

# 1.1 Why Study Psychology

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- Psychology Is About *You* And About *Us*
  - Psych is most popular because humans are interested in human behavior
  - Most psych studies are taken by college students
- Psychologists Explain Human Behaviors in Real-Life Contexts
  - Through social interactions, we form impressions of others and use these impressions to make predictions about their intentions and actions
  - Psychologists are people who study human behavior and reasoning for a living
  - **Psychological Science** is the study of the mind, brain, and behavior
    - Mind: mental activity
      - Mind in action: perceptual experiences when interacting the world (sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch)
      - Memories, thoughts, feelings
      - The physical brain enables the mind – “the mind is what the brain does”
    - Behavior: wide variety of observable actions
      - Mental states affect human behavior
    - Goals of psychology are to understand mental activity, social interactions, and how people acquire behaviors
  - Surprising Results
    - John Bargh and colleagues discovered that thoughts, feelings, and actions are determined by unconscious influences (without thought of effort)
      - Known as “the automaticity of everyday life”
      - Dutch experiment: subjects thought about professors, secretaries, or soccer hooligans and then engaged in a trivia game. People who thought of professors scored higher because ideas about the subjects intelligence levels were *primed* or activated

- Coffee Study: Holding different temperatures of coffee changed the subjects views on how they perceived the sample person to be (ie. Holding warm coffee made the subject assume the sample person was warm and kind)
- Psychological Knowledge Is Used In Many Professions
  - Psychological knowledge is needed for anyone who is in a career that involves understanding people
  - As humans dealing with other humans, we need the knowledge of psychology
- Physiological Science Teaches Critical Thinking
  - *Amiable Skepticism* is when one is open to new ideas but wary of new scientific findings when good evidence and sound reasoning do not support them
  - **Critical thinking** is the ability to use amiable skepticism and systematically evaluating information to reach reasonable conclusions
    - Includes looking for holes in evidence, using logic and reasoning to see if the information makes sense, considering biases and considering alternative explanations
  - How Critical Thinking Works
    - People often let their beliefs and biases determine how they label observations
    - Mozart Effect: People believed playing Mozart would improve brain function and cure neurological issues due to the fact a study was done in which a subject listened to Mozart and scored higher on an intelligence test
    - Later the study was looked into and it was found that the music itself did not cause the results but rather the overall effect of studying with a lifted and more relaxed mood gave

## 1.2 What Are the Scientific Foundations of Psychology

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- Psychology originated in philosophy
- *Schools of thought:*