Ideology—closed system of beliefs and values that shapes understanding and behavior of those who use it.

Paradigm -- fundamental model or scheme that organizes view of things; paradigms shape research

positivism -- paradigm that assumes that behavior can be studied and understood in a rational, scientific manner; emphasizes objectivity, precision, and generalizability

interpretivism -- seeking to understand what it is like to "walk inside another's shoes"

critical social science theory -- focus on oppression and seeking to empower oppressed groups

Theory -- a systematic explanation for a set of facts

Fact -- something that has been observed

Hypothesis—predicts something that ought to be observed in the real world if a theory is correct

Variables -- logical groupings of attributes (characteristics or qualities)

Relationship—a change in one variable is likely to cause a change in another variable

Independent variable -- presumed cause of change

Dependent variable -- assumed to depend or be caused by another variable

Concepts -- abstract elements representing classes of phenomena within a field of study

Attributes -- a characteristic, such as "male" or "young."

Observation -- concrete information gathering using the senses

Empirical support—observations that are consistent with what we would expect to experience if a theory is correct

Two logical systems

Deduction -- derivation of expectations or hypotheses from theories

Deductive: general to specific

Test theory by collecting facts
Induction -- development of generalizations from specific observations

Inductive: specific to general
Collect facts to develop theory

Science is a process that involves an alternating use of deduction and induction.

Social work practice models help us organize our views about social work situations. Models include psychosocial, cognitive-behavior, task-centered, etc.

Probabilistic knowledge--likelihood that one event (cause) will lead to another (effect)

Determinism--explain why things are the way they are
Finding causes--seeking the reasons why things happen

Two causal models of understanding
idiographic--explain by identifying the many and perhaps unique considerations that lie behind a given action (often focus on individual)
nomothetic--seek to understand a general phenomena partially

Quantitative methods of inquiry--research activities that result in precise and generalizable statistical findings that are generally more appropriate for nomothetic aims.

Qualitative methods of inquiry--research activities that emphasize depth of understanding, attempt to tap into deeper meanings of human experience, and intended to generate theoretically rich observations; more often idiographic

Objectivity and subjectivity in science--because what you see depends on the paradigm you adopt, true objectivity does not exist in science; must recognize subjectivity and seek agreement.

Objectivity -- does not exist -- intersubjectivity -- two or more researchers view a phenomena similarly and agree on conclusions