

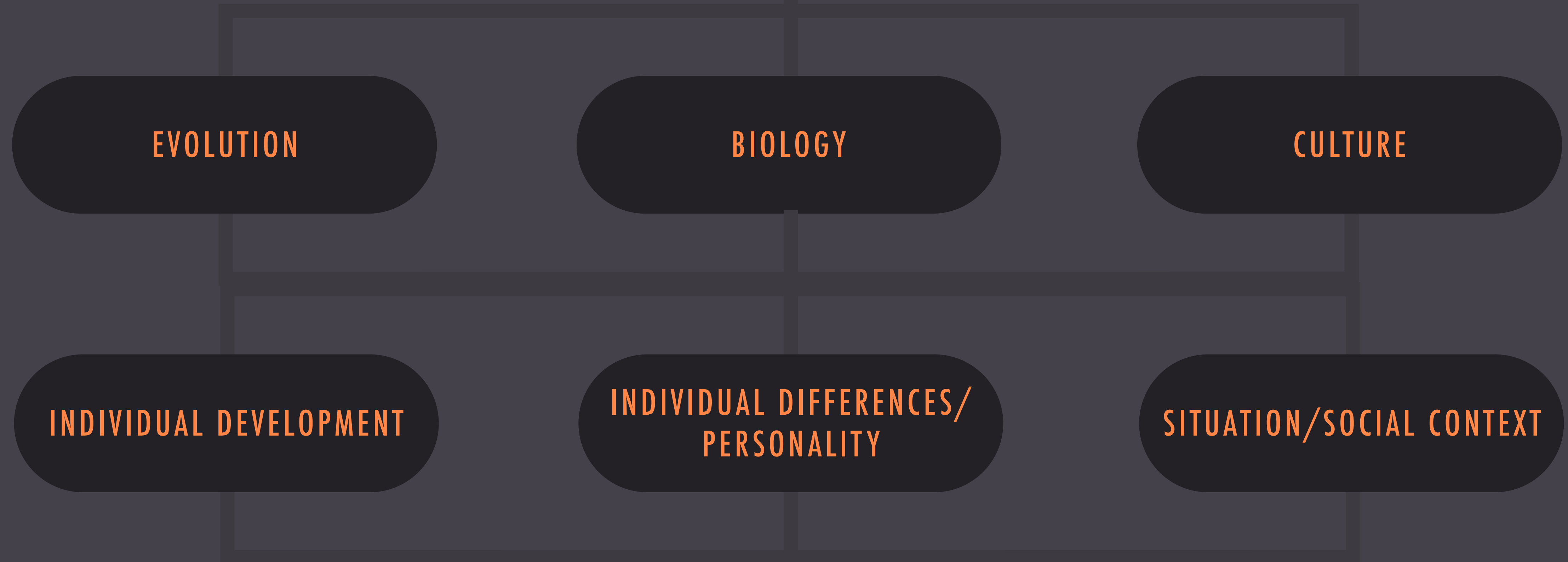
Social Psychology: Two Big Ideas



PSYCH 1101: DAY 29

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Explaining The Mind: Different Levels Of Analysis



Social Psychology: Two Big Points

- 1. The Power of the Situation:** our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are powerfully shaped by the social environment.
- 2. The Self/Other Divide:** our perception of other people is fundamentally different than our perception of *ourselves*.

First Big Point: The Power Of The Situation

- Our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are shaped by the immediate social situation.
 - the situation can overwhelm our plans and intentions and our stable personality traits
 - e.g., features of the environment can make good people more likely to do bad things
 - Zimbardo prison experiment
 - Milgram obedience experiment
 - can also encourage people to do good things



The Sweet Smell Of Helping

(Baron, 1997)

- What determines whether people are willing to help a stranger by giving him change for \$1?
- Whether they are helpful people?
- What part of the mall they happen to be standing in?
 - 60% helped in front of Cinnabon
 - 20% helped in front of Banana Republic.



The Power Of The Situation

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 - Zimbardo prison experiment
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- can also encourage people to do good things
- can cause changes in attitudes



Photograph by D. Pizarro

Priming People With A Cleanliness Reminder Shifts Their Political Orientation



Second Big Point: The Self Is “Special”

- The way that we think about ourselves is fundamentally different than the way we think about other people
- Across a variety of domains, we demonstrate positive illusions about ourselves and are harsher (or more realistic) about other people
 - **Motivational:** We want to maintain a positive view of ourselves because it feels good.
 - **Informational:** We have imperfect access to information about ourselves and about others

The Spotlight Effect: We Think People Notice Us More Than They Do (Gilovich Et Al, 2000)

