Introduction to psychology

• **What is psychology?** A scientific study of behavior and cognition.
  • Cognition: an indirectly observable activity that is associated with “mental activity”
  • Behavior: observable activity that can be measured and recorded.

Scientific study employs systematic procedures that allow us to develop theories about psychology.

We can divide the field of psychology into **basic research areas and applied areas**
  1. Biological
  2. Perceptual
  3. Learning and Memory
  4. Cognitive
  5. Developmental
  6. Social
  7. Cultural

**Major research perspectives:**
  • Biological: How our physiology produces our behavior and mental processes
  • Cognitive: Perception, memory, and problem solving

Where did psychology come from?

• Psychology resulted from the marriage of physiology and philosophy
  • The first psychologist was **Wilhelm Wundt**, a German scientist.
    o He was interested in studying mental perspectives but from a scientific point of view
    o **Was a structuralist**
      ▪ For example, he studied how long it took to mentally register a perceptual event.
  • **First American psychologist was William James**
    o School thought that he was inspired by physics (philosophy)
    o **Was a functionalist**
      ▪ Everything has a function: bird beak and someone being mad/their emotions.

**Research methods**
**Descriptive method:**
  • Observational techniques