

TOPIC: WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

Introduction



- ◆ **Psychology:** The scientific study of the _____ and behavior.
 - Comes from Greek *psyche* (mind/soul) and *logos* (study).
- ◆ Relies on **empirical** _____ - information gathered through scientific observation or experimentation.
- ◆ Modern psychology strives to:
 1. Understand people's thoughts, motivations, and emotions.
 2. Explain how the _____ works.
 3. Identify and explain broad patterns of behavior.
 4. Examine stability and _____ as people develop and across situations.



Think Like a Psychologist: Get used to the phrase “it depends” – this is a common and important phrase in psychology. Human behavior is complex, and we can rarely make definitive statements!

EXAMPLE

Which of the following is NOT one of the main goals of psychology as a field?

- a) To explain how the brain works.
- b) To identify and explain patterns of behavior.
- c) To precisely predict people's behavior and reactions.
- d) To examine stability and change as people develop.

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Philosophical Roots of Psychology

◆ Many early themes in psychology originated from philosophical debates. Here are two prominent ones:

Main Question: What is the nature of the relationship between the _____ and the _____?			
	Philosophical _____ism	Philosophical _____ism	Modern Psychology
Philosopher	René Descartes (1596 - 1650)	Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679)	Most psychologists favor _____.
Viewpoint	Mind and body are _____ (physical body + immaterial mind/soul).	Mind and body are _____ (the mind _____ what the brain _____).	

Main Question: _____ does human knowledge come from?			
	Philosophical Empiricism	Philosophical Nativism	Modern Psychology
Philosopher	John _____ (1632 – 1704)	Immanuel _____ (1724 – 1804)	This evolved into the _____ vs. _____ debate in psychology. Experience is essential, but human brains appear to come 'hard-wired' for certain types of learning.
Viewpoint	All knowledge is acquired through experience – humans are born as blank slates (_____).	Some knowledge is _____ - humans are born with basic knowledge – ex: causality, space, time, etc.	

EXAMPLE

According to philosophical materialism...

- The mind is fundamentally separate from the body.
- The mind and human consciousness are caused by physical processes in the brain.
- Humans are composed of a *physical* body and an *immaterial* mind.
- Some human knowledge is innate, for example, an abstract understanding of space and time.

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PRACTICE

True or False (if false, choose the answer that best corrects the statement); The famous philosopher John Locke believed that humans are born with extensive, species-specific knowledge.

- a) True.
- b) False; Locke believed that humans are born with *some* innate knowledge.
- c) False; Locke believed in philosophical dualism (the idea that the mind and body are separate entities).
- d) False; Locke believed that humans are born *tabula rasa*, as “blank slates” with no innate knowledge.