



PSY 212

Learning & Behavior

Monday | Wednesday

12:30-1:45

Moyer 106

SPRING 2016

Course Description

In this course, we will examine basic theories and phenomena in the field of learning, and will delve into the modern-day applications of this work.

Learning is a critical aspect of our everyday lives. Without the ability to change behavior and adapt to environments, organisms would be unable to function effectively and would be unlikely to survive. We will examine learning in the context of classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning.

Course Goals

Students will work to refine their skills in:

- **Critical thinking** - problem solving, critical reading, in-class writing, and group discussions
- **Leading discussion and presentation**
- **Collaboration with peers**

By the end of the semester, students should understand:

- Major terminology used in the field of learning and behavior and be able to use it in conversation and in writing.
- Experimental methods used to examine learning and behavior.
- Procedural, theoretical, and practical importance of classical and instrumental conditioning, observational learning, and memory.

PROFESSOR:

DR. GRETCHEN GOTTHARD

OFFICE: Moyer 324

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 12:30-2:00

Thursday 12:30-2:00

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EMAIL: ggotthard@muhlenberg.edu

** Email is the best way to reach me.

I check email Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.

Requirements of the Course

EXAMS

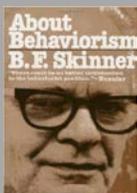
There will be **two exams during the semester, plus a cumulative final** (i.e., three exams total). Exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Questions will be based on material discussed in class and assigned readings. Exams 1 and 2 will be worth 75 points each, and the final will be worth 100 points (**250 points total**).

READINGS

Chance, P. (2014). *Learning and Behavior* (7th ed.)
ISBN: 1-111-83496-2



Skinner, B. F. (1976).
About Behaviorism
ISBN: 0-394-71618-3



REFLECTION PAPER: SKINNER

Over the course of the semester, we will read B.F. Skinner's famous work on the philosophy of behaviorism - *About Behaviorism*. All students will submit a reflection paper at the end of the semester that answers the following questions:

- What is behaviorism, according to Skinner?
- What specific examples can you describe from the book that support Skinner's assertions?
- What concepts have you learned this semester that fit (or don't fit) with Skinner's ideas?
- What are your personal opinions about the concepts discussed in the book?

Book reflections should be 2-3 pages in length and should be typed (single-spaced). We will discuss the book in class at the end of the semester (see Schedule for specific date), and reflection papers will be due at that time. Reflection papers will be worth **25 points**.



APPLICATIONS OF CONDITIONING

Students will work in small groups to research **TWO applications** of conditioning: **Classical Conditioning and Operant Conditioning**.

- Each group should create a **PowerPoint** presentation to facilitate your discussion. This presentation should not be a lecture to the class, but should be used to facilitate your discussion of the topic (include key points, videos, figures, etc.).
- The bulk of the discussion should consist of **several 'real world' examples** of your conditioning phenomenon. Use your textbook and other reputable sources to find these examples.
- **IMPORTANT:** Be prepared to answer questions from the class, and be sure to make connections between your examples and concepts discussed in class.

Each group should plan to spend approximately 20 minutes leading their class discussion. Each discussion will be worth 25 points (**50 points total**). A handout further describing this assignment is posted on Blackboard.

Grading

ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
Exam #1	75
Exam #2	75
Final Exam	100
Reflection Paper: Skinner	25
Classical Conditioning Application	25
Operant Conditioning Application	25
LOC (5 points each)	10
TOTAL	335

Accommodations

If you have a documented disability, please let me know what I can do to facilitate your learning in this class. Students requiring special accommodations for this course must first contact the Office for Disability Services (Director: **Pamela Moschini, Ext. 3825**). Provide me with the appropriate documentation and I will make every effort to meet your needs.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT GRADING:

A grade of C is indicative of average work in this class. If you want to earn a grade in the A-range or B-range, then you need to be prepared to work hard and produce stellar work. Based on my past experiences teaching this seminar, students who earn better than average grades come to class consistently and are actively engaged, earn solid grades on their critical analyses and final exam, produce work that is well-thought-out and that involves a high level of intellectual sophistication, and consistently offer comments during class that enrich the discussion.

Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade	%
A	94-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A-	90-93	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	63-66
		B-	80-83	C-	70-73	F	0-62

The Fine Print

Be an active participant

Being an active participant in this seminar means that you will:

- **Come to every scheduled class and group meeting.**
- **Consistently contribute to class activities and discussions.**
- **Turn in graded and non-graded work on time.**

Active engagement in class is a key factor in learning, and therefore, your participation in this course will play an important role in grades. Failure to participate (as defined above) will result in a lower grade in this class (by as much as one letter grade).

Bottom line: Come to class prepared and be an active participant!

Turn in assignments and take exams on time

Be sure to plan accordingly so that you can turn in all assignments on time, and take exams as scheduled.

Late assignments will lose one letter grade per day, and any missed exams will result in a zero. Students may make up missed exams, if they provide documentation to support their absence.

If you know that you will need to miss class for a legitimate reason (leaving early for break or for a vacation is NOT a legitimate excuse), please let me know early, so that we can arrange for you to turn things in before you leave.

Leave your cell phone and laptop at home

The use of electronic devices during class is NOT permitted (including cell phones, laptops, and tablets). It is incredibly disruptive when students interact with a cell phone or laptop during class.



Furthermore, it is clear from research that:

- **Performance drops significantly when students attempt to multitask with electronic devices during class** [click [HERE](#) for more info].
- **Taking notes by hand produces better understanding and retention than typing notes verbatim on a laptop** [click [HERE](#) for more info].

Therefore, to enhance learning for all students in this class, **electronic devices should be left at home.**

Students who use a phone or laptop during class will be asked to put it away; if this happens repeatedly, they will be asked to leave. If you have a documented disability that requires use of a laptop, please let me know, and I will be happy to make accommodations.

Show academic integrity in your work

All assignments in this class are pledged work under the Academic Integrity Code. I encourage you to study with other students in class and to discuss class materials with other students. However, **your tests and written assignments should be your work alone.** Students found to be breaking the AIC will receive a zero on the assignment, and depending on the circumstances, may receive a failing grade for the class. Additionally, in accordance with the AIC, please write and sign your name by the following statement on all written assignments: "I pledge that I have complied with the Academic Integrity Code in this work." If you have any questions or concerns about how the AIC applies to work in this class, I am happy to discuss this with you.

Schedule

This is an approximate guide. Material may be added or deleted throughout the semester, as time permits. If changes are made, they will be announced in class and/or via email as soon as possible.

Date	Day	Topics	Readings
Jan 20	Wed	Course Overview Introduction: Learning to Change	-CH 1
Jan 25	Mon	Introduction: Learning to Change	
Jan 27	Wed	The Study of Learning and Behavior	-CH 2
Feb 1	Mon	The Study of Learning and Behavior	
Feb 3	Wed	Pavlovian Conditioning	-CH 3
Feb 8	Mon	Pavlovian Conditioning	
Feb 10	Wed	Pavlovian Applications <i>Group 1: Fear - Group 2: Prejudice - Group 3: Paraphilias</i>	-CH 4
Feb 15	Mon	Pavlovian Applications <i>Group 4: Taste Aversion - Group 5: Advertising - Group 6: Drug Addiction</i>	
Feb 17	Wed	Pavlovian Applications <i>Group 7: Health Care</i>	
Feb 22	Mon	EXAM 1: Chapters 1-4	
Feb 24	Wed	Operant Learning: Reinforcement	-CH 5
Feb 29	Mon	Operant Learning: Reinforcement	
Mar 2	Wed	Reinforcement: Beyond Habit	-CH 6
Mar 7	Mon	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES	
Mar 9	Wed	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES	

Mar 14	Mon	Schedules of Reinforcement	-CH 7
Mar 16	Wed	Schedules of Reinforcement	
Mar 21	Mon	Operant Learning: Punishment	-CH 8
Mar 23	Wed	Operant Learning: Punishment	
Mar 28	Mon	EASTER BREAK: NO CLASSES	-CH 9
Mar 30	Wed	Operant Applications <i>Group 1: Home - Group 2: School - Group 3: Work</i>	
Apr 4	Mon	Operant Applications <i>Group 4: Self-Injurious Behavior - Group 5: Delusions - Group 6: Paralysis</i>	
Apr 6	Wed	Operant Applications <i>Group 7: Zoo</i>	
Apr 11	Mon	EXAM 2: Chapters 5-9	
Apr 13	Wed	Observational Learning	-CH 10
Apr 18	Mon	Observational Learning	
Apr 20	Wed	Generalization, Discrimination, and Stimulus Control	-CH 11
Apr 25	Mon	Generalization, Discrimination, and Stimulus Control	
Apr 27	Wed	Forgetting	-CH 12
May 2	Mon	The Limits of Learning	-CH 13
May 4	Wed	The Limits of Learning Book Discussion: B.F. Skinner - <i>About Behaviorism</i> [Reflection Paper Due - by class time]	
TBA		FINAL EXAM: Chapters 10-13, plus Skinner book and cumulative questions	