

Graduate History of Psychology (Online)

Fall, 2026

Course: This class will include a general overview of the history of psychology, but will mainly focus on the development and evolution of theories both within and across different content areas of psychology. It will also provide you with a good preparation for comps, and an excuse to read some original source material.

Recommended Texts: There is no required text per se, but you likely want something to work from. *Connections in the History and Systems of Psychology*, Thorne & Henley, 3rd edition. OR... one of the previous editions of that book, OR... one of the last few editions of “Hergenhahn” book. Any of those should work as a resource for reviewing the basic ideas associated with a given unit.

The Basics: Do the reading necessary to address the unit’s objectives. If you do, then I promise this class will be both educational and straightforward. Beyond that:

- Note that all assignments have **firm** closing dates.
- Plagiarism and cheating (broadly defined) is not allowed. **NOTE:** This also includes the use of related AI technologies. In other words, and as the university likes me to say: "All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)" If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating please contact me.
- Also, note that “The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center’s crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel.”
- As we are online I am not sure this applies, but if you come to campus: Be advised that only qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, even licensed holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

Format: This is an online course organized around 15 units. Think of each unit as a short “research project.” That is, there are learning objectives to be accomplished and since I haven’t specified an exact text/edition, I’ll leave it to you to locate what seems to be the appropriate readings.

IF, If, if we can find a time that works for most everybody I am very amenable to us having a short Zoom meeting each week to discuss the material. We’ll just play that by ear—

Basically, I am showing you selections from the History of Psychology that as would-be professionals in the discipline you should know. That said, I am not expecting you to master, or report on, all of these topics within the short time span we have available.

Course Organization:

Week/Unit 1 *Background Matters*

Andy Griffith and The Problem of Context
Understanding the Problems of History
Understanding the Philosophy of Science

Week/Unit 2 *Read about Descartes and Galton, as well as Mind-Body and Nature-Nurture*

What is the subject matter of psychology?

Understanding the Mind-Body Problem: Descartes and Beyond

Understanding Nature-Nurture: Galton and Beyond

Week/Unit 3 *Read about Darwin, Human-Evolution and Functionalism*

The Place of Animals in Human Psychology

Understanding Evolution as Metatheory

Understanding Psychology in Prehistory

Week/Unit 4 *Read on the Greeks; then on Empiricism and Rationalism*

The pre-Socratic Greeks: Pythagorus and "Rational Medicine"

Plato and Aristotle as Forerunners of Rationalism and Empiricism

Later Developments in Empiricism and Rationalism

Week/Unit 5 *Read about Renaissance Humanism. Also, find something on psychology in China, India, or the Islamic World*

Roman and Medieval Misconceptions

Psychology (in history) outside of the Western World

Renaissance Humanism

Week/Unit 6 *Read some Existential Psychology. If you haven't already, make it Frankl's Man Search for Meaning*

Existentialism: Kierkegaard & Nietzsche

Existentialism: Sartre, Camus and Beyond

Phenomenology: Husserl and Beyond

Week/Unit 7 *Read about Wundt and his precursors/contemporaries; then Gestalt Psychology*

The Origins of Psychology in Germany - Fechner, Helmholtz, Wundt

Rational/Phenomenological Alternatives to Wundt

Gestalt Psychology

Week/Unit 8 *Read something by James and then Thorndike*

Early American Psychology

James

Thorndike and Guthrie

Week/Unit 9 *Read about Behaviorism, and specifically something by both Watson and Skinner*

From Pavlov to Behaviorism as Watson sees it

Skinner and Hull - Reinforcement Theory

Tolman and Miller - Toward Social Learning and Beyond

Week/Unit 10 Review the major topics and "classics" of social psychology; read one of those classics for yourself

Gestalt Psychology Reborn: Social Psychology
Revisiting the "Classics" - Asch and Milgram
Social Identity Theory - Turner and Tajfel

Week/Unit 11 Review the major topics and "classics" of cognitive psychology/science

Gibson's Ecological Theory
The Advent of Cognitive Science
The Question of AI - Turing, Searle, and Beyond

Week/Unit 12 Read some Freud for yourself!

Psychopathology before Freud
Freud
Freudians

Week/Unit 13 Review the Relationship between Psychometrics, Statistics and Psychology

Psychometrics and Psychology
Measuring and Mismeasuring Intelligence
"Modern" Issues

Week/Unit 14 And so...

Week/Unit 15 An "Appendix" on Ethics

- Kant (Axiomatic) and Bentham (Utilitarian)
- Ethics and Psychology
- the CFR and the IRB

NOTE: This is just a topical outline. The actual assignments are in the course shell for that week.

Assignments: Make a "graduate level" post addressing the learning objectives for that Unit.

Grades: Everybody who does as requested will make an "A."

The Instructor: Tracy B. Henley, PhD. I will be in my office in Binnion each M-W-F, but presumptively we will interact primarily online via: tracy.henley@etamu.edu.



That is what I still looked like until very recently (now I have less hair) as drawn by a student from many years ago. That student (Marshall Ramsey), by the way, went on to be a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.