

Conditioning & Learning

Psy 3250, Fall 2011

T-Th 7:30a-8:45a, Social and Behavioral Science 323

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Required Texts:

1. Theories of Human Learning: What the Old Woman Said, 5th Edition; G. R. LeFrancois
2. Sniffy the Virtual Rat Pro, Version 2; T. Alloway, G. Wilson, J. Graham

Course Overview:

The purpose of the course is to gain an understanding of the basic principles associated with human conditioning and learning. In its most basic form, this course will guide you in an exploration of the history of behavioral psychology, including the rise and fall of the influence of the field on psychology in general.

The course has been organized into three parts: early conditioning and learning, neo-behaviorism, and current trends and directions of the field of conditioning and learning.

Course Requirements:

Canvas: All assignments will be submitted through use of Canvas using the following link: <https://learn-wsu.uen.org>

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Weekly Points of Discussion (5pts each x 12 weeks)

Due Date: Thursday by 5pm each week

Note: NO POINTS OF DISCUSSION WILL BE DUE ON WEEKS WHEN WE HAVE NO CLASS ON THURSDAY!

Each week students will be required to submit one question or comment about the readings for that week. This question or comment will be due the day before class in order to allow the instructor time to integrate them into the lecture each week. Questions and comments are meant to address areas of struggle with the readings, concerns about the content, or interesting questions or comments the topic being covered calls to mind. Students will be allowed to miss **one (1)** Point of Discussion (POD) during the course of the semester without penalty. Late PODs within the first week after the due date will result in a one (1) point penalty. After this time, no late work will be accepted.

Weekly Lab Assignment (10pts each x 12 weeks)

Due Date: Thursday by 5pm each week

Note: NO LABS WILL BE DUE ON WEEKS WHEN WE HAVE NO CLASS ON THURSDAY!

Each student will be required to participate in weekly lab exercises designed to illustrate the concepts being covered in class. These labs will be accessed via the Sniffy the Virtual Rat CD and book. The basis behind doing these exercises is to see in action how operant principles work. Sniffy the Virtual Rat moves and reacts like a “real” rat. Students must

provide Sniffy with reinforcement for desired actions in order to create the desired relationships.

After completing the required Sniffy exercises each week, students will be required to answer the assigned questions regarding the lab as well as create a document with the graphs from the exercises in it. All graphics and answers to questions should be compiled into one document and turned in electronically by the due date.

A schedule of labs to complete is at the end of the syllabus. Students are allowed to miss **one (1)** lab during the semester without penalty. Labs should take an average of 15-30 minutes to complete, so please plan accordingly. Late labs within the first week after the due date will result in a two (2) point penalty. After this time, no late work will be accepted.

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order to understand what is going on with Sniffy, it is necessary to start from Chapter 1 in the book and move forward from there! If you do not read the first two chapters, you will not understand what is going on with Sniffy!

Content Exams (75 pts each)

Approximate Exam Dates: Sept 20-26, Oct 27-31, Dec 5-9

There will be three (3) exams. These exams will cover the three main focuses of the course (early conditioning and learning, neo-behaviorists, current trends) and will be given approximately every five weeks. **This is an approximation!** Exact dates for each exam will be determined dependent upon the flow of class discussions, and may be pushed back in order to allow appropriate coverage of material. Exams will not be comprehensive, but some material from previous sections may show up on a later test depending on how much new information relates to old. If this is the case, the old material will be presented as a link to current material.

Tests will contain 20 multiple choice questions (2 pts each), 3 short-answer/matching questions (5 pts each), and 2 essay questions (10 pts each). Tests will be given using Chi Tester. No retakes of exams will be allowed except in the most extreme cases (i.e. death or serious illness to you or your immediate family, jury duty, etc).

Final Project (125 pts total)

Each student will be required to write a research paper related to a topic in conditioning and learning. Any topic within the textbook is a valid topic for investigation. This paper will consist of three (3) separate assignments that will be due at different times throughout the semester.

Final Project, Assignment 1: Outline and List of References with Quotes and Explanation (25 pts)

Due Date: Sept 30

The first assignment for the final project will consist of two parts: an outline and a list of references with quotes and explanations. These two parts may be combined into one paper or two, but both pieces must be present.

Part I—Outline:

Each student will be required to think through the organization of their final paper and present that organization in an outline format. The outline should be used as an organizational map for the completion of the final project. Students should think very carefully about this outline, as once it is turned in, it will be considered as a ‘writing contract’ by the instructor. More specifically, the organization of the final paper will be compared for consistency with the original outline.

Each outline should have 3 main headings, broken down further into subheadings. The 3 main headings should be *Introduction, Body, and Conclusion*.

Part II—List of References with Quotes and Explanations:

Each student will be required to turn in an extended reference list. This reference list will be much like an annotated bibliography, but with more detail. The reference list will consist of **at least 6 references, not including the text**. Three things will be expected:

1. Each reference should be written out using correct APA format.
2. Beneath each reference the student will be expected to explain in a paragraph why this reference is relevant to the proposal, and which section of the proposal the reference will be used in.
3. For each reference, the student is required to pull out 2 possible quotes for use in the proposal. These quotes should be typed up using proper APA format and proper referencing. In other words, the quote should be written as if it were a part of a research paper and not a bibliography.

Final Project Assignment 2: Problem Statement (25 pts)

Length: 1-1.5 pages

Due Date: Oct 28

The hardest two parts of any research paper are determining what the logic and flow will be and writing a competent introduction. This assignment focuses on the first page to page and a half of the final paper and represents the most critical part of the report. The flow for the entire report follows from this statement. Clear problem statements make the final report that much easier to write.

Each student will be required to use the material from the outline to write up a problem statement. This problem statement will act as a contract for the final report. The flow of the problem statement should mimic the flow of the research paper, and should follow a “if A then B then C” logic. This will be explained more in class. Problem statements will be critiqued on logic (13 pts) and clarity (12 pts) of topic introduced.

Final Project Assignment 3: Research Paper (75 pts)

Length: 7 pages

Due Date: Dec 2

The purpose of the research paper will be to write an in-depth investigation into one of the topics covered in the book. The paper should investigate the history of the topic, as

well as the relevance and importance of the topic to cognitive psychology or to psychology and human behavior as a whole. The format followed for this paper should be as follows:

- Introduction/Problem Statement (1-2 pages)
- Body of the Report (5-7 pages)
- Discussion/Conclusion (1-2 pages)
- References (at least 6, not including the text)

The paper should use proper APA formatting, and should follow the organization of the outline and problem statement submitted early in the semester. The final report will be graded on Organization and Flow (15 pts), Clarity of Writing (25 pts), Relevance of Material (25 pts), and Correct APA Formatting (10 pts). Examples of each of the three parts of this assignment will be provided during the semester.

Points Breakdown

Weekly Points of Discussion	60 pts
Weekly Lab Exercises	120 pts
Three Exams (75 pts each)	225 pts
Final Project (125 pts total)	
Outline/Reference List	25 pts
Problem Statement	25 pts
Research Paper	75 pts
Total	530 points

Grading Scale:

A	93-100%	C	73-75%
A-	89-92%	C-	69-72%
B+	86-88%	D+	66-68%
B	83-85%	D	62-65%
B-	79-82%	F	Below 62%
C+	76-78%		

Extra Credit Opportunity (up to 10 pts):

Students can obtain extra credit by training Sniffy the Virtual Rat to do any of the items in chapter 14. This chapter deals with shaping of behavior, and covers exercises 43 through 47. Completing exercises 43, 44, 45, or 47 will earn a student between 3-5 points. Completing exercise 46 will earn a student between 5-10 points. The number of points assigned will depend on the complexity of the task Sniffy is trained to acquire. To get the points, students will need to demonstrate to the professor Sniffy's acquired behavior. Extra credit assignments are due no later than December 2nd.

Contacting the Instructor:

If at any point any student has questions or problems during the course of the semester, please feel free to contact the instructor. Use of the Canvas email system as the initial contact point for the instructor is recommended. Please allow 24-48 hours for a response. If for some reason you don't receive a response from me through Canvas, my e-mail address is always an option, but please out of courtesy, use Canvas first. This assures that your email will not go unnoticed or get misplaced in the day-to-day shuffle of emails.

Changes in Course Assignments and Schedule:

The instructor reserves the right to adjust course readings, assignments, and test dates to best attain the objectives of the course. Any changes will be announced in class.

Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy:

Any academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If a student is caught engaged in academic dishonesty in this course, he or she risks failing the course and being subject to academic discipline including the imposition of university sanctions. For more information, please see the university policy on cheating, which can be found in the WSU Student Code, Section IV, Part D, Paragraph 2.

Course Calendar:

	T		Th	
Week1	23-Aug	Ch1	25-Aug	Ch1, Watson (1913)
Week2	29-Aug	Ch2	1-Sep	Ch2
Week3	6-Sep	Watson & Raynor (1920)	8-Sep	Ch3
Week4	13-Sep	Ch3	15-Sep	Ch3
Week5	20-Sep	Skinner (1953); Exam 1 Review	22-Sep	NoClass
Week6	27-Sep	Ch4	29-Sep	Seligman & Maier (1967)
Week7	4-Oct	Ch4	6-Oct	Ch5
Week8	11-Oct	Ch5	13-Oct	Ch5
Week9	18-Oct	Breland & Breland (1961)	20-Oct	NoClass
Week10	25-Oct	Ch6	27-Oct	Guthrie (1937); Tolman (1938); Review Exam 2
Week11	1-Nov	Ch7	3-Nov	Ch7
Week12	8-Nov	Ch8	10-Nov	Ch8
Week13	15-Nov	Ch9	17-Nov	Ch9
Week14	22-Nov	Ch10	24-Nov	NoClass
Week15	29-Nov	Ch11	1-Dec	Ch11
FINAL EXAM			12/5-12/9	

Articles listed in readings section can be found on the Canvas course page.

Lab Schedule:

	Due Date	Lab Chapter & Exercises
Week1	25-Aug	Ch1, Ch2 - Intro to Prog
Week2	1-Sep	Ch3, Ex 1-3 for both Movement and Suppression Ratio*
Week3	8-Sep	Ch3, Ex 4-5
Week4	15-Sep	Ch4, Ex 6-8
Week5	22-Sept	NO LAB
Week6	29-Sep	Ch5, Ex 10-11
Week7	6-Oct	Ch6, Ex 12-13
Week8	13-Oct	Ch7, Ex 14-17
Week9	20-Oct	NO LAB
Week10	27-Oct	Ch8, Ex 19-21
Week11	3-Nov	Ch9, Ch10, Ex 22-24
Week12	10-Nov	Ch 10, Ex 25-27
Week13	17-Nov	Ch11, Ex 28-30
Week14	24-Nov	NO LAB
Week15	1-Dec	NO LAB

*Ex 1-3 will be the only instance in which both Movement and Suppression Ratios are to be used. From this point on, all exercises will use the Movement Ratio.