

# Subject Matter & Scope of Psychology

Lecture 1  
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## Learning Objectives – Lecture 1

By the end of the lesson the learner should be able to:

- be aware of the outline of the course;
- define psychology – in terms of the cognitive, affective & behavioural components; and
- enumerate the general scope of psychology.

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Look out for words  
on the screen

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Behaviourism  
Psychoanalysis  
Positive Psychology  
Humanism

Consciousness  
Memory  
Cognition  
Perception  
Brain  
Neurobiology

Environment  
Genes  
Attachment Theory  
Personality

Manic Disorder

Mental Disorders

Deviant Behaviour

Addiction

Affective Processes

Emotions

Feelings

Moods

Experiments

Exploratory

Questionnaires

Correlation

Longitudinal

True or False?

1. A psychologist knows people's minds as soon as s/he seems them.
2. Geniuses generally have poor social adjustment.
3. The best way to ensure that a desired behaviour will continue after training is completed is to reward that behaviour every single time it occurs during training rather than rewarding it only periodically.

True or False?

1. People with schizophrenia have at least two distinct personalities.
2. Parents should do everything they can to ensure their children have high self-esteem.
3. Children with higher IQ scores have little to do with how well they do in school.
4. Homosexuality is psychological disorder.

True or False?

1. Your personality basically determines your behaviour.
2. Most people would refuse to give painful electric shocks to other people.
3. People who talk about suicide are unlikely to actually try to kill themselves.

## Etymology of Psychology



### From Greek:

*psykhe* - "breath, spirit, soul" +

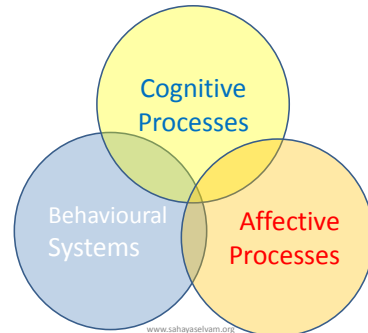
*Logia* - "study of"

Meaning: "study of the mind"

First recorded in Latin in 1748, from Christian Wolff's "*Psychologia empirica*", meaning study of the soul; Used in modern behavioural sense from early 1890s.

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## Three components of Psychology



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## What is psychology?

- Scientific study of cognitive, affective processes and related behavioural processes..
  - in individuals and groups;
  - in humans and animals (comparative psychology);

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## Cognitive Processes

A set of internal responses that involve:

- perceiving (senses responding to external stimuli);
- Processing of information (thinking);
- Retaining (memory);
- Recalling, and
- expressing (using language) – this could already be classified as behaviour if external, cognitive if internal.

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## What are affective states?

'Affect' refers to a general class of responses that involve:

- Feeling
- A significant physiological component (involving arousal: skin temperature, breathing, heart beat)
- Valence (pleasant or unpleasant)
- More specifically, affective states could be:
  - Moods
  - Emotions
  - Appetitive states

## Behaviour

- A set of observable response to external stimuli, in terms of:
  - Autonomous physiological reaction, and/or,
  - Motor activities involving muscles of the body.
- The response could be:
  - internal or external, conscious or unconscious, overt or covert; and voluntary or involuntary.

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### Is Psychology a Social Science?

- Yes, but...
- While most social sciences tend to be **descriptive** in their approach, psychology differs from anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology in seeking to capture **explanatory** generalizations about the mental function and overt behaviour of individuals;
- **Descriptive**: how do things function; **explanatory**: why do things function the way they do... establishing the cause-effect relationship through experiments.

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### Is Psychology a Social Science?

- No, still, psychology differs from biology and neuroscience in that it is primarily concerned with the interaction of mental processes and behaviour, and of the overall processes of a system, and not simply the biological or neural processes themselves.

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