The History of Psychology

1. Antiquity
   a. The Greeks
      i. The Temple at Delphi has inscribed the phrase "know thyself"
      ii. Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are descriptive psychological explanations of human behavior.
      iii. Socrates began systematic inquiry into the human condition, especially through the dialogues of Plato.
      iv. Aristotle, who studied Plato in the Academy for 20 years adapted a quite naturalistic, observational approach to psychology
         1. He believed that behavior that human psyche is composed of the sour and rational faculties.
   b. Descartes encouraged the individual to begin with skepticism and emphasized the individual to challenge ideas and assumptions with experience.
      i. He is the developed what we call dualism.
   c. Christianity, witchcraft, and the supernatural
      i. Science and experimentation began to replace the influence of religion and scripture.
   d. Locke’s theory of the mind suggests that elementary sensations are made up of corpuscles (based on the Newton’s corpuscular theory) and that constellations of experience occur when these sensations are associated together.
      i. Locke’s ideas were the foundation of structuralism and encouraged scientists to break human experience into elemental parts…reductionism.
      ii. Locke’s method is introspective and he suggests that there are NO innate ideas.
2. The Scientific Revolution
   a. The influence of the scientific movement throughout Europe had a profound influence on the development of the science of psychology.

   b. Movement away from the influence of the church and religion toward a more secular society founded on scientific principles.

   c. The Renaissance (1300’s – 1600’s) period covered several centuries and tremendous changes in scientific disciplines fueled the growth of this new discipline. This movement carried into the 19th century. Some notable discoveries that have influenced psychology include:

   i. Astronomy & Mathematics (early influences)
      1. Newton (1669) – Laws of Mechanics
      2. Galileo (1610) – Planetary movement, the structure of the solar system, & structure of the universe
      3. Copernicus (1543) – The heliocentric solar system

   ii. Biology
      1. Mendel (1853) – Genetics
      2. Pasteur (1885) – Germ Theory
      3. Darwin (1858) – Evolutionary Theory

   iii. Chemistry
      1. Alchemy
      2. Mendeleev & Meyer (1869) – The Periodic Law & Periodic Table

   iv. Strong reductionistic influences
3. The Early Era

a. Wilhelm Wundt (1879) at the University of Leipzig developed the first laboratory of psychology.
   i. **Introspection** – To look within one’s self.

b. Titchner (Cornell University) & Structuralism (1920’s)
   i. **Structuralism** is the attempt to describe the structures that compose the mind. Consciousness can be analyzed in terms of sensations and feelings that form the structures of the mind.
   ii. To get their data, the structuralist used introspection to examine what was happening in one’s mind and what one was thinking and feeling. Any problems with this?
   iii. Reflects the early influence of sensory biologists
   iv. Translated many of Wundt’s original writings into English

c. James (Harvard University) & Functionalism (1890’s)
   i. **Functionalism** looks at how the mind produces useful (functional) behaviors.
   ii. The brain engages in a dynamic adaptation to the environment
   iii. James had profound things to say about philosophy and neuroscience.
   iv. Unfortunately, his close ties to the field of philosophy kept much of his work out of the main field of psychology.
   v. Developed the first American Psychological Laboratory

4. The fields of **psychophysics** and **comparative psychology** had an important influence of the current modern era of psychology.
5. Psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud (1920’s)
   a. **Psychoanalysis** is the first modern school of psychology to emerge and it emphasized the importance of **unconscious** forces in the behavior of humans
   b. Psychoanalysis is a **deterministic** model and has significant problems with regard to observation and whether or not the theory can be tested, i.e., “Is the theory **falsifiable**?”
   c. Freud has had a profound influence on the entire field of psychology, sociology, criminal justice, and modern life in general!

   a. **Behaviorism** was the second school to emerge and it did so in response to psychoanalysis. Its emphasis is not on unconscious forces but rather on what is **directly observable** and **measurable**.
   b. Behavior is described more accurately in terms of simple behaviors rather than in mental terms. Very opposed to the idea of a “mental life”.
   c. Behaviorism appears to be far more “scientific” but is still a **deterministic** model.
   d. **Pavlov** (1904 – Noble Prize), **Watson** (1920’s), & **Skinner** (1938 to 1950’s), and others have had a significant impact on modern life as well.

7. Humanistic Psychology
   a. **Humanistic** Psychology is a very broad field that encompasses many psychological theories. They all, however, emphasize the importance of **free will** and the **human condition**.
   b. One major contribution is the development of psychological techniques.
   c. These theories are in stark contrast to both behaviorism and psychoanalysis.
d. Some of the important humanistic psychologies include:
   
i. Gestalt Psychology (Kohler, Wertheimer, & Perls)
   1. Gestalt psychologists discount structure and focus on the totality of perceptions. One cannot understand something by breaking it up into pieces...it must therefore be taken in total!

   ii. Existential Psychology (Sartre, Frankl, Kierkegaard, & Yalom)

   iii. Humanistic Psychology (Sullivan, Rogers, & Maslow)
   1. Carl Rogers may have had the most significant impact developing what he called client-centered therapy in the 1950's.

8. Recent trends in psychology
   
a. Cognitive Psychology, the fourth school of psychology emphasizes the importance of mental activities, symbolic processing, learning, memory, thinking, and perception in normal and abnormal states.

   b. Neuroscience is the most recent school of psychology and suggests that all behavior is rooted, in some way, to the functioning of the nervous system.
      
      i. If we understand the nervous system then we can understand how all behavior emerges!

      ii. This field is growing so quickly that it is difficult to keep up with the literature

      iii. Neuroscience departments appear to be replacing traditional psychology programs!