teams
- Interpersonal Awareness
- Desire and Ability to Learn
- Willingness to Gain New Skills
- Focus on the Customer/Clients
- Environmental Awareness
Top 10 Skills Employers Like in Psychology Majors

- Adaptability
- Critical Evaluation
- Problem-Solving Skills
Other Skills Gained With a Psychology Major

- Literacy
- Statistical Familiarity
- Computer Literacy
- Research Skills
- Perspective
- Pragmatism
So, what kind of job can I get with my B.A. in Psychology?

- 50% of Psychology graduates were employed with a for-profit company
- 20% public affairs or social services
- 14% teaching
- 10% sales
- 10% state or local government
Salary range

- 2001 survey
  - Range of $21,900-$40,000
    - Management: $30,488
    - Teaching: $25,378
    - Counseling: $24,724
    - Social Work: $23,988
    - Sales: $34,451
    - Government: $20,000-$29,000