Personality
What makes us who we are?

Psych 305A: Lecture 5
-Quick Wrap up on Trait Taxonomies
-Issues in Trait Research: The Person-Situation Debate
-Review for Midterm

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Trait Taxonomies Wrap Up

- **How to build a trait taxonomy…**

Lexical Class Exercise

- What slang words do you use to describe a person?

Research Study:
The Lexical Approach to Pride

- Research Procedure (Step 1)
  - Asked participants to "list words that characterize what you think, feel, and do when you feel pride"
  - 205 participants listed a total of 795 different words
  - 65 words were listed by at least 2% of the sample (i.e., 4 people)

- Happy 64%
- Confident 64%
- Strong 34%
- Accomplish 30%
- Smile 29%
- Proud 24%
- Excited 20%
- Egotistic 20%
- Joy 18%
- Satisfied 17%
- Arrogant 15%
- Energetic 15%
- Powerful 13%
- Self-esteem 13%
- Show-off 11%
- Stand up straight 11%
- Success 10%
- Content 10%
- Achieve 10%
- Good 9%
- Better 9%
- Motivated 9%
- Respect 9%
- Superior 9%
- Boastful 8%
- Fulfilled 8%
- Courageous 7%
- Cocky 6%
- Relief 6%
- Head held high 6%
- Honor 6%
- Determined 6%
- Stubborn 6%
- Hard-working 6%
- Laugh 6%
- Love 6%
- Intelligent 5%
- Self-worth 5%
- Knowledgeable 5%
- Great 5%
- Winner 5%
- Haughty 4%
- Important 4%
- Self-centered 4%
- Independent 4%
- Overwhelming 4%
- Perseverant 3%
- Pleased 3%
- Positive 4%
- Relaxed 3%
- Reward 3%
- Self-assured 3%
- Self-confident 3%
- Special 4%
- Support 3%
- Talkative 4%
- Tall 4%
- Worth 3%
- Ability 4%
- Encourage 4%
- Conceited 3%
- Enthusiasm 3%
- Fearless 3%
- Friendly 3%
- Goal 3%

Pride Lexical Study

- Step 2: Figure out how words group together
  - Are there coherent sub-groups of words within the pride domain?
  - How are all the words related to each other?
    - Some should be more similar to each other than others

Developing a Trait Taxonomy
Part 2

- Statistical (Experiential) Approach
  - Factor analysis
  - Step 1: Ask participants to rate the extent to which each trait describes them
  - Step 2: Enter ratings into *factor analysis* program, which tells you how traits "hold together" in people's experiences

Statistical Approach to Pride

- "To what extent do you generally tend to feel…"
  - Each of the 65 pride words (e.g., arrogant, happy, conceited, accomplished, etc.)
  - Rated on the following scale:

1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 ——— 5

Not at all   Somewhat   Very Much

Statistical Structure of Pride: Results from Factor Analysis

Factor 1

- Accomplished
- Achieving
- Confident
- Happy
- Head held high
- Goal-fulfilled
- Self-assured
- Self-esteem
- Triumphant

Factor 2

- Arrogant
- Boastful
- Cocky
- Conceited
- Egotistic
- Haughty
- Self-centered
- Self-righteous
- Snobbish

Developing a Trait Taxonomy
Part 3

- ## Theoretical Approach
  - Think about how many traits *should* matter, based on some pre-articulated theory

Two Facet Theory

- **Authentic pride**
  - Promotes social investments
  - Fosters genuine self-esteem

- **Hubristic pride**
  - Related to aggression, hostility
  - Narcissism

- **If findings from factor analysis study converge with theoretical perspective, then we've probably found the structure of pride**

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Issues in Trait Research

- The person-situation Debate

MAI 68

1968

HEY JUDE
(Lennon & McCartney)

STREET FIGHTING MAN

THE ROLLING STONES

1968

PERSONALITY
AND
ASSESSMENT

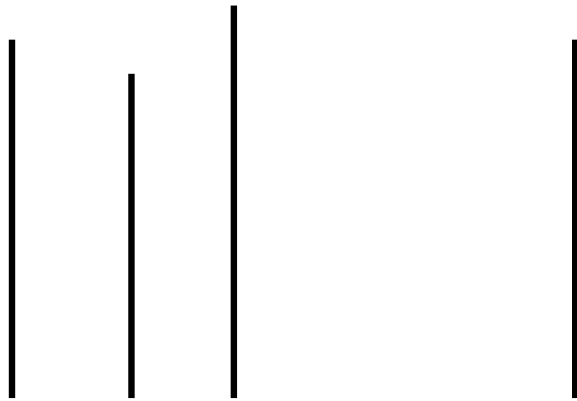Walter Mischel

What was going on in '68?

- Changes in Field of Personality:
  - End of the era of mega-theories (Freud, Jung, Maslow, Murray, etc.)
  - Era of middle-level theories
    - Domain-specific
    - Personality traits used to describe and predict certain types of behavior
    - $B = f\,(P)$
    - Behavior is determined by personality

What was going on in '68?

- Rise of Social Psychology
  - *Lewin's Interactionism*
    - Behavior as a function of person and situation
    - $B = f\,(P \times S)$
  - *Festinger's Situationism*
    - Reduced to $B = f\,(S)$
    - Personality = error variance, irrelevant

Situationism

- Emphasis on the *power of the situation* to shape people's behavior
  - Asch's conformity study

  - Milgram's obedience study
  - Zimbardo's prison study**

**now known to be largely an act

Mischel's Critique

- Personality does not predict behavior
  - $B = f(P)$ is wrong
- People act differently in different situations
- Knowing a person's level on a particular trait does not allow you to predict their behavior on any specific occasion

The result of Mischel's critique

- Personality psychology suffered!
  - Fewer grad programs
    - Currently, almost no solely P programs in the US or Canada, and possibly more pure S programs than combined S-P
  - Fewer researchers in the area
  - Fewer jobs

The Result of Mischel's Critique

- Social Psychology blossomed
  - Huge area of research
  - Many grad programs, researchers, and jobs
- But, over time, personality psychology fought back… and became stronger

Personality's Response

1. Personality traits predict behavior, but over the long-term
    - Your level of Extraversion is
        - a good predictor of the total number of times you will go to parties this quarter
        - but, a weak predictor of whether you will go to a party this Friday night
    - Like batting average; seasonal weather
- To predict behaviors, use *aggregation*
    - Averaging/summing together a set of behaviors

Personality's Response

2. Broad traits predict broad behaviors, narrow traits predict narrow behaviors

- Conscientiousness → academic performance
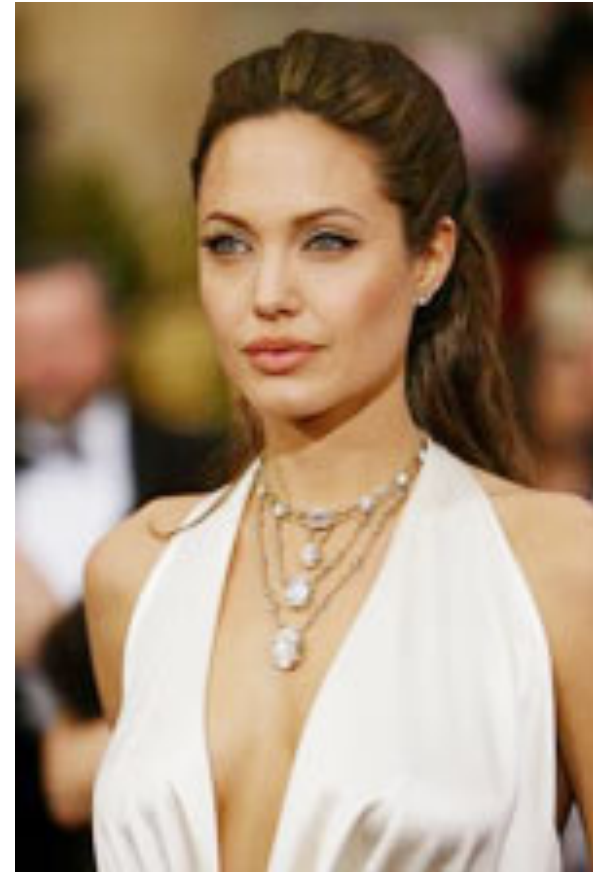- Punctuality → showing up to class on time

Personality's Response

3. People may differ in how they behave across situations, but are consistent relative to other people

Brad and Angelina

Moderate Extraversion

High Extraversion
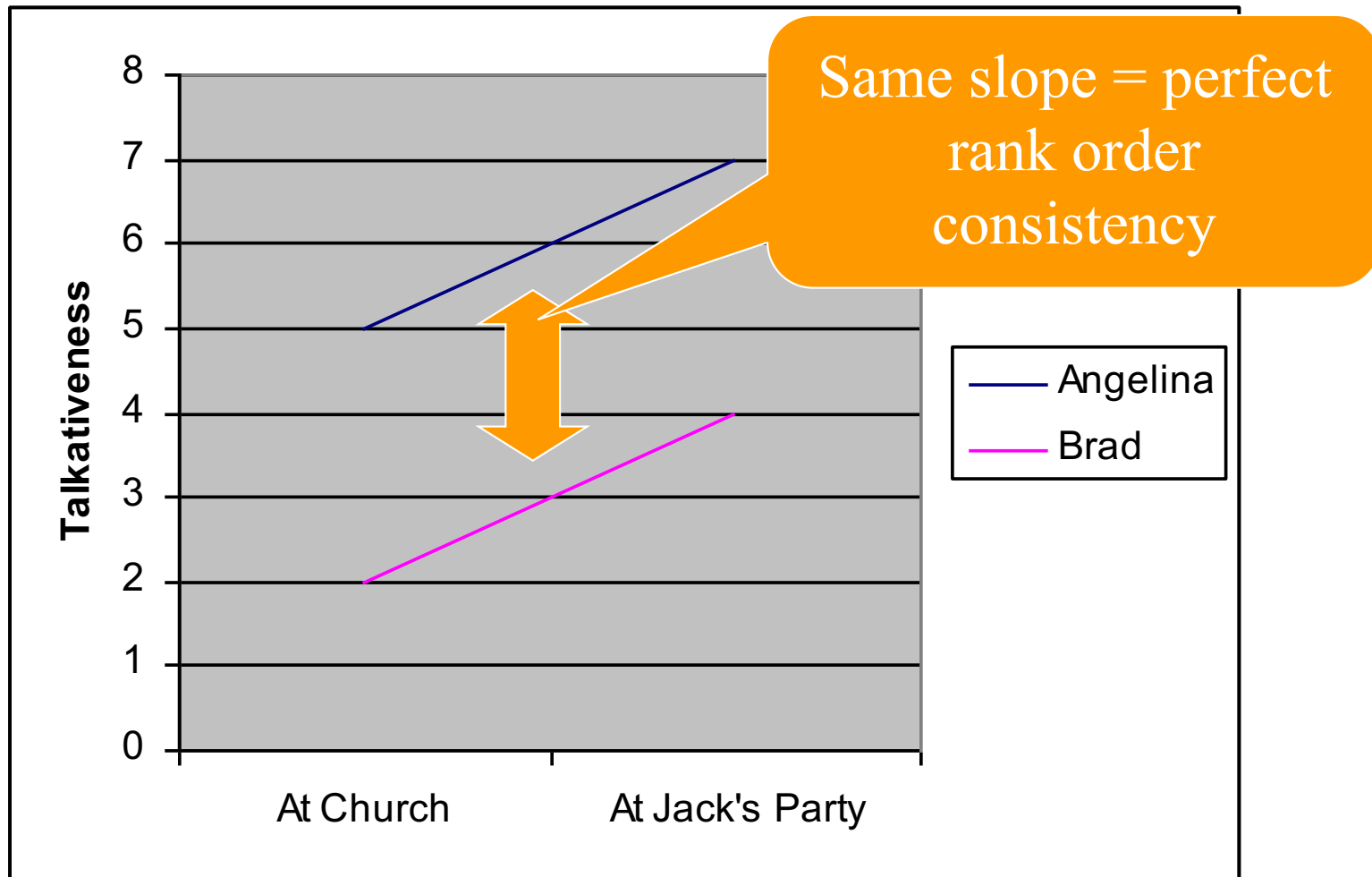
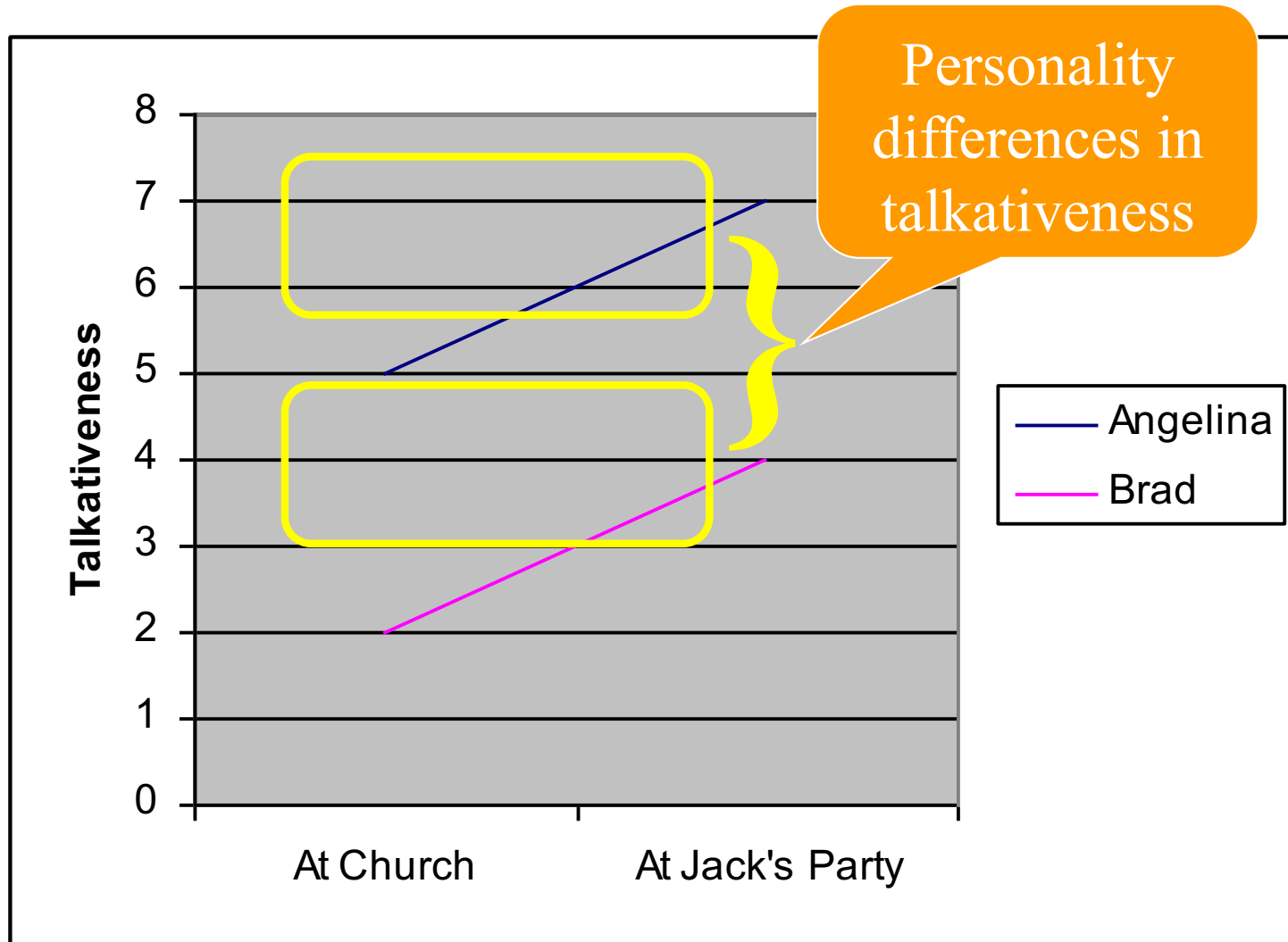# Brad and Angelina in Different Situations

- At Church

- At Jack's party

Rank-order consistency

Rank-order consistency

Personality's Response

4. Personality traits are stable over long periods of time

- – The degree to which a person is shy, organized, creative, friendly, etc. tends to be consistent from week to week, year to year, and even across the entire lifespan
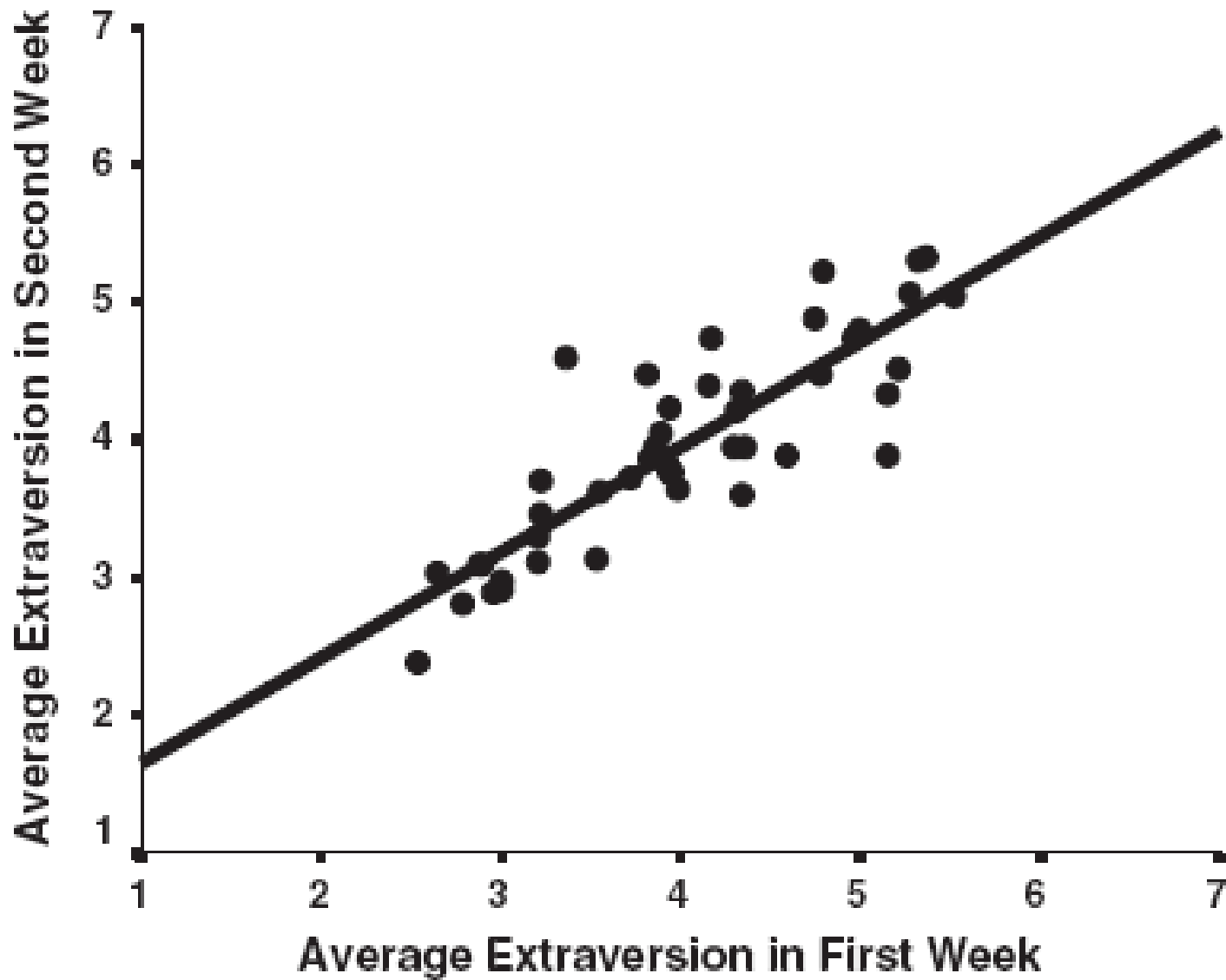
Fig. 3. Stability in behavior over time. Each point in this graph represents one person's average level of extraversion in 2 different weeks. How people act on average in one week is highly similar to how they act on average in another week.

Adult Personality is Linked to Child Temperament

Temperament Dimension	Big Five Dimension
Activity level	Extraversion
Sociability	Extraversion, Agreeableness
Emotional reactivity	Neuroticism
Attention level	Conscientiousness
Orienting sensitivity	Openness

Resolution of Person-Situation Debate: Interactionism

- Both personality and situation are important predictors of behavior

So how do we know which matters, when?

- Situational characteristics are better predictors of behavior
  - when situation is strong—with a high level of constraint

- Personality traits are better predictors of behavior
  - when situation is weak—with a low level of constraint

- **Degree of constraint**

  High

  people likely to show little variation in behavior

  (situation most important)

  Low

  people likely to show most variation in behavior

  (personality most important)

- **Situation**

  Church

  Job interview

  Elevator

  Family dinner

  Class

  Movies

  Restroom

  Bus

  Date

  Bar

  Football game

  Dorm lounge

  Park

  Own room

More recently, personality is fighting back in a new way

- Replicability crisis in social psychology

Scientific Studies: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)

Failure to Replicate in Social Psychology

- Most findings that have failed to replicate, or are known to have been p-hacked, are social psychology findings demonstrating the power of the situation

- E.g., "ego depletion", "power posing", "ideomotor priming"

Social Psychology in Crisis

- Social psych studies have historically tended to:
  - Use small samples
  - Maximize the apparent difference between two conditions, or two situations (rather than observe the relation between two variables)
  - Not heed the lessons of personality psychology (aggregation, narrow traits predict narrow behaviors, etc.)
- Personality psychology already equipped to deal with the crisis

As a result...

- Personality psychology back on the rise!
- Leading personality psychologists gaining fame
  - Developing better methods to deal with Questionable Research Practices (QRPs)
  - Researchers seeking reliable effects, less likely to be p-hacked, look to trait research
  - So far, no major personality findings have been targets of failed replication attempts
- Psych Depts seeking to employ researchers who produce reliable research

Midterm Review

Midterm Exam 1

- Approx. 45 Multiple Choice items (worth about 70-75% of total exam score)

- 1 essay question (worth about 25-30% of total exam score)

- Be sure to bring a No. 2 Pencil!

- Will start at 5 pm and go to about 6:30

Midterm 1 Topics

- Class introduction; What is personality?
    - Royal Tannenbaums
    - Abu Ghraib; person vs. situation
- Methods in personality research
    - LOTS of Descriptive Methods
    - Validity & Reliability
- Psychoanalytic Approach
    - Origins of theory, Freud's Basic Principles
    - Id, ego, superego; the unconscious
    - Defense mechanisms

Midterm 1 Topics

- Contemporary Psychoanalytic Approaches
  - Ego psychology
  - Narcissism
  - Object relations/adult attachment

- Phenomenological Approach/Motive Theories
  – Motive Theorists (3 Ms)
  – Humanistic Approach: Maslow, Rogers
  – The Self
  – Self-Esteem

Midterm 1 Topics

- ## Trait Approach
  - What are traits
  - Development of trait taxonomy
  - Eric's lecture
    - Important trait taxonomies (PEN and BIG 5)
    - Change and consistency in traits
  - Person-Situation Debate & Resolution

Midterm 1 Coverage

- Emphasize lectures & lecture notes
- Textbook chapters covered:
  - 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 14, 3, 4, & 5
- For material that's in textbook and lectures, know it well!
- Material that's in the textbook and not even touched on in lecture will not be targeted in exam questions
  - But could be used in your essay response