Lecture 13

Emotions
Psychology 101

Overview
- How do we experience emotions?
- What are some aspects of emotions?
- How can we apply emotions to our lives?

What is emotion?
- A response of the whole organism, involving
  - Physiological arousal
  - Expressive behaviors
  - Conscious experience

How do these things relate to each other?
- Does our heart pound because we are afraid, or are we afraid because our heart was pounding?

James-Lange Theory of Emotion
- Experience of emotion is awareness of physiological responses to emotion-arousing stimuli

Cannon-Bard Theory of Emotion
- Emotion-arousing stimuli simultaneously trigger:
  - physiological responses
  - subjective experience of emotion
Schachter’s Two-Factor Theory of Emotion

- To experience emotion one must:
  - be physically aroused
  - cognitively label the arousal

Capistrano Bridge Experiment

- Two bridges (one high and one low)
  - Female grad student approaches males on each bridge
  - Asked them to write a story
    - Gave them card and told them to call if they had any questions
  - Men on higher bridge more likely to have sexual imagery in their story and more likely to call the experimenter later

What does this mean?

- Men on high bridge confused their excitement from the bridge with sexual energy and believed they had a connection with the grad student

Cognition and Emotion

- The brain has a shortcut for emotions to get where they are needed
  - Allows quick response

Do Lie Detectors Work?

- Polygraph
  - machine commonly used in attempts to detect lies
  - measures several of the physiological responses accompanying emotion
    - perspiration
    - cardiovascular
    - breathing changes
Emotion--Lie Detectors

- **Control Question**
  - Up to age 18, did you ever physically harm anyone?
- **Relevant Question**
  - Did [the deceased] threaten to harm you in any way?
- Compare the responses: if there is a larger response to the relevant question, they are lying

**What do lie detectors give you?**

- Control question
- Relevant question

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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Innocent people</th>
<th>Guilty people</th>
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<td>Judged innocent by polygraph</td>
<td>Judged guilty by polygraph</td>
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50 Innocents
50 Thieves

- 1/3 of innocent declared guilty
- 1/4 of guilty declared innocent (from Kleinmuntz & Szucko, 1984)

How accurate are they?

Which emotions do we need to detect most quickly?

People will find the angry face faster than the happy face

Emotions are Universal

- Happy, surprise, fear, sad, anger, disgust

Infants have these too

Interest is extra here
Other ideas

- Catharsis
  - emotional release
  - catharsis hypothesis
  - "releasing" aggressive energy (through action or fantasy)
  - relieves aggressive urges
  - Not really true
- Feel-good, do-good phenomenon
  - people's tendency to be helpful when already in a good mood

Does money buy happiness?

- Finances only correlate with happiness in very low income groups

![Graph showing percentage of people describing themselves as very happy vs. average per-person after-tax income in 1995 dollars.](image)