

PSY 4971: Seminar: Learning Processes (CRN 14195)

4 Credits, Winter 2018

TR 3:00 – 4:47 PM, 301 Wilson Hall

Instructor: Martha Escobar, Ph.D. Office: 124 Pryale Hall E-mail: marthaescobar@oakland.edu (preferred)	Office Phone: 248-370-2303 Office Hours: By appointment
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Basic Course Information:

Course Description: In this course, you will learn the bases of basic associative learning (how organisms learn about the relationship between several events that tend to occur together and apart) and basic operant learning (how organisms learn about the consequences of their actions). The knowledge acquired with these two mechanisms is the basis for the development of most complex cognitive processes and behavior control therapies. The course will survey theory, basic findings, and applications of these principles. The goal of this course is to help you understand that behavior is usually controlled by environmental contingencies, and how those contingencies can be modified to change behavior.

Course Prerequisites/co-requisites: PSY 1000, PSY 2500, PSY 2510, instructor permission for registration required.

Required Text: Powell, R.A., Honey, P.L., & Symbaluk, D.G., *Introduction to Learning and Behavior*, 5th Ed. Cengage Learning. You can use the 4th edition if that is what you have available (page numbers and some examples will not match).

Course Procedures: lectures and discussion

Outcomes and Objectives:

This class satisfies Oakland University's general education requirement for the capstone experience.

Upon completion of this course the student will demonstrate understanding of

1. methodologies used to measure and record behavioral change
2. associative and nonassociative processes of behavioral change
3. the principles of classical and operant conditioning
4. applications of classical and operant conditioning

Grades:

Weekly questions (20% of course grade): Each week, 1-2 questions will be posted in Moodle for students to answer. These questions will refer to the topic of the week, including textbook and paper reading assignments. Students must also provide one question based on their understanding of the reading assignment. Answers to the questions posted by the instructor and questions proposed by the students will be due by midnight on Monday (must be uploaded to Moodle), and will be discussed in class Tuesday and Thursday. Eighty percent of the questions' grade will derive from the answers you provide, and 20% will derive from the questions you propose. As a guideline, answers must specifically address the question; if examples are requested, they should not be the same as those in the textbook. Questions should address a specific issue for clarification (they should not be definitions). Examples of questions and answers will be provided the first day of class and detailed feedback will be provided to shape future submissions.

Class project (15% of course grade): All students must complete a project based on a class topic. Topic selection can take place at any point in the semester, with the caveat that projects will be due on **April 3rd**. The project will consist on the development and research of one (or more) class topics, applied to an actual example. You will need to find a video (documentary, movie, TV show, etc.) that exemplifies one or more phenomena discussed in class and write a short paper (about 5 pages) on that phenomenon describing the following:

1. Name of the phenomenon.

2. Definition of the phenomenon.
3. What conditions lead to the phenomenon.
4. At least 2 references from original sources that describe how that phenomenon is studied in the laboratory.
5. What sort of extensions of that phenomenon are presented in the video or can be anticipated based on the discussions we had in class?
6. A link or recording of the example you are using must be provided as part of your project.

You will have one day assigned to working on your project (March 1). However, you should select your project's topic and begin organizing your materials before that date. The goal of project work day is to have you create an outline of your paper for which you will receive feedback. Even if you have not yet found your video example you can begin outlining the project with the goal of finding a video that shows a specific phenomenon. You will receive detailed instructions of how to create your project outline as we get closer to it being due. You are not required to submit a project outline, but if you choose not to submit it, you will not receive formative feedback to get started on your project. **Before you settle on a project topic, discuss it with Dr. Escobar.**

Response to the class project (5% of course grade): All students will share their class project with the class on **April 5th**. Following your presentation, you will receive feedback on your class project (by **April 6th**). Along with that feedback, you will receive one question to further extend your understanding of the project's topic or help you relate it to other students' projects. You will be expected to respond to that feedback briefly (no more than one page) by **April 10th**.

Exams (60% of course grade): There will be four exams through the semester which will be based on the weekly questions and/or a study guide that will be provided two weeks prior to the exam date. The format of all exams will be short answers, with 10 questions graded in a scale of 1-10 for a total possible 100 points in each exam.

Grade Calculation: All activities will be graded on a 0-100% scale, and averaged to find out %grade in the class. This %grade will then be transformed to the official OU grading scale (0.0-4.0). Percentage conversions to OU grades are presented in the table below.

% grade	OU Grade
100	4
99	4
98	3.9
97	3.9
96	3.8
95	3.8
94	3.8
93	3.7
92	3.7
91	3.6
90	3.6
89	3.5
88	3.4
87	3.4

% grade	OU Grade
86	3.3
85	3.3
84	3.2
83	3.2
82	3.1
81	3.1
80	3
79	2.9
78	2.8
77	2.7
76	2.6
75	2.5
74	2.4
73	2.3

% grade	OU Grade
72	2.2
71	2.1
70	2
69	1.9
68	1.8
67	1.7
66	1.6
65	1.5
64	1.4
63	1.3
62	1.2
61	1.1
60	1
≤59	0

Class Policies:

Academic Conduct: Oakland University students are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with the University's standards of academic integrity and honesty. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct will be reported to the Dean of Students for appropriate action (Academic Conduct Regulations can be found in the Student Handbook, <http://www.oakland.edu/?id=1610&sid=75>). Some examples of misconduct relevant to this class include **cheating on examinations and papers**, and **unauthorized collaboration during examinations**.

Add or Drop the Class: The University add/drop dates can be found on the website for the Office of the Registrar (<http://www.oakland.edu/registrar>). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of course drop deadlines. There will be no adds after the first week of class, during which you can add the class without instructor's signature.

Class Attendance: Class attendance is expected. Students missing 20% or more of the class lectures will be considered to

have missed the required instruction, and will receive a grade equivalent to failing due to excessive class absences. Class attendance will be recording with your iClicker device. Note that using someone else's iClicker device constitutes misrepresentation, which will be considered a form of cheating for disciplinary purposes.

Classroom Courtesy and Behavior: USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS IS NOT ALLOWED. While I understand the need to feel connected to the world, your capacity to find instruction time is useful only if you attend to lecture. A well-known cognitive principle is that multi-tasking (e.g., texting, updating social media, and taking notes) results in poor performance in both tasks, so we end up only performing one (usually, not taking notes). I will give you a 3-min break in the middle of class to tell the world how interesting class has been thus far. If employment or family responsibilities require that you have your telephone on, please silence it and leave the classroom to return calls (these should be exceptional circumstances). Class will begin at 3:00 and will end at 4:47; you should arrive to class on time and leave after class ends. Packing to leave the classroom should start at 4:47, after lecture ends. If students begin packing I will consider the lecture over and stop instruction. Disruptive classroom behavior will be addressed by (1) a general announcement, (2) a direct announcement, (3) a request to leave the classroom, and (4) calling Campus Police to have the student removed from the classroom.

Make-up Policy: Expected excuses need to be discussed with the instructor at least 1 week before the absence date to schedule examinations prior to the date scheduled for the class. Unexpected absences due to major life events require immediate notification to the instructor and proof of reason for the absence (e.g., Dr.'s note, police report, etc.). The format of the make-up exam may differ from the format of the exam administered to the rest of the class. Arrangements to make up missed work must be made within one week of the date in which it was administered to the rest of the class (unless there are extenuating circumstances; e.g., illness that prevents you from attending school). If you have not made arrangements for your make-up within one week, you will receive a grade of zero points for that particular exam/quiz. There will be no exceptions to these policies. Students who must be absent from class due to University representation events (e.g., athletics, performances) are also subject to these policies (see the OU Excused Absence Policy; <http://www.oakland.edu/?id=6850&sid=175>). The class schedule is listed at the end of this syllabus and posted in the OU website. Schedule your vacation accordingly; early vacationing will not count as an approved rationale for class absence.

Moodle: Class materials and online quizzes will be distributed through Moodle. Please, take the time to become familiar and learn how to use Moodle. You can access Moodle from the OU main site by clicking "Moodle" on the top banner. If you do not know how to use Moodle, from the Moodle login page you can click "Help" and use the tutorials presented by the IT department (Mozilla Firefox is the recommended browser for Moodle).

Disability Support Services: Students with disabilities who may require certain accommodations should register with Disability Support Services (<http://www.oakland.edu/dss>) and bring their needs to the attention of the instructor by providing their Accommodation Memo as soon as it is available. Accommodations can only be provided after receipt of the memo.

Veteran Support Services: The office of Veteran Support Services (VSS) is responsible for giving support services to more than 300 veterans, service members, and dependents of veterans. VSS is staffed with personnel who are veterans and current or former students. Any student veteran or dependent of a veteran requiring assistance with navigating the Veterans Administration, understanding service-related benefits, or requires referrals to campus and community resources should contact one of the Veterans Liaisons by visiting 116 North Foundation Hall, or phoning 248-370-2010.
<http://www.oakland.edu/veterans/>

Audio Recording Policy: Students who wish to audio-record lectures may request permission to do so. These recordings may only be used for the purpose of personal study. Students may not share these recordings with other individuals without the consent of the professor. At the conclusion of the semester, students may request permission to keep these recordings if needed, otherwise it is expected that all audio-recordings will be deleted from all electronic recording and storage devices.

Departmental Policy for Resolution of Student Academic-Related Concerns: The student has an obligation to attempt to resolve all academic-related concerns with the instructor. If a suitable solution cannot be reached, then the student should consult the Department of Psychology Procedure for the Resolution of Student Academic-Related Concerns at <https://www.oakland.edu/Assets/Oakland/psychology/files-and-documents/Undergrad-Advising/Resolution%20of%20Student%20Concerns-04-2017-approved%20full%20doc.pdf>

Tentative Schedule

The schedule below is a good approximation of the topics to be covered in each lecture; however, we may get a little ahead whenever possible in order to allow for a brief in-lecture review class meeting prior to an exam. Exams (including the final exam) will **not** be rescheduled, so please make travel plans for your summer travel accordingly.

Week	Dates	Topic	Reading assignment	Likely covering...
1	Jan. 4	Basic concepts and historical background I	Chapter 1	pp. 1-48
2	Jan. 9	Research methodology I	Chapter 2	pp. 50-63
	Jan. 11	Research methodology II	Chapter 2	pp. 63-91
3	Jan. 16	Elicited behaviors	Chapter 3	pp. 93-107
	Jan. 18	Fundamentals of classical conditioning	Chapter 3	pp. 107-131
4	Jan. 23	EXAM 1		
	Jan. 25	Basic conditioning phenomena	Chapter 4	pp. 132-142
5	Jan. 30	Extensions and limitations of classical conditioning	Chapter 4	pp. 143-166
	Feb. 1	Inhibitory classical conditioning	Reading posted in Moodle	
6	Feb. 6	Underlying processes in classical conditioning	Chapter 5	pp. 167-179
	Feb. 8	Applications of classical conditioning	Chapter 5	pp. 179-208
7	Feb. 13	Unit 1 Wrap-up and review	No reading assignment	
	Feb. 15	EXAM 2		
8	Feb. 20	WINTER RECESS		
	Feb. 22			
9	Feb. 27	Fundamentals of operant conditioning and operant conditioning contingencies	Chapter 6	pp. 209-232
	Mar. 1	Project work day – Brief outline of the project due by the end of day		
10	Mar. 6	Types of positive reinforcement and schedules of reinforcement I	Chapter 6 Chapter 7	pp. 233-253 pp. 254-277
	Mar. 8	Schedules of reinforcement II and theories of reinforcement	Chapter 7	pp. 277-292
11	Mar. 13	Extinction	Chapter 8	pp. 293-306
	Mar. 15	Stimulus control	Chapter 8	pp. 306-333
12	Mar. 20	EXAM 3		
	Mar. 22	Escape and avoidance	Chapter 9	pp. 334-346
13	Mar. 27	Punishment	Chapter 9	pp. 347-372
	Mar. 29	Choice and matching	Chapter 10	pp. 373-388
14	Apr. 3	Self-control	Chapter 10	pp. 388-415
	Apr. 5	Project presentations and class discussion		
15	Apr. 10	Observational and social learning	Chapter 11	pp. 416-452
	Apr. 12	Response to project feedback due by end of day		
16	Apr. 12	Biological dispositions	Chapter 12	pp. 453-488
	Apr. 17	Unit 2 Wrap-up and review	No reading assignment	
Finals	Apr. 19	FINAL EXAM (12:00-3:00 pm)		

Please, note that this class will observe all deadlines posted in the Oakland University Academic Calendar, including add and drop dates. Please, see <http://www.oakland.edu/registrar/important-dates/> for more information.