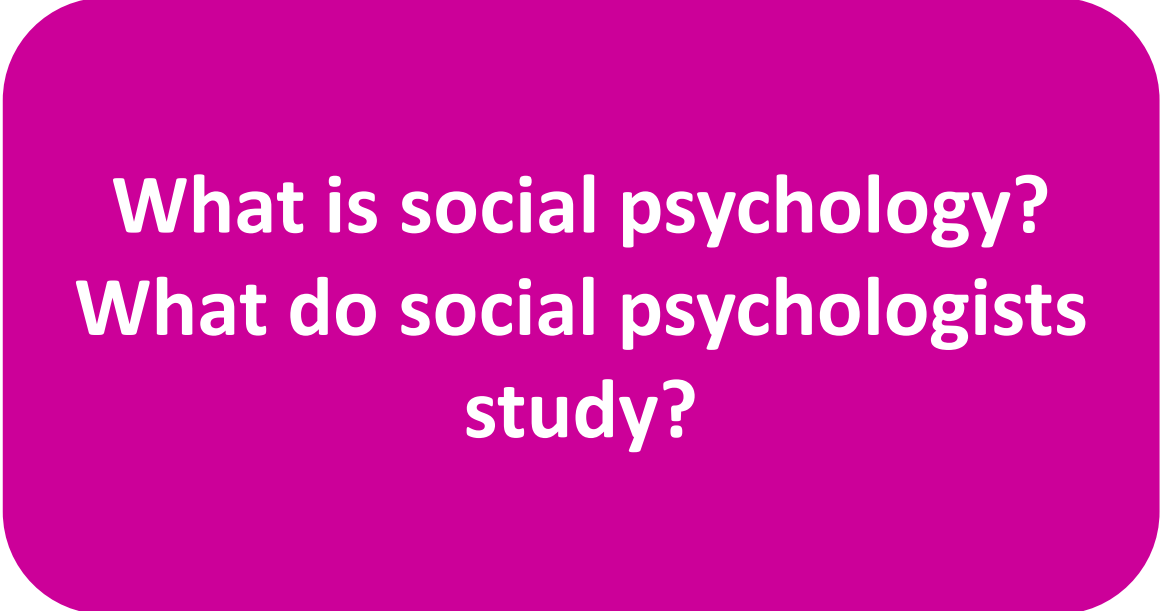




Overview of Social Psychology

Discussion Questions

1. What is social psychology? What do social psychologists study?
2. How is social psychology different from other fields of study? Why should we learn about social psychology?
3. How was the field of social psychology established? How has the field changed over time?
4. What is trending in the field of social psychology?



**What is social psychology?
What do social psychologists
study?**

What is social psychology?

- **Social psychology:** The scientific study of individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in social contexts
 - Reliance on evidence
 - Social and nonsocial factors



"All those in favor say 'Aye.'"
"Aye."

"Aye."

"Aye."

"Aye."

"Aye."

What do social psychologists study?



TABLE 1.1

Examples of Social Psychological Questions

Social Perception: What Affects the Way We Perceive Ourselves and Others?

- Why do people sometimes sabotage their own performance, making it more likely that they will fail? (Ch. 3)
- How do people in East Asia often differ from North Americans in the way they explain people's behavior? (Ch. 4)
- Where do stereotypes come from, and why are they so resistant to change? (Ch. 5)

Social Influence: How Do We Influence Each Other?

- Why do we often like what we suffer for? (Ch. 6)
- How do salespeople sometimes trick us into buying things we never really wanted? (Ch. 7)
- Why do people often perform worse in groups than they would have alone? (Ch. 8)

Social Interaction: What Causes Us to Like, Love, Help, and Hurt Others?

- How similar or different are the sexes in what they look for in an intimate relationship? (Ch. 9)
- When is a bystander more or less likely to help you in an emergency? (Ch. 10)
- Does exposure to TV violence, or to pornography, trigger aggressive behavior? (Ch. 11)

Applying Social Psychology: How Does Social Psychology Help Us Understand Questions About Law, Business, and Health?

- Why do people sometimes confess to crimes they did not commit? (Ch. 12)
- How can business leaders most effectively motivate their employees? (Ch. 13)
- How does stress affect one's health, and what are the most effective ways of coping with stressful experiences? (Ch. 14)

How is social psychology different from other fields of study? Why should we learn about social psychology?

How is social psychology different from other disciplines?

Social Psychology

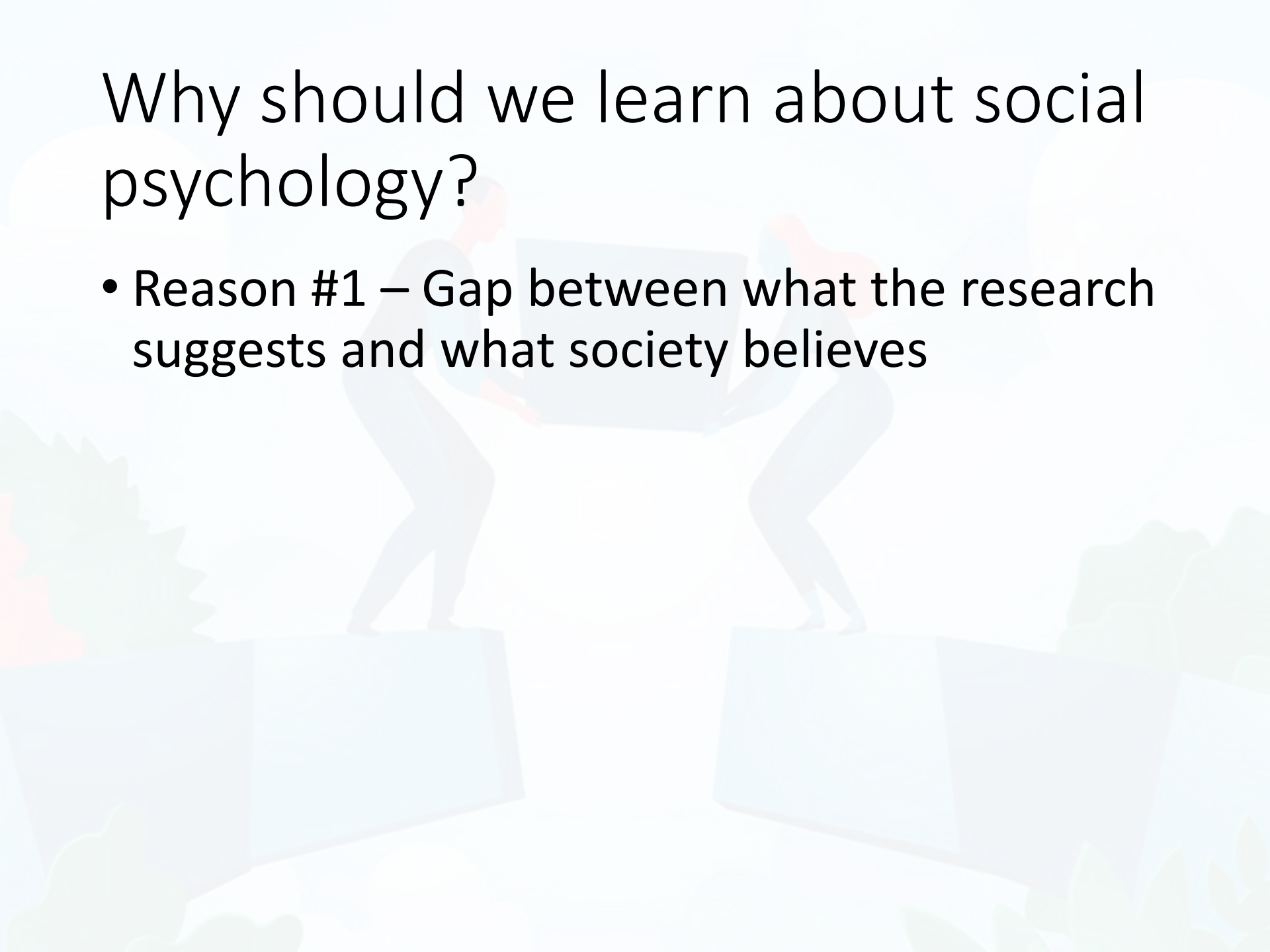
- Individuals
- Typical behavior
- Individual similarities
- Mental processes within social contexts


Other Fields

- Sociology – Groups
- Clinical psychology – Abnormal behavior
- Personality psychology – Individual differences
- Cognitive psychology – Mental processes

Why should we learn about social psychology?

- Reason #1 – Gap between what the research suggests and what society believes





An illustration featuring two stylized human figures, a man on the left and a woman on the right, both with red skin and blue clothing. They are standing on separate blue rectangular platforms that represent a gap. The man's platform is on the left and is labeled 'What research suggests'. The woman's platform is on the right and is labeled 'What society believes'. They are both leaning forward, holding a large, dark blue rectangular block between them, which serves as a bridge. This block contains the text 'Why should we learn about social psychology?'. The background is a light blue sky with soft, white clouds. Green bushes are visible at the edges of the platforms.

**Why should
we learn
about social
psychology?**

**What research
suggests**

**What society
believes**

Why should we learn about social psychology?

- Reason #2 – “Common sense” is not always supported by research.
 - Conflict with other common sense
 - Untestable, oversimplified, or misleading
 - “Knew-it-all-along” phenomenon

Why should we learn about social psychology?

- Reason #3 – Our social interactions and relationships influence us in many ways.



How was the field of social psychology established? How has the field changed over time?



How was the field established?

- 1898: Norman Triplett published the 1st research article in social psychology

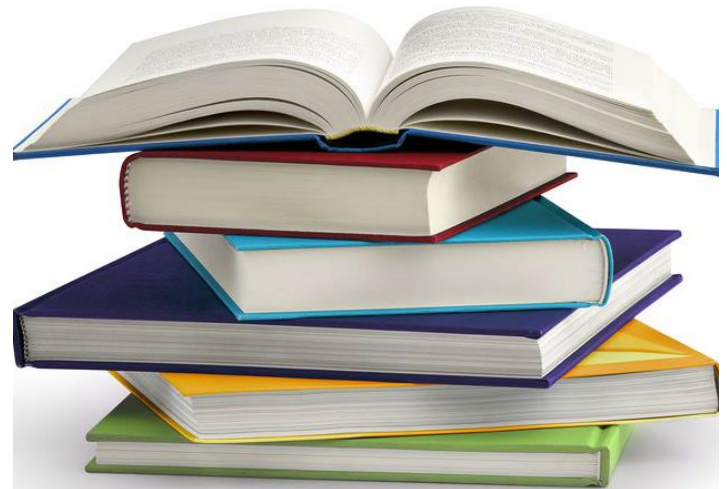


How was the field established?

1913: Max Ringelmann published article

How was the field established?

- Early 1900s: Established as a distinct field of study when 3 textbooks were published
 - William McDougall's in 1908
 - Edward Ross' in 1908
 - Floyd Allport's in 1924



How has the field changed over time?

- 1930s—1950s:
 - Adolf Hitler and the actions of Nazis during World War II sparked a global interest in social psychology.
 - Examples - Violence, prejudice, conformity, obedience, and genocide

How has the field changed over time?

- 1936:
 - Muzafer Sherif's experiments demonstrated the influence of groups on individuals (and that complex social behavior can be studied scientifically)
 - Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues established

How has the field changed over time?

- 1930s—1940s:
 - Kurt Lewin promoted *applied* social psychology
 - **Interactionist perspective:** Assumes behavior is a function of both the person and the environment



How has
the field
changed
over
time?

- 1950s:
 - Gordon Allport's book on stereotypes and prejudice
 - Solomon Asch's conformity study
 - Leon Festinger's social comparison and cognitive dissonance theories


How has the field changed over time?



- 1960s and early 1970s:
 - Expansion of topics
 - Increased criticism
 - Stanley Milgram's obedience study

How has the field of social psychology changed over time?

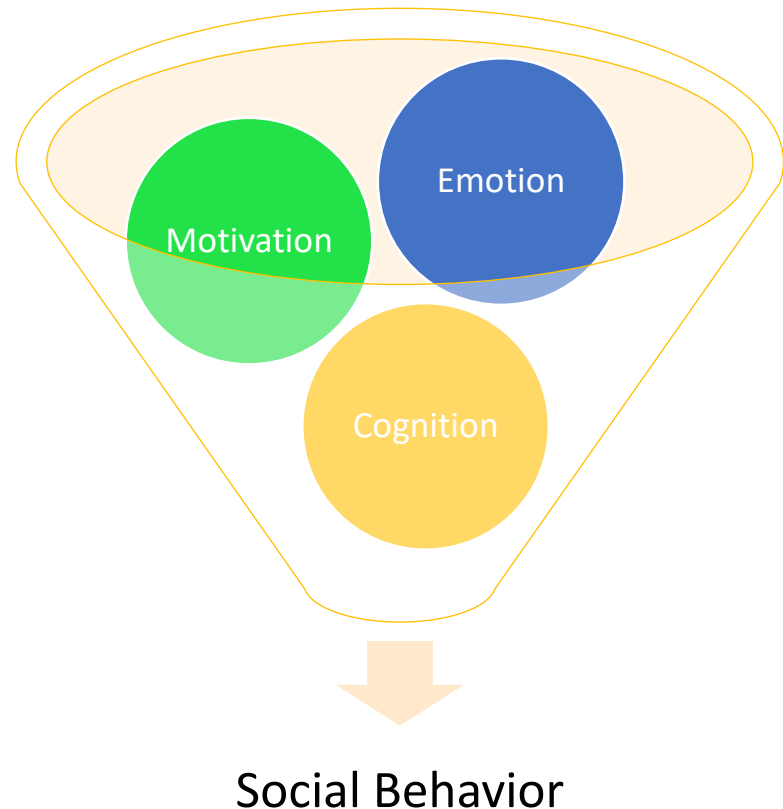
- Late 1970s—1990s:
 - Concerns about research ethics, researcher bias, and generalizability
 - **Pluralism:** Encompass a range of methods and perspectives



**What is trending in the field
of social psychology?**

What is trending in social psychology?

- Integration of emotion, motivation, and cognition
 - Conflicts
 - Automatic versus controllable processes





What is
trending in
social
psychology?

- Genetic and evolutionary perspectives
 - **Social neuroscience:** Neural and social processes
 - **Behavioral genetics:** Study of the effects of genes on behavior
 - **Evolutionary psychology:** Study of adaptations and functions of social behavior

What is trending in social psychology?

- **Culture:** The shared beliefs, values, assumptions, and practices of a group of people
 - **Cross-cultural research:** Examines the similarities and differences *between* cultures
 - **Multicultural research:** Examines similarities and differences between groups *within* a culture



What is trending in social psychology?

- **Behavioral economics:** Study of the relationship between psychological factors and economic decision making
- **Embodied cognition:** Connections between mind and body
- Intersection with political science



What is trending in social psychology?

- Technological advances
 - Examples - Brain imaging, dialogue coding, virtual reality, and social media

