

## Class Meeting **1**

February 1

Theme: **Introduction and Overview: Why Study "Feelings?"  
Conduct and Administration of Subject**

### INTRODUCTION:

Distribution of preliminary information and benchmark questionnaires.

Completion and redistribution of preliminary information and (pseudonymous) benchmark questionnaires.

We introduce ourselves and state our business.

Who/what/where/when are we?

And what is going on here?

"Everything that is said is said by someone." (Humberto "Chicho" Maturana).

What does that **mean** in this context?

Why draw attention to the issue of "perspective" or "point of view at the outset?"

We call a SHORT BREAK to enable people not yet finding themselves ready, willing and able to commit to the process of participating in 9.68 as "serious students," to leave. This will hopefully leave us with at least a few people remaining. To you, the instructors pledge a good faith effort to do what we can to make 9.68/04 into the best possible learning experience for everyone concerned.

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### STUDY GROUP FORMATION:

Toward that end, we next randomly divide up the class and organize ourselves into a number of study groups.

Continuing our line of inquiry, we define the groups that we have formed (and their individual members) as 9.68 subsystems. This leads into a discussion of the "systems approach" to be taken.

We introduce some evolutionary, experiential, neuropsychological, psychodynamic, literary, poetic, dramaturgical and sociological aspects of affect in human systems; identify some historically significant developments associated with the names (among others) of:

Hippocrates, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Galen; Rene Descartes and Blaise Pascal, Gall Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, William James, Claude Bernard, Walter B. Cannon, Sigmund Freud, John .F. Fulton & C.B. Jacobsen, Paul MacLean, James W. Papez,

Heinrich Klüver, Karl Lashley, Daniel S. Lehman, Donald O. Hebb, Karl Pribram, Hans-Lukas Teuber, James Olds and Peter Milner, Mortimer Mishkin, H. Eger Rosvold, Larry Weiskrantz, Allan F. Mirsky, Arthur Kling William H. Sweet, Vernon H. Mark and Frank R. Ervin.

#### FOCUS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION:

The whole context of our remembered experience of the meaning of this situation is in process of conditioning and constraining our present thoughts and feelings and conduct.

By the same token, what will happen in this context – for example, whether or not and if so to what extent you will learn anything here that turns out to be useful in leading your life -- is bound to depend on your background, experiences and attitudes and will definitely be conditioned and constrained (for better / worse) by the habits of thinking feeling and acting that you bring to the learning process.

The existence of an introspectively observable succession of mental events (WJ's "stream of consciousness"; our "thoughts" and "feelings" – along with the inconcussible fact of our overtly observable behavior (actions; what we actually and visibly may be said to do) – is the primal fact for anyone who aspires to comprehend (let alone to predict and or to control) the organization and development of human systems at the psychological level of organization.

#### SOME PROBLEMS OF LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION:

Some relations involving "meaning" and "power" (and why they "matter")  
How is human psychology (mental life and behavior) organized?  
Of what are our mental lives comprised?

What is introspection?

How do the inwardly experienced aspects of mental life relate to outwardly expressed aspects of human behavior?

What would we have if we had an understanding of these things?

Our inquiries will lead us – perhaps not unsurprisingly – to the idea that systematic (and recursively cyclical) relationships among the cognitive, affective and expressive / receptive aspects of our mental lives and behavior; that our ways of "thinking, feeling and doing" are systematically interrelated. But how? This is the question to which we next turn.