

Psychology 4910 – Questions to Think About

1. Is Psychology a science? What makes it a science? Describe the developments in method and theory which make psychology a science. Can you think of examples of psychological research or practice which did not use scientific methods?
2. How does knowledge about human psychology influence our views about morality. What type of relationship should there be between ethics and psychology? How does knowledge of human psychology help us to decide what is the best way to live our lives? What is *eudamonia* and how does psychology help us attain it?
3. How has knowledge about human psychology influenced our views about the way society should be governed? about how criminals or the mentally ill should be treated? about how to bring up children? about educational methods?
4. Is psychology separate from biology and physiology? Is the ultimate goal of psychology to reduce all explanations of human and animal behaviour to physiological mechanisms? Will psychology be replaced by neuroscience? Describe the developments in physiology and show how they have influenced ideas about how the mind works.
5. What do we mean by “mind”? Is the mind a real thing, and if so, what type of real thing is it? Or is “mind” a social construct like hysteria or the Greek gods? Is it possible to have a scientific explanation of “mind”? How does our view of “mind” determine whether or not, and how, “mind” can be studied scientifically? Trace the development of ideas about what the mind is and how to explain it from the time of the Greeks to the present day.
6. Religion and science are often seen as incompatible. Discuss the relationship between religious ideas about the soul and what we mean by “mind”. Describe the development of the concept of “mind” from the time of the Greeks to the present day. How has religion (that is, Christianity) helped or hindered the development of psychology?
7. Throughout history, new knowledge about psychology or new theories have been applied before being tested to determine whether the application is appropriate. Describe situations in which psychological theories or findings have been applied prematurely. Show how some of these applications have been unethical.
8. Has psychology experienced any Kuhnian revolutions or is psychology is a pre-paradigm state? Was the Cognitive Revolution really a revolution in the Kuhnian sense? Have any other revolutions occurred in psychology?