

Integrative essays: I will pick 4 of these 6 and you will need to answer 3 of those in 150-200 words each. Be as CONCISE and CONCRETE as possible – you really only have space to make one point/argument and use 1-2 solid examples to support it. Do not try to do more than you really need!

1. Do you think that psychology's "public relations problem" is well deserved? Discuss.
2. Many of the topics that we covered in class have an evolutionary explanation: these phenomena may exist because they were adaptive in our evolutionary past as a species. This idea has historically been particularly compelling in the domain of gender differences. Pick a robust psychological gender difference, and explain why it might have evolved as the product of natural and/or sexual selection. Include criticisms as appropriate.
3. On the first day of class, I provided this definition of psychology: "the scientific study of behavior & mental processes." To what extent is the word 'scientific' justified? (For example, does it accurately describe all aspects of the field?)
4. Critically evaluate the claim that perception is not determined simply by the stimulus; rather, "it is a dynamic searching for the best interpretation of the available data ... perception involves going beyond the immediately given evidence of the senses" (Gregory, 1966). Is this true of memory as well?
5. In class I referred a number of times to "classic" studies. What criteria would you use to say that something is a "classic" study that should be taught in most intro psych classes? Can contemporary psychology hope to create classic studies of the future? Why or why not?
6. Behaviorism was ascendant in mid-century but was largely killed by overwhelming evidence that not all human behavior can be explained by external reward/punishment structures. Give me a good example of this (for example, when do human cognitive responses lead us to react against punishment or be insensitive to rewards?) and comment upon whether behaviorism has any redeeming aspects.