

# Personality

What makes us who we are?

**Psychology 305A Lecture 3**

## **Research Methods in Personality Psychology**

# Reminder

- Research Assistant Positions available!
  - Emotion and Self Lab needs your help!
  - Email [jeff.emoselflab@gmail.com](mailto:jeff.emoselflab@gmail.com) for information about projects, positions, etc.
- Some Directed Studies positions available too
  - Earn course credit and get research experience

# Personality Descriptions:

Pick the set of adjectives that best describes your personality:

Set A: Pioneering, enthusiastic, courageous

Set B: Stable, stubborn, organized

Set C: Intellectual, adaptable, clever

Set D: Sensitive, nurturing, sympathetic

Set E: Extroverted, generous, authoritative

Set F: Critical, exacting, intelligent

Set G: Harmonizing, just, sociable

Set H: Secretive, strong, passionate

Set I: Honest, impulsive, optimistic

Set J: Ambitious, hard-working, cautious

Set K: Original, open-minded, independent

Set L: Kind, sensitive, creative

# It's in the stars!

## Astrological Personality descriptions

Set A: Pioneering, enthusiastic, courageous [*Aries*]

Set B: Stable, stubborn, organized [*Taurus*]

Set C: Intellectual, adaptable, clever [*Gemini*]

Set D: Sensitive, nurturing, sympathetic [*Cancer*]

Set E: Extroverted, generous, authoritative [*Leo*]

Set F: Critical, exacting, intelligent [*Virgo*]

Set G: Harmonizing, just, sociable [*Libra*]

Set H: Secretive, strong, passionate [*Scorpio*]

Set I: Honest, impulsive, optimistic [*Sagittarius*]

Set J: Ambitious, hard-working, cautious [*Capricorn*]

Set K: Original, open-minded, independent [*Aquarius*]

Set L: Kind, sensitive, creative [*Pisces*]

\*\*8% (about 11 people) expected by chance

# Percentage of people who believe in Astrology

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
58%	53%	64%

# Pre-Scientific Methods

- Astrology
  - Personality assessment based on birth date
- Physiognomy
  - Personality assessment based on shape of body, particularly the face
- Phrenology
  - Personality assessment based on morphology (shape) of skull



# Contemporary Approaches to Studying Personality

## Descriptive Methods

**Self-reports (surveys)**

**Observer-reports**

**Test Data**

**Life History Data**

# Descriptive Methods

There are 4 major types of descriptive methods

**Life History Data**

**Observer-reports**

**Test Data**

**Self-reports (surveys)**

**LOTS of data!**



# Descriptive Methods

## Self-Report

Asking people questions about their beliefs and behaviors



- Provided by the subject
- Responses to questionnaires

# Ten-Item Personality Inventory-(TIPI)

- You will be reading a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.
- Use the following scale:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7  
Disagree Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Agree Agree  
Strongly Moderately A little Agree nor A little Moderately Strongly  
Disagree

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately	Disagree A little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree A little	Agree Moderately	Agree Strongly
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I see myself as:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Extraverted, enthusiastic
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Critical, quarrelsome.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Dependable, self-disciplined.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Anxious, easily upset.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Open to new experiences, complex.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Reserved, quiet.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Sympathetic, warm.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Disorganized, careless.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Calm, emotionally stable.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Conventional, uncreative.

# Scoring the TIPI

- Extraversion
  - Reverse your score on #6 [1=7, 2=6, 3=5, 4=4, 5=3, 6=2, 7=1]
  - $(\#6R + \#1)$  divided by 2 = E score
- Agreeableness
  - Reverse your score on #2
  - $(\#2R + \#7)$  divided by 2 = A score
- Conscientiousness
  - Reverse your score on #8
  - $(\#8R + \#3)$  divided by 2 = C score
- Neuroticism
  - Reverse your score on #9
  - $(\#9R + \#4)$  divided by 2 = N score
- Openness to Experience
  - Reverse your score on #10
  - $(\#10R + \#5)$  divided by 2 = O score

# How do you compare?

- The average undergraduate student
  - Extraversion: 3.25
  - Agreeableness: 3.64
  - Conscientiousness: 3.44
  - Neuroticism: 2.97
  - Openness to experience: 3.48

$N = 2,249$  undergrads

# Self-Report Data

- Advantages

- Allows study of difficult-to-observe behaviors, thoughts and feelings
  - Who knows better?
- Easy to distribute to large groups

- Disadvantages

- Respondents may not be representative (convenience sampling is tempting)
- Responses may be biased or untruthful

# Descriptive Methods

## Observer Report

Observing behavior of others



# Example:

## Why did they want to be a leader?





# Observer reports of their personalities may provide answers



# Rate Obama and Harper's Personalities

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not at all                      Somewhat                      Very much

- Extraversion: sociable, outgoing, talkative
- Agreeableness: friendly, nice, easy to get along with
- Conscientiousness: goal-oriented, hard-working, diligent
- Neurotic: unhappy, anxious, stressed
- Open to Experience: open-minded, creative, flexible

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not at all                      Somewhat                      Very much

OBAMA

HARPER

- E
- A
- C
- N
- O

# Observer Reports: Who are the Observers?

- Parents, friends, teachers
  - Usually collected by questionnaire or rating form
- Trained observers
  - Systematic observations of behavior
- Untrained, participant-observers
  - Class ratings of Harper and Obama

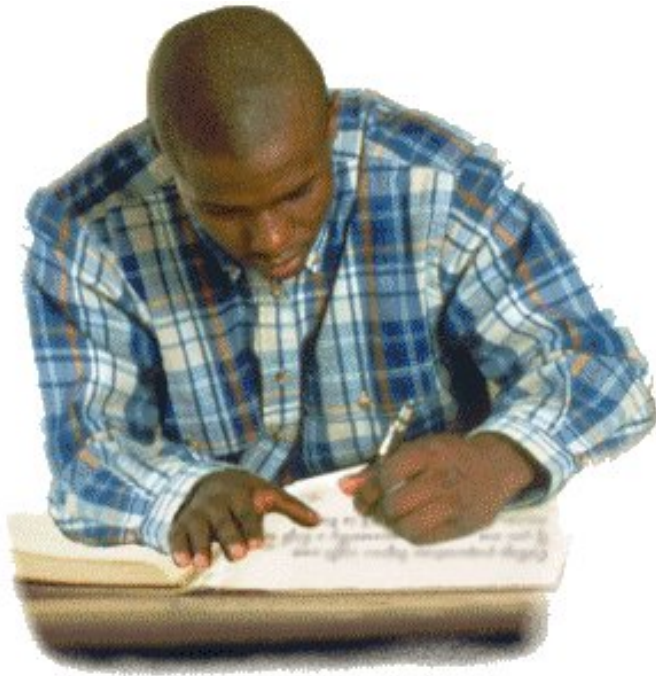
# Observer-Report Data

- Advantages
  - Capture spontaneous behaviors
  - Avoid bias of self-reports
- Disadvantages
  - Researcher interference
    - How naturalistic (vs. artificial) is the observation?
  - Rarity of some behaviors
    - Research on criminality
  - Observer bias & selective attention
  - Time consuming

# Descriptive Methods

## Test Data

Assessing an individual's abilities, cognitions, motivations, or behaviors, by observing their performance in a test situation



Tests may be written, physical (e.g., cardiogram), experimental, or physiological

# Kinds of Test Data

- Questionnaire tests
  - E.g., IQ
- Experimental tests
  - Megargee (1969) study of dominance
    - Does trait dominance (high vs. low) or gender predict leadership?
    - Paired high and low dominant men and women in “box repair” task
    - 4 kinds of groups:
      - (1) high dom ♀, high dom ♂
      - (2) high dom ♀, low dom ♂
      - (3) low dom ♀, low dom ♂
      - (4) low dom ♀, high dom ♂

# Megargee's Results

- Same sex
  - Male pairs?
    - High dom was leader (75%)
  - Female pairs?
    - High dom was leader (70%)
- Co-ed pairs
  - High dom male, low dom female?
    - Male was leader (90%)
  - High dom female, low dom male?
    - Male was still the leader! (80%)
- Why did this happen? Would it happen today?



# Information Derived from Tests

- Physiological
  - Individual differences in biological responses (i.e., heart rate, startle, blood pressure, etc.) to stimuli
    - E.g., startle reflex to loud noise

# Information Derived from Tests

- Projective techniques
  - E.g., the Rorschach
  - Perception of the stimulus reveals something about mental state or personality

# What do you see?



# Next Class

- Wrap up Methods
- Begin Psychoanalytic Approaches: Freud
- Homework: Larsen & Buss: Chapter 9