

History and Systems in Psychology

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Course Outline: This course illuminates the conceptual and historical basis of modern psychology. Specifically, students will learn about the intellectual frameworks or assumptions of modern ideas in psychology (the Systems part) by exploring the conceptual origins and evolution of those ideas (the History part). As part of the requirements for the course students will trace the origins and evolution of modern psychological ideas which they find particularly exciting and important.

Course Objectives: There are four major objectives.

1. Students will acquire knowledge about the origins and evolution of ideas that have shaped modern views of psychology.
2. Students will appreciate the roles of internal intellectual (philosophical and scientific) and external social (cultural and technological) forces which shape the development of ideas.
3. Students will learn how to perform an intellectual history of modern ideas in scientific psychology.
4. Students will improve their oral and written skills as they prepare to share the results of their historical analysis.

Course Structure: During the first five weeks of class, we will introduce the course and discuss the modern discipline of psychology since the last half of the 20th Century. The first three weeks will acquaint students with the philosophical tools of analysis of such frameworks or paradigms of modern psychology and the last two weeks will involve a review of four such frameworks or paradigms: The Cognitive, psychobiological, humanistic, and socio-contextual frameworks. During this section of the course, students will be expected to find a recent article of interest, review its findings, and argue for its connection to one of the four frameworks or paradigms reviewed in class.

The subsequent four weeks will trace each of the four modern frameworks to views of psychology from the origin of the discipline in the 19th Century. The origins of Psychology as a scientific discipline will be reviewed and the earliest frameworks or paradigms will be discussed. Emphasis will be given to structural, functional, psychoanalytic, evolutionary, and Gestalt psychology. Attention will be given to both the internal (scientific and philosophical) and external (social and technology) forces on the development of ideas in psychology. During this period, students will write a paper identifying the central idea of the research they reviewed, tracing it to earlier views by tracking the papers' references, authors, techniques, assumptions etc.

Over the last 6 weeks, the scientific and philosophical ideas of the Renaissance (14th to 16th centuries) and Enlightenment (1650-1800) will be discussed and connected to the previous frameworks (4 weeks) as will ancient Greek philosophy (2 weeks). During these last 6 weeks, students will be expected to write two papers connecting their research article to both topics in 16th - 19th Century and ancient Greek philosophy. The final week will be devoted to student presentations of their analysis.

Textbook:

Hergenhahn, B. R. (2008). *An introduction to the history of psychology*, (6th Edition). New York, NY: Wadsworth.

Grading: Students will be graded primarily on the basis of a 20-page paper which is composed of 4 shorter papers that are required over the course of the semester. Each of the shorter, individual papers is worth 10% and will be given extensive comments and suggestions so that a motivated student can rewrite the paper for their final paper which is worth 20%. At the end of the semester, each student will be asked to prepare a 5 minute presentation on the historical analysis they performed, which is worth 10%. A midterm take-home exam will be distributed to students approximately at the 6th week class and due on the 8th week. Open-book, open-note quizzes (total 10%) will assess students close reading of the textbook. Students will be able to take the quizzes on WebCT. Any given quiz will only be available for a specified period and students can take a quiz repeatedly during that period until they achieve 90% on the quiz. Finally, attendance (which will be recorded selectively throughout the semester) and participation will be assessed and factored into students' grade (5%)

Distribution of Grades

Oral Presentation.....	10%
Papers.....	60%
Review of Research.....	10%
18th to early 20th Century Connection..	10%
Philosophical Foundations.....	10%
Greek Origins.....	10%
Final Paper (20 pages minimum).....	20%
Midterm Exam.....	10%
Quizzes.....	10%
Attendance & Participation.....	10%

Class Policies: For a review of class policies, [click here](#). For a late contract, [click here](#).