

## PSYCH 104 NOTES

### WEEK 1

- **Philosophical roots of psychology**
- **Ancient Greeks.** Plato supported rationalism: humans born with knowledge of the world that is accessed through reason. Plato didn't believe you could rely on info from sense to gain knowledge of the world as senses can be deceiving.
- **4th C.** Aristotle supported empiricism: sensory experience is source of knowledge. Logical reasoning is confirmed through senses e.g. observation. Combination of Emp & Rat.
- **Middle Ages.** Retrogressive for Western Psych. Religious dogma prevailed.
- **Renaissance 17th C.** Descartes supported modern rationalism: Questioned Church. Mind-body dualism, mental studied subjectively and body studied objectively. Francis Bacon favoured systematic observation and scepticism.
- **18th C.** John Locke was extreme empiricist, 'tabula rasa' blank slate when born. Acquire knowledge through sensory experience. Immanuel Kant believed knowledge is innate and experience.
- Rationalism: apply knowledge by reason and innate (Plato, Descartes). Empiricism: knowledge by experience and learned (Aristotle, Bacon, Locke). Kant in between.
- **Scientific roots of psychology**
- **19th C.** Psychology with scientific focus. Wundt eradicated dualism, studied mental processing with experimental approach of measurement and analysis.
- Titchener for structuralism: introspection. James for functionalism: consciousness is constantly flowing stream evolving to select moral choices. Human thought/behaviour adapts through sensory experience. Gestalt psychologists against structuralism.
- **History of psychology in Australia-** First psych lab in 1920's. Now APS is huge.
- **Current perspectives on psychology:**
- **Behaviourist perspective:** Need to study observable behaviour rather than talk in abstract terms of the mind. All behaviour is learned responses to particular stimuli. Pavlov presentation of food in dog's mouth, involuntarily salivate. Revolt against James, behaviourists say consciousness is not objective/hard science. Skinner studied operant conditioning of animal and believed mind is unnecessary concept, pigeons trained to peck at top right hand corner to get food in box. Criticism-cannot ignore inner thoughts and feelings, too deterministic, denies free will and choice. Applications-clinical setting e.g. eliminating fear, treating phobia, help give up smoking. Not interested in why scared of spiders. Focus on stimulus (spider) and response (fear) and teach muscle relaxation and show pics. Approach is objective observable verification of research findings.
- **Psychodynamic perspective:** Freud, neurologist. Emphasise role of impulses in psyche, conflicts, biological drives and unconscious inner forces. Physical can be cured through mental; technique of free association where say what comes to mind while relaxed, reveal what causing conflict in mind and headache. Criticism-Too deterministic, deny choice/control, unconscious unobservable, cannot measure, not falsifiable, difficult objectively test theory. Application-widely used as therapeutic approach in clinical. Modern-more focus on planning/thinking in human psyche.

- Humanist perspective: rejected determinism of previous two. Free will. Carl Rogers natural state of humans is to be good, but life events prevent self-actualisation. Unscientific, vague. Positive-treat clients with respect and research participants treatment improved
- Cognitive perspective: Focus on thinking and knowing. Follow-on from James. Emphasis on mind/internal state e.g. memory, attention. Criticism: unobservable subject matter, but use of objective methods to measure and draw conclusions. Permeates modern psychology.
- Biological perspective: Wundt. Biological processes underlying behaviour, brain and nervous system to address psych problems. Criticism-cannot fully understand complex behaviour only look at micro level. Application-treatment of psych problems.