Personality Theories

- Consistent or *distinctive* tendencies to behave in a certain way.
- Implies some *consistency across situations*
Psychoanalytic Theory

• Developed by Sigmund Freud

• Importance of instincts
  – Sexual instinct
  – Aggressive instinct

• Instincts must be balanced with social acceptability
Psychoanalytic Theory: Structure of Personality

- **Id**
  - Unconscious drives and instincts
  - Follows the pleasure principle, instant gratification

- **Ego**
  - Follows the reality principle
  - Balancing id’s demands with social approval

- **Superego**
  - Moral guardian, conscience
  - May impose self-punishment, guilt, shame
Psychosexual Stages of Development

- **Oral**: birth to 12-18 months old
  - Pleasure through sucking, mouthing, chewing
- **Anal**: 18-36 months
  - Ability to control elimination
Psychosexual Stages of Development

• Phallic: ages 3-6
  – Masturbation of penis or clitoris
  – Boys: Oedipus complex, castration anxiety
  – Girls: Electra complex, penis envy

• Latent: ages 6-12
  – Sexual impulses remain dormant

• Genital: puberty
  – Attraction to opposite gender
  – Sexual intercourse, marriage, child bearing
Psychoanalytic Theory: Personality Development

• Psychosexual stages of development
• Superego as a result of resolution of the Oedipal/Phallic conflict.
  – Characterized by changes in libido, shifting location of erogenous zones
  – Fixations may occur
    • Personality traits characteristic of a certain stage
Psychoanalytic Theory: Defense Mechanisms

- Ego prevents anxiety by keeping troubling desires, memories from consciousness.

Defense Mechanisms/Examples
- Repression
- Denial
- Reaction formation
- Rationalization
- Projection
- Sublimation
Projective Tests

• Unstructured or ambiguous stimuli to be interpreted
  – Assume people “project” needs, drives, motives through responses

• Examples
  – Rorschach test: inkblots
  – Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

• Evaluating projective tests
Sample TAT
Rorschach Inkblot (Figure 12.6)
Other Psychodynamic Approaches

- Beyond Sigmund Freud: neo-Freudians
- Lesser emphasis on sex and aggression
- Greater emphasis on social relationships, ego, concept of self
Trait Perspective

- Personality consists of traits
  - Stable, enduring characteristics or dispositions
  - Describe and predict behavior
- Focus on
  - How people differ in traits
  - Ways of measuring traits
  - Organization of traits
Five-Factor Model of Personality

• “Big Five” model
  – Neuroticism (anxiety vs. Stability)
  – Extraversion- “outgoingness or social adaptability”
  – Openness- willingness to adjust to new situations
  – Agreeableness- compatibility with others; ease of getting along with others
  – Conscientiousness- responsible, hard working; consider others
Figure 11.1 The five-factor model of personality. Trait models attempt to analyze personality into its basic dimensions. McCrae and Costa (1985, 1987, 1997) maintain that personality can be described adequately with the five higher-order traits identified here, which are widely referred to as the “Big Five.”
Genetic Basis of Traits

- Heredity plays important role in personality
  - Neuroticism
  - Shyness
  - Aggressiveness
  - Novelty-seeking

- Interactions of biology and environment
Traditional Behavioral View

- Watson, Skinner
- All behavior is learned
  - Classical conditioning
  - Operant conditioning
- History of reinforcements and punishments shapes behavior
Social-Cognitive Theory

- Personality is based on learning
  - Going beyond traditional behaviorism

- Importance of
  - Cognitive aspects of behavior
    - Expectancies
  - Social aspects of behavior
    - Imitation
Social-Cognitive Theory

• Albert Bandura
  – Reciprocal determinism
    • Cognitions, behaviors, environmental factors influence each other
  – Observational learning

Efficacy expectations
• Self-efficacy
Reciprocal Determinism (Figure 12.4)
Evaluating the Social-Cognitive Perspective

• Benefits
  – Understanding of behavior and environmental factors
    • Behavior therapy
  – Broadening of learning theory
    • Cognitive-behavioral therapy

• Criticisms
  – Fails to include unconscious influences, heredity
  – Little focus on subjective experience
Humanistic Perspective

• Central features
  – Conscious choice
  – Personal freedom
  – Free will, choices
Humanistic Perspective

- Carl Rogers
  - Self-theory
    - Self-actualization
    - Self-concept
    - Self-esteem
      - Unconditional positive regard
      - Conditional positive regard
    - Self-ideals
  - Client-centered therapy
Humanistic Perspective

- Abraham Maslow
  - Emphasis on self-actualization
Measuring Personality Today

• Two major categories
  – Self-report personality inventories
  – Projective tests
Self-Report Personality Inventories

- Objective tests
  - Scored objectively
  - Limited response options
  - Based on research

- Example: Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)
  - Standard scores

- Evaluating self-report tests