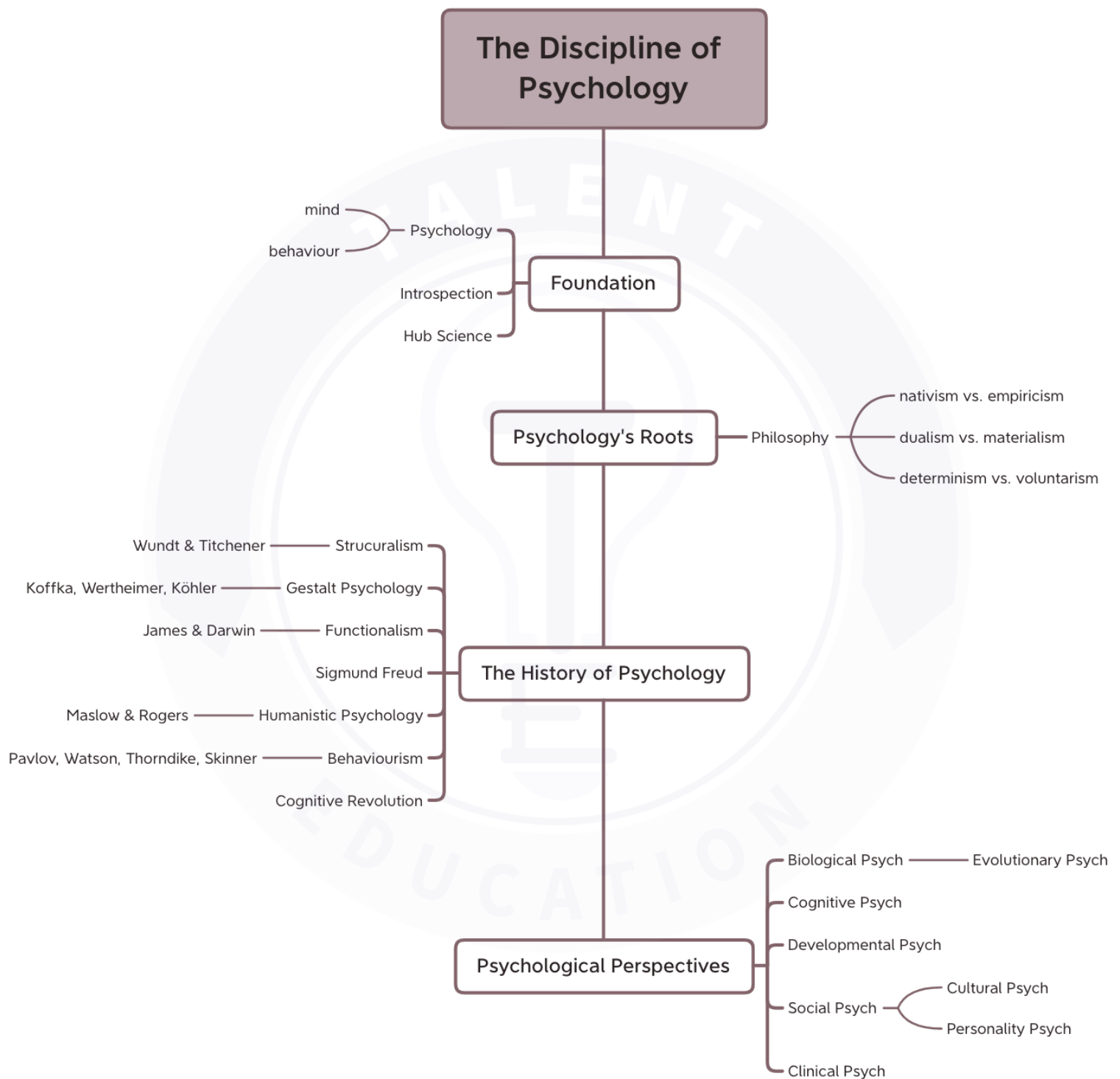




# Winter 2022







## What Is Psychology?

- **psychology**: the **scientific** study of behaviour, mental processes, and brain functions (the scientific study of the mind)
  - **mind**: the **brain** and its activities, including thought, emotion, and behaviour
  - **behaviour**: any action that we can **observe**
- **introspection**: the **personal observation** of your **own** thoughts, feelings, and behaviours
- psychology explains **general principles** that govern behaviours while recognizing **individual differences**
- psychology is a **hub science**: it is closely connected to several other sciences
  - psychology is all about people, and nearly all occupations require an understanding of people and their behaviours



## What Are Psychology's Roots?

### Philosophy

- **philosophy** systematically examines basic concepts
- **nature vs. nurture**
- **nativism**: all human knowledge is pre-programmed with the **innate** quality; we are **determined** once we are born
- **empiricism** (*John Locke*): the mind is a “**blank slate**” at birth, which then was filled with ideas gained by observing the world
  - *Aristotle*: all knowledge is gained through **sensory experience**
- **dualism**: there is a body **and** there is a **separate** soul



- **materialism**: consciousness is **created by** the brain in your body (nothing exists except **matter**)



- **determinism**: all events, including human actions, are ultimately determined by causes **external to the will**

## Natural Sciences

- study physical and biological events that **occur in nature**
- *ancient Greek philosophers*: observations can be accounted for by natural, not supernatural, explanations
- *17-18th century natural scientists*: discoveries about sensation and movement showed that the mind was physical
- *Hermann von Helmholtz*: studies of reaction time → physical mind

## 🖋️ Practice

Andy believes that Albert Einstein can be a successful scientist only because of his inborn qualities. How hard he has worked throughout his life does not matter. What perspective best describes Andy's view on human nature?

- A. Empiricism
- B. Nativism
- C. Naturalism
- D. Determinism

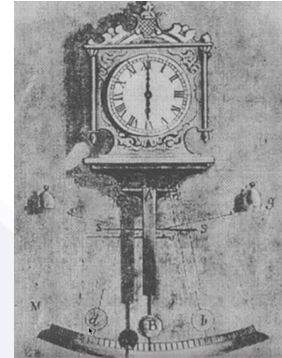




## How Did the Science of Psychology Begin?

### Structuralism

- the mind could be **broken down** into the smallest elements of **mental experience**
- *Wilhelm Wundt*: the **first psychologist** who conducted the first documented psychological **experiment** in Germany (formally founded experimental psychology)
  - “thought meter”; he refers reaction time as “mental chronometry”
  - **voluntarism**: the principle of doing something by or relying on voluntary action (**free will**)
- *Edward Titchener* expanded Wundt’s theories and officially **established** structuralism



### Gestalt Psychology

- **“the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”**
- *Kurt Koffka, Max Wertheimer, and Wolfgang Köhler*
- rejects structuralism: breaking a “whole” perception into its building blocks would result in the **loss** of some important psychological information



### Functionalism

- behaviour is **purposeful** because it leads to **survival** and **reproduction** (the basis for evolutionary psychology)
  - “why behaviour and mental processes worked in a particular way?”
- in response to the publication of *Charles Darwin’s The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*
  - **natural selection**: **adaptive** traits will be **selected** and help an organism to better survive and reproduce



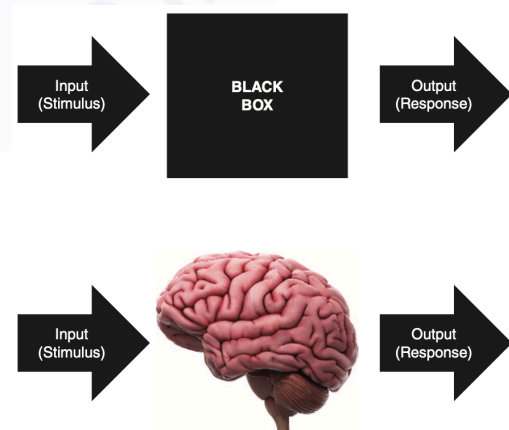
- *William James*: emphasized the role of evolution, coined the term “stream of consciousness” (the flow of ideas that people experience while awake)

## Freud and the Humanistic Psychologists

- *Sigmund Freud*: society has a **civilizing** function on the otherwise **selfish** and **aggressive** human
  - psychodynamic theory, unconsciousness, psychoanalysis (free association & dream analysis), the study of personality
  - greatly enhanced the public awareness of psychology
  - but his methods were not scientific, theories were based on observations of his patients, not falsifiable, his focus was too narrow and exaggerated
- **humanistic psychology** sees people as **inherently good** and **motivated** to learn and improve; behave badly only when **corrupted** by society
  - *Abraham Maslow*: what made a person “good”; motivation
  - *Carl Rogers* introduced **client-centred therapy**: the people receiving treatment are called clients rather than patients, reflecting their **equal** standing with the therapist and their **active** role in the therapy process
    - **unconditional positive regard**: showing **complete support** and **acceptance** of a person no matter what that person says or does
    - emphasis on **active listening** and the use of “**I hear** what you’re saying”

## Behaviourism

- concentrates on **observable**, **measurable behaviours**
  - mind = “**black box**”
- *Ivan Petrovich Pavlov*’s **classical conditioning**: many of our emotional responses associated with environmental cues are the result of this type of learning
  - **experience** is the primary source of behaviour





- *John B. Watson* echoed the blank-slate approach of the British empiricist philosophers in his emphasis on the **role of experience** in forming human behaviour
  - focus on the relationships between **environmental cues** and **behaviour**
  - **commercial** product must be associated with an appealing image
- *Edward Thorndike* was interested in the effects of consequences on behaviours
  - **law of effect**: behaviours followed by **pleasant**/helpful outcomes would be **more likely** to occur in the future, whereas behaviours followed by **unpleasant**/harmful outcomes would be **less likely** to occur
- *B. F. Skinner*'s **operant conditioning**: behaviour and outcome, reinforcement and punishment

## Cognitive Revolution

- cognition **can** be studied **scientifically**, and cognition **affects** our behaviour
- **cognition** covers the **private** and **internal** mental processes, including information processing, thinking, reasoning, and problem solving
- *Ulric Neisser* and his *Cognitive Psychology*

## Practice

Which one of the following statements is incorrect?

- A. Experience cannot be broken down into smaller elements would likely be said by a structuralist.
- B. Kevin is applying conditioning principles to teach language skills to retarded children, he is probably a behavioural psychologist.
- C. The study of mental process such as thinking, perception, information processing are all key elements in cognitive psychology.
- D. The psychodynamic view emphasizes the role of internal impulses, desire and conflicts in development.



## What Are Psychological Perspectives?

- **biological psychology/behavioral neuroscience** focuses on the relationships between mind and behaviour and their underlying biological processes, including genetics, biochemistry, anatomy, and physiology
  - i.e., **physical mechanisms associated with behaviour**
  - **evolutionary psychology** investigates how physical structure and behaviour have been **shaped** by their contributions to **survival** and **reproduction**
- **cognitive psychology** investigates **information processing**, **thinking**, **reasoning**, and **problem solving**
- **developmental psychology** explores the **normal changes** in behaviour that occur across the **life span**



- **social psychology** examines the effects of the **sociocultural context** and **biology** on the behaviour of individuals
  - **cultural diversity**: **variations** in the practices, values, and goals shared by **groups** of people
  - **personality**: an individual's **characteristic way** of thinking, feeling, and behaving
  - our perceptions and biases **filter** our experiences of the world through an **imperfect** personal lens







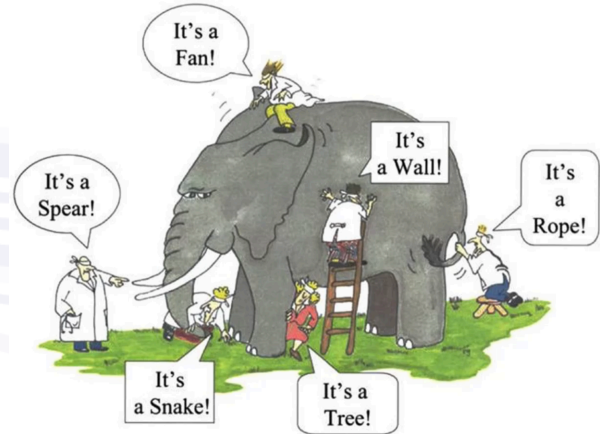
- **clinical psychology** seeks to explain, define, and treat **abnormal behaviours**
- **comparative psychology** studies the **similarities** and **differences** in the behaviour of organisms

- **single** perspectives are **insufficient** for fully describing and explaining psychological phenomena

- psychological, biological, social, and cultural factors influence behaviour and mental processes

- some assumptions/biases of Western psychology

- **individuality**: the individual is the focus of behaviour and the unit of analysis
- **experiment-based empiricism**: emphasis on laboratory experiments
- **quantification**: constructs should be able to be quantified & measured
- **“objectivity”**: identify and understand the world in an unbiased way
- **nomothetic** approach: psychologists looking for **generalized principles** that can be applied to various groups of people/situations
- (White) male dominance in this discipline: favour particular topics, methods, and participants



### Practice

Sarah is interested in studying how children's aggressive behaviours are impacted by other children over time. Sarah's research area falls under which perspective(s)? Select all that apply.

- A. Developmental Psychology
- B. Clinical Psychology
- C. Social Psychology
- D. Cognitive Psychology
- E. Biological Psychology



## *\*What Does It Mean to Be a Psychologist?*

- the clinical or counselling track includes extensive internships and supervised training prior to government-regulated licensure that usually add at least 1 year to students' graduate studies
- PhDs or PsyDs: therapists with doctoral degrees in psychology
- MDs: psychiatrists who are medical doctors
  - can **prescribe medication** (but psychologists usually cannot)

