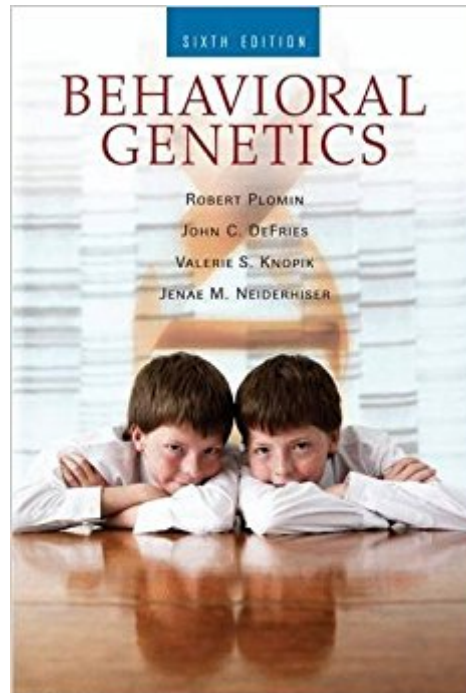




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Behavioral Genetics



Synopsis

For over four decades, Behavioral Genetics has explored the crossroads where psychology and genetics meet, advancing step by step with this dynamic area of research as new discoveries emerge. The new Sixth Edition takes its place as the clearest, most up-to-date overview of human and animal behavioral genetics available, introducing students to the field's underlying principles, defining experiments, recent advances, and ongoing controversies.

Book Information

Hardcover: 560 pages

Publisher: Worth Publishers; 6 edition (September 24, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1429242159

ISBN-13: 978-1429242158

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

ROBERT PLOMIN from the Institute of Psychiatry, London, UK. JOHN C DeFRIES works at the University of Colorado, Boulder, USA. VALERIE S KNOPIK is Director of the Division of Behavioral Genetics at Rhode Island Hospital, and Associate Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry & Human Behavior and Behavioral & Social Sciences at Brown University, USA. JENAE M. NEIDERHISER is Liberal Arts Research Professor of Psychology, The Pennsylvania State University, USA.

I purchased this textbook for an undergraduate course in Behavioral Genetics. Overall, I thought this was a very helpful book for the class. The readability is okay, with it not being too difficult but not being the most exciting thing you'll ever read, even by textbook standards. The strengths of this book include the broad scope that it covers (in general, it covers a wide range of behavioral genetic issues and fields of research, while still getting fairly specific with many of them). Some of the charts and graphs are useful, while others aren't. I've had other textbooks that do a better job with the

terms used. The field of behavioral genetics has a lot of words that will be new to people, and I like it when textbooks of this nature define the words in the glossary in the margins of the first page in which the term is used, but this book does not do that. I think that the book did a very good job of preparing me for lectures. I felt ahead of the game when I would read the next chapter before lecture. Another strength of this book in my opinion is that they did a very good job of laying the groundwork for discussing the findings in specific fields of research (personality, intelligence, disorders, etc.). This was done by being very thorough in the discussion of the "research methods," twin and adoption studies, gene-environment interactions, animal models, etc. I also thought the epigenetic section and the discussion of it in the following chapters was good, which I had high expectations for. To the reader new to this field, the discussion of molecular genetics might seem unsatisfactory. However, that is due to the state of the research, and not the book. You will hear the following phrase many, many times: "multiple genes of small effect are likely implicated in behavior _____." Here's a rundown of the topics you will encounter in this book:

- 1 Overview
- 2 Mendel's Laws of Heredity
- 3 Beyond Mendel's Laws
- 4 DNA: The Basis of Heredity
- 5 Animal Models in Behavioral Genetics
- 6 Nature, Nurture, and Human Behavior
- 7 Estimating Genetic and Environmental Influence
- 8 The Interplay Between Genes and Environment
- 9 Identifying Genes
- 10 Pathways Between Genes and Behavior

*As you can see, a large focus of this book goes toward explaining, in essence, how this field works. In a field with some resistance (to genetics having a large role in behavior), this is probably a good thing.

- 11 Cognitive Disabilities
- 12 General Cognitive Ability
- 13 Specific Cognitive Abilities
- 14 Schizophrenia
- 15 Other Adult Psychopathology
- 16 Developmental Psychopathology
- 17 Personality and Personality Disorders
- 18 Substance Use Disorders
- 19 Health Psychology and Aging
- 20 Evolution and Behavior
- 21 The Future of Behavioral Genetics

As a quick aside, I found most of the chapters thorough. The only exception to this was the Evolution and Behavior chapter. It was short and in my opinion, basically just a lazy chapter. There is a whole field of Evolutionary Psychology to draw information from, and we get a whole 16 pages devoted to it. This was disappointing.

A summary:

Pros:

- 1) For the most part, each chapter is thorough
- 2) The book has a wide scope
- 3) Much of the book is fairly straightforward to comprehend

Cons:

- 1) Somewhat dry
- 2) The evolution chapter was subpar
- 3) The glossary/terms list could be more user-friendly

I think this textbook is solidly between a 4 and 4.5 star rating. It certainly isn't the best textbook I've ever read but it does a nice job in most of the essential areas.

In this brand new 6th edition of the leading classic in Behavioral Genetics (BG), the authors promise the "handing of the baton" to a new generation of researchers. This is not just marketing or lip

service, as two of the hottest young experts in this exploding field (Valerie Knopic and Jenae Neiderhiser, from Brown and Penn State respectively) have been recruited to significantly update both the research and the "friendliness" of the pedagogy, as well as very recent genome related developments. Beginning with Mendel's basics, the authors go on to cover the entire BG field with enthusiasm, scientific skepticism, and an outstanding didactic that makes this ideal for both self study and course work. The chapters include: Mendel, Quantitative Genetics, DNA, Animal models, Nature - nurture - human behavior, Genetic vs. Environmental influences / interplay, Behavioral gene identification, Gene / behavior pathways, Cognitive disorders, General cognitive abilities, Specific abilities, Schizophrenia, Other pathologies, Developmental, Personality and disorders, Substance abuse, Aging, Darwin, Future topics and a Statistical/ quant appendix. The "tone" and style, like previous editions is "study after study" -- nearly every paragraph is punctuated with so many studies and reviews that the read is panoramic and breathtaking. As you can see, both normal and path are covered extensively. Many years ago, I was astonished to read observational accounts of identical twins separated at birth, that when reunited had shocking behavioral elements like the same belt buckle, astonishingly close spousal choices, and many other behavioral traits and choices that "couldn't possibly be" of genetic origin at the time! The authors, with dry humor, weigh in on the nature/nurture issue by suggesting that growing up in the same environment might account for more differences than similarities! With twins running strongly in my family, I can see this clearly! Because the research literature is still riddled with "less than completely reliable" meta analysis and other studies and techniques that are rarely conclusive, even though these very competent authors are indeed both researchers and hospital affiliated practitioners in this field, they put heavy doses of controversy and skepticism on each page-- giving a true scientific feel for where the research really is today. I'd put the level all the way from advanced High School to advanced undergrad, depending on your previous courses, and other than the (as usual) exorbitant price, would have made a fine intelligent layperson's text as well, and a refresher for practicing geneticists and psychologists. The quantitative and molecular biology aspect have some grad elements, but are generally within reach with basic calc and biochem. New decision theory and behavioral economics sections have been added, with an interesting twist that I've not seen in a lot of those literatures. If you're on a constrained budget, you can get away with a previous edition, available on for far less now that this is out (as little as \$5, or \$10 Prime @ this writing), as you'll be missing updated research you can find on the new book's website to some extent, but I'd only take this step if the field is ancillary rather than primary to your needs and field. If you're taking it for a course, you won't be disappointed, and if you're teaching, our Library Picks and ClassPros databases show this

as the #1 text in its field for over a decade. The biggest downside of older editions is the style itself-- these authors give CURRENT studies one after another, and this has been greatly updated in the past 5 years. "There's a big genetic factor in bedwetting and ADHD (x%), less so anxiety (more environmental), more so in depression..." then: reference, reference, reference... and areas x, y, z are understudied, or there is only one twin study... etc. This style gives an awesome snapshot of the research landscape today, valuable even for advanced researchers, even though the style and language are very readable for any bright undergrad. I COULDN'T find "all" the studies that show what percent of lifetime joy and happiness are genetic, however... maybe the 7th? There also is a wealth of additional web resources in this new edition -- a sign of the times. If you're using another text or just class notes, at least a previous edition of this fine work is a must have, with the above caveats. As a bonus both the 5th and 6th editions are written in a lively, readable, "non dry" style that doesn't put you to sleep as many texts this large and dense can. The technical detail also is high enough to make it a realistic reference work, and previous edition retention rates are higher than the average text we rate for libraries and professors-- meaning more students hang on to their copies than average-- unusual in today's economy! One unusual praise for the publisher: so many today just issue new editions to rip us off with minor changes, it's pathetic-- and many teachers go along with it. This is NOT the case here, as a LOT of new studies are happening in this electric and important area of research, and the coverage of new developments is encyclopedic. You'll truly know what's got good evidence, what's uncertain, and what's BS when you're done-- the authors have a refreshing skeptical honesty about their own field. Those three valences look sadly like the normal curve in the order given, btw. Library Picks reviews only for the benefit of shoppers and has nothing to do with , the authors, manufacturers or publishers of the items we review. We always buy the items we review for the sake of objectivity, and although we search for gems, are not shy about trashing an item if it's a waste of time or money for shoppers. If the reviewer identifies herself, her job or her field, it is only as a point of reference to help you gauge the background and any biases.

got it for a text book for school. good read. even read some extra chapters cause they were interesting.

Received in a condition better than i was expecting

Good read. Concepts are explained well. Easy to read.

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This text is a little dry but lots of good info. Very basic graphics. Interesting evolutionary view of behavioral genetics. If you don't buy into Darwin evolution you'll hate it.

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