

Fall 2014

Instructor: Prof. Mark Solovey

Location, AH 103 (Alumni Hall, 121 Joseph Street, Room 103)

Day and Time: Monday 1:30-3:30, first class Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>. Also Oct 16th, Thursday 2-4.

Office Location: Room 322, IHPST, Victoria College, 91 Charles Street West

Office Hours: Monday 3:30-4:30 and by appointment

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### Course Description

Most of us believe we know a thing or two about human psychology. Yet we also realize that personal views and popular wisdom about what makes us tick may be mistaken. In the last century and a half, a new and now-thriving discipline called Psychology has aimed to place our knowledge of the human mind, brain, and behavior on a scientific footing. Using a wide array of scientific tools of analysis, professional psychologists have been studying fundamental questions that concern all of us:

What are the basic psychological differences and similarities between people and other animals?

Are we fundamentally rational or irrational creatures?

Why do we do the things we do?

How does the mind work?

Are there deep psychological differences between males and females?

How about between people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds?

And how can professional psychology benefit the individual and society?

In this course we examine the history of psychology from a number of angles. We will focus on major figures such as Wilhelm Wundt, Sigmund Freud, and B. F. Skinner. We will study the development of key controversies about scientific epistemology and methodology and about the social implications and public policy uses of psychological knowledge. We will consider how psychology was first established as an academic discipline, became institutionalized, grew as a profession, and came to be the large, diverse field of scientific inquiry and practical application that it is today. We will examine the social context and specific influences (i.e., politics, war, social structure, patronage, academic environment, influential personalities, etc.) that have shaped the development of psychology and its relationships with the wider society. And we will consider how the history of psychology can be relevant to the theory and practice of contemporary psychology.

We will also use the history of psychology to examine fundamental questions about the history of science:

What sorts of questions do historians of science ask?

What kind of answers do they offer?

What evidence do they rely upon?

What rhetorical strategies and story-telling techniques do they employ?

How has and how can the history of psychology contribute to the history of science, and vice versa?

### Required Readings

Nadine Weidman, Constructing Scientific Psychology: Karl Lashley's Mind-Brain Debates, 1999. For week 6.

Jamie Cohen-Cole, Cold War Politics and the Sciences of Human Nature, 2014. For week 8.

Thomas Teo, The Critique of Psychology from Kant to Postcolonial Theory, 2005. For week 10.

The other readings come from journal articles. These will be made available, with the specific references provided on a separate page.

## Schedule of Topics

Week 1	Introduction
Week 2	Historiography: Aims, methods, trends, and controversies in the history of psychology
Week 3	Wilhelm Wundt and the complicated founding of scientific psychology
Week 4	Scientific psychology on brilliantly new or disgracefully wobbly foundations? Sigmund Freud and the battle over psychoanalysis
Week 5	The rise and fall (partial, but not complete) of the behaviorist program, from J.B. Watson to B.F. Skinner and beyond  Discussion of paper topics and research strategies
Week 6	The contested story of neuropsychology: Karl Lashley as a case study
Week 7	Psychology at war, hot and cold
Week 8	The psychological self and open mind in Cold War America
Week 9	Was there a cognitive revolution? If so, what did it consist of?  Discussion of paper outlines and preliminary bibliographies
Week 10	The critique of psychology
Week 11	Discussion of papers-in-progress, pre-circulated at least three days before class
Week 12	Gender studies

## Grading

Class attendance and participation: 20%. I expect students to attend each class, except in the case of emergencies, and to come prepared to discuss the assigned readings and engage in class discussions.

Class presentations: 20%. Each student will make some in-class presentations, to review and assess the readings each week and to stimulate class discussion. The number of presentations depends on the number of students and will thus be determined at the first class meeting.

Short papers: 30%. Students will turn in some short papers, 400 to 500 words each, summarizing and commenting on the readings. The number of short papers will be determined at the first class meeting. One of these papers must be a book review. These papers must be submitted at the beginning of the relevant class meeting. Late papers will be penalized 10% for each day late. I will put comments on these papers but no grade, and return them to you. At the end of the semester you must resubmit your three best papers (with my comments included) for a grade. One of these resubmitted papers will include a revision by you that addresses the concerns in my comments on the original version. So you need to submit the revised version along with the original that includes my comments.

Final paper: 30%. Students will write a final paper, 3000-4000 words. This can be an original research paper, or it can be a historiographic essay that analyzes the ways historians have approached a particular person, episode, theme, or controversy in the history of psychology. Late papers will be penalized 10% for each day late. I encourage students to consult with me a number of times along the way, starting from the very beginning, when you are trying to find a good topic and useful sources.

During week 10 students will circulate by email a detailed outline or rough draft of their papers-in-progress. During the class for week 11, students will make a brief presentation of their papers, no longer than 5 minutes each, followed by questions and discussion, for about 10 minutes. The final paper, which must be submitted as a hard and an email copy, is due Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, one week after the last class meeting.