PSY 328: LEARNING & BEHAVIOR CHANGE

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Professor: Dr. Darlene E. Crone-Todd
Office: Meier Hall, 224F
Office Phone: 978-542-7410
Email: dcronetodd@salemstate.edu

Office hours: Monday 10-11 am & 3:00 – 4:00 Thursday 10 – 11 am, or by appointment.
Website: http://w3.salemstate.edu/~dcronetodd/
MBL website: http://mbl.chicofox.net

Salem State College is committed to providing equal access to the educational experience for all students in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans With Disabilities Act and to providing all reasonable academic accommodations, aids and adjustments. Any student who has a documented disability requiring an accommodation, aid or adjustment should speak with the instructor immediately. Students with Disabilities who have not previously done so should provide documentation to and schedule an appointment with the office for Students with Disabilities, (978) 542-6217, and obtain appropriate services.

COURSE DESIGNATION FROM SALEM STATE COLLEGE CATALOGUE
PSY 328 Learning and Behavior Change 3 credits DIII
This course introduces students to the basic principles of behavior analysis derived from both classical and operant conditioning. Students will learn to use these principles to analyze and interpret examples of both overt and covert human behavior. In doing so, students will examine the relation between verbal and non-verbal behavior as it relates to the concepts of rule-governed behavior, self-control, and self-management. Not open to students who have received credits for PSY 351.
Prerequisite: PSY 101.

PURPOSE
This course is primarily intended for psychology majors, minors, or those with an interest in applied behavior analysis. This course links to the program curriculum in the following ways. First, students will learn the fundamental assumptions, principles, and procedures in behavior analysis as they relate to normal and human animal behavior. Second, students will develop and report on their own self-modification projects throughout the term. The course material, activities, and projects will require creative and critical scientific thinking as it relates to the course material emphasized in this course. Comparison with other areas in psychology will also be made throughout the course.

GENERAL COURSE GOALS (Based on APA Learning Goals – The following are verbatim from the goals. You may see the full report here: http://www.apa.org/ed/pcue/taskforcereport2.pdf)
1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology. (Goal 1: Knowledge Base in Psychology)
2. Students will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation. (Goal 2: Research Methods in Psychology)
3. Students will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes. (Goal 3: Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology)
4. Students will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues (Goal 4: Application of Psychology)
5. Students will be able to weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a discipline. (Goal 5: Values in Psychology)
6. Students will demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes.(Goal 6: Information and Technological Literacy)
7. Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats. (Goal 7: Communication Skills)
8. Students will recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity (Goal 8: Sociocultural and International Diversity)
9. Students will develop insight into their own and others’ behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement (Goal 9: Personal Development)
10. Students will emerge from the major with realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings. (Goal 10: Career Planning)

**COURSE TEXT/READINGS**

Additional readings as required for self-modification project (see below)

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES (Learning outcomes = LO)**
At the completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, apply, and analyze the various types of principles and procedures in operant and respondent conditioning.
2. Identify, describe, apply, and analyze the various types of research designs used in behavior analysis.
3. Identify, describe, apply, and analyze the various ethical considerations inherent in conducting basic and applied behavior analysis.
4. Design, and communicate in written in both scientific paper and poster format, an appropriate self-modification project.

**MAJOR STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

1. There will be 15 (fifteen) self-paced computer-based written mastery unit tests covering assigned readings, lecture, or activities (LO 1, 2, and 3; APA 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).
2. There will be 2 (two) examinations covering the material in the unit tests above. (LO 1, 2, and 3; APA 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).
3. Students will be expected to read the textbook and complete assignments outside of class time. (LO 1, 2, 3, & 4; APA 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10).
4. Students will be expected to have prepared answers ahead of time to questions that will be asked of them in class (LO 1, 2, & 3; APA 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, & 9).
5. Students will be expected to participate in research demonstrations in class and contribute to others’ understanding through meaningful, scientific dialogue (LO 1, 2, 3, & 4; APA 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, & 9).
6. Students will be expected to make consistent progress toward the development of their self-modification project throughout the term, and engage in dialogue about their, and others’, projects, during class. (LO 1, 2, 3, & 4; APA 2, 3, 5, & 7).
7. Students will be expected to orally present a poster based on their self-modification project that integrates an appropriate background and logic, research questions or hypotheses, appropriate methods, appropriate data analyses and outcomes, and theoretical discussion. (LO 1, 2, & 4; APA 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 9).

**PRESENTATION METHODS**
Approximately 80% - 100% of each Monday and Wednesday class period during the term will be spent in seminar in which students will have prepared answers to the assigned study questions. The remaining class time will be spent discussing ongoing research project, working in groups, and in various demonstrations in the class. Fridays will be reserved as “data days”, which are devoted to individual and group work on your projects.
reserve the right to change these proportions during the term based on my assessment of student learning, progress, and best practices.

**EVALUATION AND GRADING**

Grading will be based on the following course components that a student completes during the term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBL Unit Tests</td>
<td>1 each x 15 = 15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBL Peer Reviewing</td>
<td>0.5 each x up to 15 or more = up to 7.50 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>2 x 25 = 50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Modification Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Intent</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Tracking &amp; Ongoing Progress</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107.50 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Earned</th>
<th>Points Required</th>
<th>Grade Earned</th>
<th>Points Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 – 100</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 92.99</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 72.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89.99</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 69.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86.99</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 – 66.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82.99</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 – 62.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79.99</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.99 or below</td>
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</table>

**MBL UNIT TESTS AND PEER REVIEWING**

In addition to in-class meetings and other assignments, I use a computerized mastery-based learning (MBL) program, which incorporates a personalized system of instruction (PSI). The version of PSI in this course is based on the work of two behavioral psychologists: Fred Keller (the "Keller Plan") and Joseph Pear (computer-aided personalized system of instruction, or CAPSI). MBL requires mastery of the material presented in the text and in lecture, and incorporates several assessment strategies that require students to fully and correctly answer unit test questions. In this course, the MBL strategies used will require students to write short essay-type answers to randomly-selected questions from each of the units. They will also have the opportunity to review (for bonus points) other students' work in unit tests. The purpose is to help you to become more proficient with respect to the material.

There are fifteen unit tests are based on the guided unit study questions contained in the manual specific to this course (see list of required texts above). All questions can be answered by making use of your required course texts. Unit tests are self-paced and mastery-based. This means that you can work on them using a computer connected to the Internet on your own time, and that each answer on the test must be complete and correct. You should plan on scheduling your time such that you pass at least one test per week during the term so that you have sufficient time to complete the other components in the course. The unit tests will also aid your understanding of the course material to more adequately prepare for your proposal.

Peer reviewing of other students tests can be done by students who have demonstrated mastery on a given unit. As per the course manual, the peer reviewing should be constructive. This means that it should include praise for what was done well, and helpful information about how to improve any answers that are incomplete or incorrect. There will be more details discussed in class, and other handouts related to peer reviewing. I reserve the right to remove any student from this activity, and to remove any points earned in the system, if that student is not performing their peer reviewing in a conscientious and constructive manner.
INCENTIVE FOR WORKING AHEAD AND DEMONSTRATING HIGH PERFORMANCE IN THE COURSE.

Any student who does the following may be considered by the instructor for elevation to course mentor. A course mentor can evaluate unit tests on their own, and will be exempt from the final examination. To qualify, a student must:

- Always be ahead of the class in completing and passing all unit tests in MBL
- Always be prepared with answers in seminar, and participate in class discussions
- Show good judgment as a peer reviewer in MBL (i.e., the instructor must agree with your assessments).
- Score high (95% or higher) on the first exam
- Be prepared to actively give feedback on schedule to students in the class as a mentor
- Be prepared to discuss material with the instructor ahead of time
- Be prepared to sign an agreed-upon contract for the remainder of the term

All students have this opportunity available to them. However, while meeting these requirements may initially place a student in this category, failure to live up to the terms of the contract will result in this opportunity being revoked. In such cases, students will not be exempt from the final examination.

TESTS, EXAMS, AND MAKE UP EXAMS

Since students have ample opportunities to take tests during their own time, there are no provisions for missed tests. You are expected to get to work early, and take tests in a timely fashion. Students are encouraged to use the tentative schedule as a timeline for completing tests. Failure to do so may result in failure in the course. The last day of classes is the date on which a student has the final opportunity to complete unit tests.

If computer space that can be adequately supervised (as determined by the instructor) is available, the two exams will normally be given through MBL. If computer space is not available, then the exams will be completed on paper. The exams will consist of 7 study questions covered in MBL, and will be graded using points (rather than mastery).

SELF-MODIFICATION PROJECT

Throughout this course, we will cover powerful and useful techniques to describe, understand, predict, and control behavior. All of us have some sort of behavior that we would like to control. Examples from previous classes include: increasing study skills and time, watching less TV, quitting or reducing cigarette smoking, reducing the amount of food that we eat, increasing exercise, quitting biting one’s finger nails, reducing the use of profanity, etc.

Before we can legitimately control other people’s behavior, we should learn to control our own. The purpose of this project is to help you gain control over a behavior that is important to you. As we go through the process of your statement, ongoing progress, data tracking, and poster, I will give you more information in class or through the course website.

1. Statement

The statement of your intended project will include a behavior of interest that you need to increase or decrease. The statement should be type-written or sent through email by the due date, and should also include a brief rationale for why you are targeting that particular behavior.

NOTE: Any student who wishes to include dietary- or exercise-related behaviors is required to obtain
medical documentation that they must supply to the instructor clearing them to pursue such a strategy. This
documentation must be in place prior to commencing any course-related programs.

2. Ongoing Progress
Students are expected to keep a journal of data related to their behavior of interest. You should expect to bring your data to class on an ongoing basis to discuss your progress and trouble-shoot any difficulties in your program. The purpose is to help you develop the best self-control program that you can, and for students to engage in dialogue related to the course concepts to better apply the principles and procedures in their own lives.

3. Data Tracking
As stated above, you are expected to keep a record of your behavior of interest. You are also expected to use a graphing program (such as MS Excel) to analyze your data.

4. Poster
The poster presentation is a usual method of scientific presentation at conferences. The purpose of having you present a poster is so that you can gain experience in developing a poster, and in presenting your research findings from your project to an audience. The poster presentation will either take place in the College of Education, or at a regional/local conference. The poster will include a description of your behavior, why it is important, the principles and procedures used in the project, relevant graphs and a description of the results and discussion.

SEMINAR
Seminar preparation is required of all students. During seminar, questions will be randomly asked of all students. Hence, it is important to have read and prepared the questions ahead of time. Seminar points are awarded based on the following:

- Adequate preparation for answering the questions (The textbook is closed – however, prepared notes may be used)
- How well the question is answered
- Helpful and constructive input for another student’s answer; original examples to open-book questions; or clever things that I haven’t thought about related to the course material. (Bonus)

Here is how I score answers during seminar (out of 10 points)
10 = Fully and correctly answered the question that was asked
9 = Excellent description/example, with small point missing from a definition or description
7 = Great description/example, with some key points missing from a definition or description
5 = Missing half of the answer (either has a description and no definition, or vice versa)
1 = present in class, but no answer prepared

Bonus: 1 point for each instance. Keep in mind that I may have to facilitate everyone having a chance!

If a student misses a class, then they receive a “zero” for that day’s seminar grade. This can drastically affect your grade. Don’t miss class. Every student gets one “zero” for missing seminar that will not count against them. If you have a legitimate excuse that can be documented, then you must make arrangements with me regarding any other arrangements. This must be done earlier, rather than later – on your first day back after missing class.

UNIVERSITY CHEATING & PLAGIARISM POLICY
Cheating on exams and writing assignments is against College policy and is not tolerated. You may discuss an assignment with other class members, but the unit tests, exams, and data, and poster you submit must be completely independent. All sources must be properly referenced using APA V citation and reference
standards. Students are encouraged to seek out assistance from the Writing Center or from me if they want help with their writing.

Within this course, cheating and plagiarism would be considered to have occurred if students copy or present other students’ work as their own, or fail to appropriately cite sources in their writing. This includes all assignments and examinations. **Cheating will also be assumed if a cell phone is on during an examination.**

In terms of writing, here are the guidelines that I use in this course for plagiarism:

- All sources must be cited.
- Three or more words in a row must be in “quotes” with a page number identified immediately after the end of the quotes.

Note that on MBL unit tests, I consider that most of the answers should be in your own words. However, for Level 1 answers, this is not always possible (see course manual for explanation of levels).

**STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY**

My guiding theme in all of my classes is simply this: Respect. This means that I will respect you, and I expect you to respect me and the other students in the class. I expect that you are in this class because you want to learn the material and concepts covered. Based on this expectation, you should not be off-task during class (e.g., no newspapers, studying or doing homework for another class, heads on desks, talking, cell phones, text-messaging). Please do not visit with other students during class. This is very distracting to students who are trying to listen, take notes, or participate in class discussion. It is also very distracting to the professor. Students should turn off and put away their cell phones during class.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

General course content and schedule of topics covered are listed below. **You are expected to have read the text and prepared answers to study questions related to the chapters prior to class seminar/lecture and discussion.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Week in Course</th>
<th>Assignment/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapters 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>1 Jan 22-26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters 3</td>
<td>2 Jan 29 – Feb 2</td>
<td>Statement of Interest Due Feb 2 via MBL (no class on Feb 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters 4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>3 Feb 5 – 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>4 Feb 12 – 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>5 Feb 21 &amp; 23 (19th is holiday)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 10 &amp; 11</td>
<td>6 Feb 26 – Mar 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>7 Mar 5 – 9</td>
<td>First Exam on Mar 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>8 Mar 12 – 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters 12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>9 Mar 19 – 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters 14 &amp; 15</td>
<td>10 Mar 26 – 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 16</td>
<td>11 Apr 2 – 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapters 17 &amp; 18</td>
<td>12 Apr 9 – 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters 19 &amp; 20</td>
<td>13 Apr 18 &amp; 20 (16th is holiday)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 22</td>
<td>14 Apr 23 – 27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 30 &amp; Review</td>
<td>15 Apr 30 &amp; May 2</td>
<td>Poster Session on May 2 during class Final Paper Due at Final Exam Date (as per the university calendar)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>