Grand Valley State University
Psychology 310
Behavior Modification
Fall 2014

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Tara Cornelius, Ph.D.
Office: 1321 Au Sable Hall
Office Hours: T 9:00am-10:00am; TH 2:45-3:45pm WALKING OFFICE HOURS, and by appointment
Phone: (616) 331-8702
Email: cornelta@gvsu.edu

Course Sections/Locations:
Section 01: TTH 10:00-11:15am 2302 ASH
Section 03: TTH 11:30-12:45pm 1310 ASH
Section 02: TTH 1:00-2:15pm 2302 ASH

Required Text:
Reserve readings, listed on e-reserve system.

Course Description:
- This course is designed as an overview of Behavior Modification for advanced undergraduate students. The prerequisite for this course is PSY 101, Introductory Psychology. This course assumes that you have a thorough understanding of the theories of learning, including operant and respondent (classical) conditioning, as well as sound research methods. If that is not the case, please inform the instructor promptly to arrange for remedial education.
- This course takes an empirical approach to behavioral psychology, and will examine the relevant theoretical underpinnings of behavioral techniques, strategies to design effective interventions, and various applications. Please note that you will be asked to critically examine empirical data and the rationale for behavioral interventions.
- This course will expose students to the study and the application of learning principles, techniques and procedures to the understanding and treatment of human behavioral and psychological problems in a wide range of settings. Some areas of application include developmental disabilities, special education, clinical psychology, business and industry, self-management, child management, and preventative behaviors.

Learning Objectives:
- Be fluent and able to differentiate between various principles of operant conditioning, including but not limited to reinforcement, punishment, extinction, shaping, chaining, and verbal and rule-governed behavior.
- Be able to evaluate a behavior modification program and use the theoretical principles to understand, modify, and shape programs to change your own behavior, or the behavior of others in a variety of settings, as acceptable and required by various service organizations.
- Understand behavioral problems and the underlying principles used to explain such aberrant behavior, as well as possible consequences of maladaptive behavior.

Office Hours:
- Given that this course focuses on behavior change, including health-related behaviors, and in order to appropriately model that, one day a week (Thursdays from 2:45-3:45pm) I will hold “Walking Office Hours” on the GVSU Fieldhouse track. If you have a need to talk to me that could appropriately be done “on the move” please join me during this time at the track. My other office hours will be held in a more traditional fashion in my office (1321 ASH).
Policy on Academic Integrity:
- Students will be held accountable for violations of the policies regarding cheating, academic misconduct, plagiarism, and fabrication that are outlined in the Grand Valley State University Student Code. To avoid any appearance of academic dishonesty, please scrupulously attend to the importance of citing the ideas and works of other authors. Any student who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have engaged in an act of academic dishonesty will be subject to discipline as outlined in the Student Code.

In-Class Activities:
- Students are expected and are strongly encouraged to attend each class for the full class period. You are a vital part of the class and you learn from each other. Material will be covered in classes and films that is not in your text, and knowing this material will be essential for you to do well on the exams. Your thoughtful and informed participation during class will be factored into your final grade. Therefore, attendance is considered required and you will likely have difficulty on the exams if your absence is a regular practice. In addition, students who frequently arrive late for class or miss several classes will lose points from their overall participation grade.
- In-class assignments include announced and unannounced activities that will involve group reflection and discussion on various issues from your assigned readings. These activities are structured to provide more information on various topics, issues, and applications in psychology. If you are not present for a class activity, you will not receive any points for that activity. These points cannot be made up.
- Class participation is a crucial component of clearly understanding the course material. Group and discussion activities are a critical part of the educational process, and you should expect to participate fully in these activities. In-Class activities are worth fifty points, and this will contribute to your final grade.

Reading Assignments:
- It is to your advantage to read each assignment before the class in which it will be addressed in lecture/discussion. This will assure you the opportunity to ask questions regarding unclear material and engage in the lectures more actively. During your initial reading of the text, you should begin to formulate thoughts and questions that will form the basis of class discussion. Please bring these to class to discuss!

Behavior Modification Group Project/Paper:
- As part of this course, you will be asked to design a project in which you apply the principles of behavior modification to your own or another’s behavior. As a group, you will decide on a general topic of behavior that all in the group will target, will track individual data on that behavior, and will use a behavior modification treatment to change that behavior. You will be required to work on your project from the beginning of the course by putting into practice what you are learning in class and in your reading. As part of this project, you will search the relevant literature, design a program of behavior modification, collect and document data on the frequency, duration, rate, and/or latency of the behavior, and write a 5-10 page group paper integrating these components. All individuals should work on ALL aspects of the paper. Failure to do this will result in point reduction on the paper. All papers will be turned into SafeAssign on Blackboard. You are required to upload your paper to Blackboard before the beginning of the class in which it is due. Each group will turn in one paper, and, with very few exceptions, all group members will earn the same grade on the project. This paper is described in greater detail later in another document. This paper is worth 70 points, and is due on November 18th.

Late Project Paper Policy:
- You should make every effort to turn in your behavior modification project paper on time. If you fail to turn in the document on time, your grade will be penalized 10% for every 24 hours (or portion of 24 hours) that it is late. You are individually responsible to make sure that your group turns in the paper on time. DO NOT RELY ON YOUR GROUP MEMBERS TO TURN IT IN, because if it is late, ALL group members will be penalized as outlined above. I will not accept any final papers more than one week late. All papers will be turned into SafeAssign on Blackboard. You are required to upload your paper to Blackboard before the beginning of the class in which it is due. I do not accept emailed assignments. If you have an extreme, unavoidable medical emergency, you should arrange for the group paper to be placed in my faculty mailbox prior to the beginning of the class in which it is due. It is your responsibility to allow yourself sufficient time to write your paper and address any computer, printer or disk problems you may encounter.
Examinations:
- Three unit exams worth a possible 100 points each will be given throughout the semester. Each exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions designed to assess your understanding of the material, rather than rote memorization. In other words, you should expect to apply material from the text and class to novel situations. Exams may include material covered for the present chapters as well as from preceding chapters.
- In addition, a final exam worth 100 points will be given on Monday, December 8; 12:00-1:50pm (310-02), or Wednesday, December 10 at 8:00-9:50am (310-01) or 12:00-1:50pm (310-03). The final exam will be comprehensive and cumulative in nature and will cover the general material presented throughout the semester. Students should use the unit exams to identify areas of difficulty, so they can seek assistance in these areas and study the material before the final exam.
- Since portions of the unit exams and the final exam will be computer scored, scantron sheets will be provided at the time of the exam. Please be sure to cleanly erase any changes you make on the scantron while taking an exam.
- If you find yourself having difficulty on the exams, please seek assistance from the instructor. I am always willing to help students identify areas of difficulty and assist in identifying improved ways of studying. Please seek help earlier rather than later!

Missed Examination Policy:
- Make-up examinations will be given in the event of extreme, unavoidable circumstances (e.g. death in family, illness) or other excused absence, and ONLY at my discretion. In addition, I reserve the right to request and obtain written documentation verifying the reported circumstance. Students who must miss an examination due to an extreme circumstance must contact me at least one hour prior to the onset of class in order to be considered for a make-up exam. If you are in a situation in which you know well in advance that you will have to miss an examination, please notify me at least one week prior to the test so I can arrange for a make-up examination time. The format of the make-up examination may be multiple-choice, essay, or oral, at the discretion of the instructor.

Severe Weather Policy:
- In the event that GVSU classes are canceled because of severe weather, activities (including unit exams) for the canceled class will be covered in the next class session.

Accommodations for Disabilities:
- Any student who has special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability should notify me or the Office of Academic Support (331-2490). Accommodations for students with special needs are always designed to maintain the academic integrity of the course and provide the necessary resources for the individual student to succeed in this course. Please notify me if you are in need of accommodations, and I will work hard to assist you in this process.

Grading:
- The final grade for the course will be based upon scores obtained on the three unit examinations (300 points), one final exam (100 points), the behavior modification project paper (70 points), and in-class activities (50 points). Percentages are calculated by dividing the total points obtained by the total points possible in the class.
- The following grading system will be used:

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<thead>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>93 – 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>90 – 92%</td>
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<td>87 – 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>83 – 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 – 82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>77 – 79%</td>
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<td>73 – 76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 – 72%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<td>66 – 69%</td>
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<td>61 – 65%</td>
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<td>60% or less</td>
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Schedule of Topics and Examination Dates:

8-26    Syllabus/Ch. 1          Syllabus; What is Behavior Modification?
8-28    Ch. 1, 2               Behavior Modification and its Application
9-2     No Class               Labor Day!
9-4     Ch. 30                 Ethics in Behavior Modification
9-9     Ch. 20, 21             Behavioral Assessment
9-11    Ch. 20, 21, 22        Behavioral and Functional Assessment
9-16    Ch. 23                 Behavior Modification Designs
9-18    Ch. 23                 Behavior Modification Designs
9-23    Unit Exam #1          Chapters 1, 2, 30, 20, 21, 22, 23
   9-25    Ch. 3, 4 ; Consent document due!  Positive Reinforcement
   9-30    Ch. 3, 4             Positive Reinforcement
10-2    Ch. 13                 Negative Reinforcement
10-7    Ch. 12, Gonnerman article Punishment
10-9    Ch. 5, Lovaas article Extinction
10-14   Ch. 7; Ch. 6          Differential Reinforcement; Schedules
10-16   Ch. 6                 Reinforcement Schedules
10-21   Unit Exam #2          Chapters 3, 4, 13, 12, 5, 6, 7, Reserve articles
10-23   Ch. 8                 Stimulus Control
10-28   Ch. 8                 Stimulus Control
10-30   Ch. 17; Sundberg & Michael article Rule Governed Behavior; Verbal Behavior
11-4    Ch. 10, 11            Shaping, Chaining
11-6    Ch. 16                Generality of Behavior change
11-11   Unit Exam #3          Chapters 8, 17, 10, 11, 16, Reserve article
11-13   Work Day             Work on Group Paper Project
11-18   Ch. 24 B-Mod Group Paper Due!!! Planning Programs
11-20   Ch. 25, 26           Token Economies, Self-Control
11-25   Ch. 26, 27           Self-Control, CBM
11-27   No Class             Thanksgiving Holiday
12-2    Ch. 27, 28           CBM, BT
12-4    Review Day          Review for final/wrap up
12-8; 12-10 Final Exam      Monday, December 8; 12-1:50pm (310-02)
                                 Wednesday, December 10; 8-9:50am (310-01)
                                 Wednesday, December 10; 12-1:50pm (310-03)