

Preface

If psychology is a science, then it should be presented as a science.

We live in an age in which science and technology have revolutionized the way we view the world, yet many students fail to realize that scientific methods can also be applied to the study of human behavior. While many students have no difficulty mastering numerous facts and principles, their behavior appears to be little changed by this experience—that is, there is little evidence that a first course in psychology has changed the way they interpret behavioral events. Perhaps this is because it is so difficult to remain objective about our behavior—and perhaps that is due, in part, to the ways in which texts present and support principles of psychology.

Throughout this text, I have attempted to actively involve students in the discovery process by inviting them to question assumptions and to participate in the scientific process of supporting or refuting ideas. Although the text is rich with content, it endeavors to bring students—and their own behavior—closer to the scientific process of observation and control.

The major goals of this textbook are to demonstrate to students how the science of psychology has evolved and how it continues to develop. I wanted to create a textbook that engages students in the scientific process by asking stimulating questions and demonstrating how scientific research proceeds in order to answer them. I believe it is important to show students how we know what we know by discussing principles of psychology in terms of the scientific context in which conclusions are demonstrated. More importantly, it discusses the methods of research used and it presents hundreds of classic and contemporary experiments in detail. Although it strives to present and interpret the most recent research available, it also discusses many older classic studies where they remain relevant.

Not all psychologists agree with a single approach to studying human behavior. Throughout this text, behavioral phenomena are discussed from different, and sometimes competing, perspectives. In cases in which the preponderance of evidence supports a particular perspective, I discuss the evidence for a stronger point of view. Psychology is a dynamic science, and other disciplines are continually adding to and changing our understanding. This is particularly evident in the rapidly evolving neural and biological sciences. Throughout this text I present the most recent and compelling biological perspectives when they are relevant.

Special Features

What makes this text different from others that are also well grounded in current research is the way in which research is presented. Throughout each chapter, I attempt to demonstrate how research evolves from simple questions about behavior, often by asking students to think about how answers to questions might be found. Then I show how research, using a variety of methods, answers these questions. In some cases, research does not lead to clear answers, and I discuss how to critically evaluate both sides of an issue. In many cases, I discuss how both the questions and the research are

influenced by individual personalities and the political climate of the time. Psychology, like any other science, is a dynamic, social process within which our knowledge continually changes.

Many of the topics discussed in this text have direct applications to human health and well-being. So, sections on *Applying Psychology* have been included where relevant.

New to This Edition

The 7th edition of *Psychology: The Science of Behavior* is the most current introductory textbook available. It continues to present contrasting theoretical perspectives, while maintaining a strong scientific orientation to the study of psychology. For instance, while the text emphasizes a strong scientific perspective, it also presents competing points of view on several of the most important topics, including animal language, behavioral disorders and their treatment, and issues in social psychology. Some of the most noticeable changes to the 7th edition include the following:

- Improved images and discussion of action potentials and propagation
- Updated drugs of abuse statistics to account for recent surges in opiate overdose deaths
- New research on perceptual expertise and inattention blindness
- Additional discussion on the use of punishment to control human behavior
- Added discussion of social learning in animals
- Added discussion of false memories for fake news
- Updated statistics and discussions of sexual orientation and identity
- Added discussion of differences in the neurobiology of complex and simple emotions
- Elaboration on emotion recognition and Botox injections
- Added discussion of Descartes's Square Model for decision-making
- Added discussion of social media influences on adolescent attitudes
- Updated marriage and divorce statistics
- Added discussion of social isolation during the COVID pandemic
- Expanded discussion of group differences in intelligence
- Added discussion of heuristics in artificial intelligence
- Revised discussion of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) to include the MMPI-3
- Added discussion of prejudice and modern social conflict
- Added discussion of intergroup threat and belief in conspiracy

These enhancements help ensure a textbook that will provide the most current introduction to the science of psychology and behavior.