Course Description and Learning Objectives

This course provides an overview of key developments in the history of modern psychology. Our focus will be on the discipline of psychology as a *science*, and we will examine the events, people, ideas, and data that have shaped—and shaken—the trajectory of scientific discovery.

In addition to our primary text, we will read and discuss selected landmark papers, both philosophical and empirical, by major figures in the history of psychology. In lecture and class discussions, we will link historical considerations to contemporary psychological questions and concerns. An examination of the history of psychology allows for speculation about how the social, political, and intellectual climates of times gone by may have influenced the development and acceptance or rejection of certain psychological ideas.

This course, thus, provides a broad overview of psychology as a field but also provides an even broader context against which classic and contemporary research questions can be understood.

Meetings and Format

We will meet on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 6:10 p.m. for lecture and class discussion. Students are expected to read all assigned readings prior to class and to come to class ready to discuss them.

Required Reading

The primary text is Ludy Benjamin’s (2007) *A Brief History of Modern Psychology*, published by Blackwell. It is available in the SDSU Bookstore (as an eText or for rent or purchase), as well as online through a variety of retailers.

Additional required readings are available online. These readings include excerpts from major philosophical and theoretical works in the history of psychology, landmark research studies, and critical commentary; see the course schedule for details.
Class Requirements and Grading

Your class grade will be based on your performance on three exams. Each exam will consist of multiple choice and long essay questions. All assigned readings, lectures, and topics covered in class discussion will be considered fair game for these exams.

Exam Procedures

Schedule. Two of the exams are scheduled in-term during regular class times and the third will be held during final exam week:

Two in-class exams (30% of final grade each). Each of the first two exams will cover approximately one-third of the course material. These exams will take place during the regular class meeting time: They will begin promptly at 3:30 and must be completed by 6:10. Each of these exams is worth 30% of your final grade.

Final exam (40% of final grade). The final exam will cover the last third of course material and also have a cumulative component, covering the entire content of the course (all chapters and all lectures). The final is scheduled for exam week (see course schedule).

Materials. You will need to purchase the narrow red ParSCORE test form (for the multiple choice section) and at least one “bluebook” examination booklet (for the essay section) for each exam. Please also remember to bring a sharp #2 pencil for the parscore forms.

Use of notes. Exams will be closed-book and closed-notes for their duration. Laptops, cell phones, and electronic devices must be off and stowed during the exam.

Challenges to exam grades. If you believe there was a clerical error in scoring your exam, you must report this problem within two weeks of the exam in order to request a rescoring. Similarly, if you believe the stated answer to an exam question is incorrect, you must register a challenge to this question within two weeks, and you must provide evidence in support of your challenge. Acceptable evidence includes citation from the textbook (with page and paragraph number) or from one of the other assigned readings. Note that I may disagree with your interpretation of the evidence.
Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

August 28: Introduction to History of Psychology

September 4: Origin Stories, I: Psychology Before Science
Philosophical Foundations and Early “Pop Psychology”

Chapter 1: Pre Scientific Psychology


September 11: Origin Stories, II: Science Before Psychology
Physiological Foundations of Modern Psychology

Chapter 2: Physiology, Psychophysics, and the Science of Mind


Please read Section II. (Case study of aphemia in the patient “Tan”)
Available at: http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Broca/aphemie-e.htm

September 18: Wilhelm Wundt and the Founding of Scientific Psychology

Chapter 3: Germany and the Birth of a New Science


Please read Section 1 (Problem of Psychology) and Section 3 (Method of Psychology) of the Introduction.
Available at: http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Wundt/Outlines/index.htm

September 25: Origins of Scientific Psychology in America

Chapter 4: Origins of Scientific Psychology in America


October 2: Exam 1

October 9: Structuralism, Functionalism, and the Limits of Introspection

Chapter 5: The Early Schools of Psychology

October 16: Intelligence Testing, Developmental, and Applied Psychologies

Chapter 6: The Birth of the New Applied Psychology in America


October 23: The Freudian Detour

Chapter 7: Psychoanalysis


October 30: Behaviorism

Chapter 8: Behaviorism


November 6: Exam 2

November 13: The New Profession(s) of Psychology: Clinical, I/O, and School

Chapter 9: The New Profession of Psychology


November 20: Gender, Race, and the Emergence of Experimental Social Psychology

Chapter 10: A Psychology of Social Action and Social Change


November 27: The Cognitive (R)evolution

Chapter 11: Cognitive Psychology


December 4: Back to the Future: Current Themes in Psychological Science

No new readings this week.

December 11: Final Exam (4:00 to 6:00pm)