

**PSY 310: Behavior Modification**  
**Fall 2016**  
**Section 04 – MWF 8:00-9:00am, 2119 Au Sable Hall**

**Instructor:** Mikhila Wildey, PhD

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**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesdays 1-2pm, or by appointment

**Course Details:**

**Prerequisite:** PSY 101 (Introductory Psychology)

**Description:** This course will provide an overview of Behavior Modification for advanced undergraduate students. 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. 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.

**Required Text:**

Martin, G. & Pear, J. (2015). *Behavior Modification: What it is and How to Do it*. (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. ISBN: 0205992102

**Course Objectives:**

- 1. To be 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.**
  - a. For example, on an exam you may be asked to:
    - i. Select which form of operant conditioning is being described by a case example.
    - ii. Identify which form of operant conditioning is being described by definition.
- 2. To 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.**
  - a. For example, on an exam you may be asked to:
    - i. Evaluate the effectiveness of an example of a behavior modification program.
    - ii. Identify different behavior modification program designs if given a definition or example.
  - b. For example, on a paper you may be asked to:
    - i. Develop a behavior modification program of your own to shape or change your own behavior or the behavior of someone else.

3. **Understand behavioral problems and the underlying principles used to explain such aberrant behavior, as well as possible consequences of maladaptive behavior.**
  - a. For example, on an exam you may be asked to:
    - i. Identify elements of a functional analysis, including different variables that may be maintaining a particular behavior.

**Classroom Process:**

1. **Format:** Classes will consist of lectures, multimedia presentations, in-class activities, and in-class discussions. You are expected to have read the textbook chapters each day prior to class. PowerPoint slides will be posted to Blackboard prior to lectures, however note that slides represent an **outline**. In order to do well in class, it is necessary for you to attend each lecture and take detailed notes. Simply studying information on the slides will **not** be sufficient to do well on exams.
2. **Attendance:** Although I may a sign-in sheet, attendance is NOT mandatory, because I feel it is your choice whether or not you want to come to class. The sign-in sheet is merely for my personal reference in case there are any problems with assignments. However, your grade may suffer if you do not attend class. You will have to complete in-class activities, and there are no make-ups for these activities, so coming to class is the only way to get these points. You will be tested on material in class that may not be presented in the book.
3. **Course Communication:**
  - a. Communication regarding the course will occur through Blackboard and GVSU email. You are expected to **regularly (i.e., every day)** check your GVSU email and Blackboard account for important course materials, information, and updates. My policy is to try to respond to your email within **1 business day**, which means within 24 hours on weekdays and by 5pm on Monday if you send me an email on Friday or over the weekend. For questions best answered in person, I will ask you to attend my office hours or set up an alternate time to meet with me. I expect that emails be drafted in a careful, considerate manner such that they reflect an email to a professor and not to a friend. I will also respond in this same professional manner. I believe that this communication is very good practice for future professional communications.
  - b. In the spaces below, please take down two students' contact information in your class. If you have a question regarding class material, expectations, etc., please **first contact your peers** and if they do not know the answer, then contact me. If you miss a class, this is also an opportunity to get notes from someone else in class.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- c. If for some reason there is an unexpected cancelation of class by the instructor due to something like weather, we will meet on Blackboard Collaborate for the class period. This is an online real-time forum in which you will log in to the class and then watch me give the lecture and be able to participate in discussion through the online forum. The link can be found on Blackboard under "Blackboard Collaborate" and then you would

click on "Join Room." Please note that Collaborate works best when using Google Chrome as your web browser.

4. **Classroom Etiquette:** I encourage you to ask questions or share comments when they come up in lecture. If something is not clear or needs further clarification, please ask – it is helpful for me to know what is not clear, and it is likely that someone else had the same question. We will also do various in-class discussions, and although participation is not mandatory, I urge you to voice your thoughts and participate. Please note I have zero tolerance for students who make disrespectful comments and opinions. I expect everyone to treat each other with full respect.
5. **Use of Technology:** Although I will allow laptops in the classroom, I ask that those using laptops sit in the back of the classroom. I realize laptops are a quick and efficient way to take notes for many people, however out of respect for myself and your classmates, please use laptops solely for taking notes as they can be a distraction to others. If you have difficulty seeing from the back or have other disabilities that may make this difficult for you, please see me and I can make an exception. Your phone should be put away during class. Please refrain from sending text messages, chatting online, or using social networking sites during class. If you are expecting an important call or message, please let me know before class so that I am aware. If I see you using your phone or laptop in a way that is distracting to others in the class, I will ask you to put it away.

#### Assignments and Exams:

##### Grade Requirements:

Assignment:	Total Possible Points:	Percentage of Grade	My Score (keep track):
Class requirements	5	~1%	
In-Class Assignments	75	12.5%	
Project Topic	20	3.3%	
Project Proposal	20	3.3%	
Final Project Paper	80	13.3%	
Unit Exam 1	80	13.3%	
Unit Exam 2	80	13.3%	
Unit Exam 3	80	13.3%	
Final Exam (Cumulative)	160	26.7%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>		

- **Class requirements (5 points):** You will have two pass/fail requirements you must complete within the first two weeks of class. First, you will need to complete an online quiz testing you on content in the syllabus. It is open book, meaning you can use your syllabus to answer the questions (are and encouraged to do so). This quiz can be found under "Assignments" and "Syllabus Quiz." Second, you will need to sign the "Teaching Assistant Permission Form." The link to this form can be found under "Assignments." Please read the form before signing it. Both tasks must be completed in order to receive all 5 points. If one task is done but the other one is not, zero points will be given. Both tasks are due by **Friday September 9th before class**.
- **In-Class Assignments (75 points):** We will be doing 16 in-class assignments worth 5 points each throughout the semester. Only 15 will count towards your final grade, so the lowest score will be dropped. These assignments will be primarily unannounced activities that will involve group reflection and discussion on various issues from your assigned readings and from topics covered

in class. If you are not present for a class activity, you will not receive any points for that activity. For class activities that take place across two class periods, if you only show up for one class period and not the other, you will only receive half points for the activity (even if you answer all questions). Make-ups for these assignments will only be given in very specific circumstances. See policy on make-ups below for more detail.

- **Project Topic/Proposal/Paper (20/20/80 points, respectively):** You will be asked to design a project in which you apply the principles of behavior modification learned in this course to your own or another's behavior. You will decide on a behavior you would like to change, operationally define that behavior, design a program of behavior modification, track data on that behavior, and then discuss your results. Portions of this project will be due throughout the semester, but your assignment will culminate in writing a final, **3-4 page paper** (double spaced, 1" margins, standard font size) that is due before class on **Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup>**. You will turn in portions of the project throughout the class that will be worth various points. The full project is described at the end of the syllabus.
- **Unit Exams and Final Exam (400 points total):** You will have 3 unit exams (80 points each) and one final exam (160 points). The 3 unit exams are **non-cumulative** but **the final exam is cumulative**. All exams count towards your final grade. The 3 unit exams will consist of 40 multiple-choice/true-false questions each. The final exam will consist of 80 multiple-choice/true-false questions. Most of the information on the exams will come from lecture, however all material covered in class and in assigned readings is fair game for the exam.

#### Grading Scale:

93% and above	<b>A</b>	77-79%	<b>C+</b>
90-92%	<b>A-</b>	73-76%	<b>C</b>
87-89%	<b>B+</b>	70-72%	<b>C-</b>
83-86%	<b>B</b>	67-69%	<b>D+</b>
80-82%	<b>B-</b>	60-66%	<b>D</b>
		59% or below	<b>F</b>

The final grade for the course will be calculated by dividing the total points obtained by the total points possible in the class (600 points). There is no curve in this class. If your grade is at the .5 mark, I will round up (i.e., 86.5 will be rounded up to 87). I will not adjust your grade in any other way. **Please do not ask at the end of the semester.**

#### Late Assignments and Make-up Policy:

1. There will be no late assignments accepted for the class requirements, case study questions, and reaction papers. If you will not be present the day that a case study's questions are due, please turn your responses in via email or in advance.
2. Make-up exams and in-class activities are only allowed in the case of an unavoidable emergency, and **ONLY** at my discretion. An unavoidable emergency may include the following: serious illness, funeral, unexpected car trouble. In order to make up an exam or in-class activity, you **must have documentation**. Documentation can include: a doctor's note, towing or car repair receipt, program from funeral, etc. You must provide this documentation within 24 hours of the missed exam or missed assignment. If you are aware you will need to miss class for a

medical reason or university-sponsored event, you must provide **at least one week** notice with documentation. Please note that make-up exams and assignments must be completed within 1 week of the scheduled or assigned date. **Failure to notify me in advance, provide documentation, or complete the exam or assignment within the time frame, will result in a zero.**

3. The final paper assignment is due before class on Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup> and is subject to the following penalty for lateness: 10% deduction (i.e., 8 point deduction) per day the paper is late. Papers received 4 or more days late will receive a zero.

### University Policies:

1. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Any student who may have special need because of a learning, physical, or other disability should contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) as soon as possible at 616-331-2490. After you have documented your disability, please make an appointment or see me to discuss your specific needs. Furthermore, if you have a physical disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency situation, please make me aware so I can develop a plan to assist you. In the event of fire, do not use the elevator.
2. **Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to adhere to the university's policies on Academic Honesty. These policies are described in the catalog and in the Student Code. Cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with as per the procedures described in the Student Code.
3. **Plagiarism:** As described in Section 223.01 of the Student Code, "any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches, or the writings of other students ... Any student who fails to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism." In sum, copying the work of any other individual, whether that of another student, researcher, author, or editor, is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is not acceptable and will be dealt with according to the policies set forth in the Student Code, which may include receiving a 0 on the assignment, failing the course, and/or other university consequences.
4. **Copyright Policy:** The materials presented in this class are copyright protected and may not be used without the express prior consent of the instructor. Intentional mis-use of the intellectual property of another may subject the user to penalties up to and including dismissal.

### How to Succeed in Class:

1. Read the textbook material before coming to class. You will have a good first look at the content and will have a broader context for understanding the material I present in class.
2. Attend each and every class. The chances of succeeding in this class are **slim-to-none** if you learn solely from the textbook and/or lecture slides.
3. Take detailed notes in class. The slides are intended as a guide only and will not provide you with all the necessary material. Detailed lecture notes will be **essential** when you study for

the exams. It is worth noting that there is data to suggest that students who are most successful take hand-written notes vs. using an electronic device (e.g., laptop) to take notes. You may find that you retain more information if you choose to take hand-written notes.

4. Class participation is a crucial component of this class. We will be doing many in-class activities that are designed to help you clearly understand 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. Remember, in-class activities do contribute significantly to your final grade.
5. Prepare for exams **well in advance**. You can get a leg up if you re-read your lecture notes each day after class and review material on a weekly basis. If you wait until the last minute to begin preparing for an exam, you are unlikely to perform as well.
6. Contact me when you **first** notice that you might be struggling. I will do everything in my power to help you discover what is difficult for you and how you can work towards improving your performance. DO NOT wait until the last minute to see me because of poor understanding or poor grades. I will be much less sympathetic at that point and there's not much you can do then.

### Course Schedule:

The schedule of lectures and readings are outlined below. Please note that this is **tentative** and I reserve the right to change this schedule. It is your responsibility to be aware of changes in this schedule that are announced in class.

Week:	Date:	Topic:	Readings:	Assignments:
One	8/29	Introduction and Course Overview	Syllabus	
	8/31, 9/2	Behavior Modification and Its Application	Chapter 1, 2	
Two	9/5	<b>No Class – Labor Day</b>		
	9/7, 9/9	Ethics in Behavior Modification	Chapter 30	<b>Class Requirements Due 9/9</b>
Three	9/12-9/16	Behavioral and Functional Assessment	Chapter 20, 21, 23	
Four	9/19	Behavioral and Functional Assessment	Chapter 20, 21, 23	
	9/21	Operational Definitions		
	9/23	Behavior Modification Designs	Chapter 22	<b>Project Topic Due 9/23</b>
Five	9/26	Behavior Modification Designs	Chapter 22	
	9/28	<b>Unit Exam #1</b>		
	9/30	Positive Reinforcement	Chapter 4, 5	
Six	10/3	Positive Reinforcement	Chapter 4, 5	
	10/5, 10/7	Negative Reinforcement	Chapter 14	
	10/7	Punishment	Chapter 13	<b>Project Proposal Due 10/7</b>
Seven	10/10-10/14	Punishment	Chapter 13	
Eight	10/17	Extinction	Chapter 6	
	10/19, 10/21	Differential Reinforcement and Reinforcement Schedules	Chapters 8, 12	
Nine	10/24	Review		
	10/26	<b>Unit Exam #2</b>		
	10/28	Paper Work Day		
Ten	10/31-11/2	Stimulus Control	Chapter 9	
	11/4	Rule Governed Behavior	Chapter 17	
Eleven	11/7-11/9	Shaping, Chaining	Chapter 7, 11	
	11/11	Generality of Behavior Change	Chapter 16	
Twelve	11/14	Review		
	11/16	<b>Unit Exam #3</b>		
	11/18	Planning Programs, Self-Control	Chapter 24, 26	
Thirteen	11/21	Planning Programs, Self-Control	Chapter 24, 26	
	11/23-11/25	<b>No Class - Thanksgiving Break</b>		
Fourteen	11/28	Planning Programs, Self-Control	Chapter 24, 26	
	11/30	Token Economies	Chapter 25	

	12/2	Behavior Therapy; Cognitive Behavior Therapy	Chapter 27, 28	<b>Project Paper due 12/2</b>
Fifteen	12/5-12/7	Behavior Therapy; Cognitive Behavior Therapy	Chapter 27, 28	
	12/9	Review for final/wrap-up		
Sixteen	12/12	<b>Final Exam: Monday 12/12 at 8am</b>		



## Behavior Modification Project

You will be asked to design a project in which you apply the principles of behavior modification learned in this course to your own or another's behavior. You will decide on a behavior you would like to change, operationally define that behavior, design a program of behavior modification, track individual on that behavior, and then discuss your results. You will write a **3-4 page paper** (double spaced, 1" margins, standard font size) that is due before class on **Friday December 2nd**. You will turn in portions of the project throughout the class that will be worth various points.

### Project Requirements

1. Project Topic - Due before class on 9/23 (20 points)
  - a. Identify a general behavior that you would like to modify for yourself or for someone else (e.g., a roommate). You should limit your project to working with humans only (e.g., NO pets). Although you may select any topic, here are some topics that you may consider for your project:
    1. Smoking cessation/reduction
    2. Weight control
    3. Physical fitness/maintenance
    4. Time management/procrastination
    5. Stress management/increasing balance of activities
    6. Class performance (test scores, reading), improving study habits
    7. Child discipline/behavior problems (if you have your own child)
    8. Sleep habits
  - b. Select a topic, and then select ONE specific area of that topic that you would like to change. Develop an operational definition of your specific, discrete behavior. Remember, you should be able to easily "measure" your behavior. Type this operational definition in a document and upload it to Blackboard. **You may not choose to do any project that aversive control, including but not limited to corporal punishment, or any procedure that results in physical or psychological harm.**
  - c. Obtain written permission from the individual on whom you intend to do this project (including yourself), and sign the consent document that can be found on the last page. You **MUST** turn this document in, or you may scan and upload it to Blackboard along with your proposal. If you do not turn this in on time, you will lose 5 points. **If you do not turn in your consent form before your final paper is due, you will receive a 0 for your final paper. It is unethical to engage in a behavior modification program without signing a consent form.**
2. Project Proposal – Due before class on 10/7 (20 points)
  - a. Design your project, and consult with me if needed to ensure that it is appropriate and feasible. You will submit a brief proposal outlining the description of your project to me. To do so, please answer the questions below in a brief but complete manner (e.g., your

answer should be brief but should also have enough detail that I can understand your project). Please upload this proposal using a Word document to Blackboard. You may simply number and answer each question.

- i. Re-write the operational definition of the target behavior incorporating any feedback given to you when you initially submitted your topic.
- ii. Describe how you plan to measure your behavior (e.g., frequency, latency, duration, quantity) and how frequently you plan to measure the behavior (e.g., daily, weekly, within a set time frame).
- iii. Describe the behavior modification design you plan to use (e.g., ABAB, changing-criterion).
- iv. Describe the specific intervention/treatment you plan to use for your program (e.g., reinforcement, differential reinforcement). Be specific using terms from class!

3. Implement your project.

- a. Once you have designed your project and I have approved it, you should begin collecting systematic data. **You must collect baseline data prior to implementing your project**, to determine if your intervention has any effect on the target behavior. For example, if you are intending to use positive reinforcement in the form of chocolate pudding to increase the rate of going to the gym, it would be useful to measure your rate of going to the gym *prior to* implementing the chocolate pudding reinforcer. You should collect this data, and then will report it in your project paper using a graph.

4. Final Project Paper - Due before class on 12/2 (80 points)

- a. After you have completed data collection, you will write a 3-4 page PAPER summarizing your findings. This paper should be written in a Word document and uploaded to Blackboard. Your paper should use APA style where necessary and include the following information:
  - i. Introduction and Methods (1-2 pages):
    1. 1-2 sentences describing why you chose your particular topic
    2. The operational definition for your target behavior. This definition should be written in complete sentences – not as a list.
    3. Describe how you measured your behavior, the design you used to test your intervention, and the specific treatment/intervention you used for your program. Be specific by using terms that we have discussed in class.
  - ii. Results (3-4 sentences):
    1. Create a graph (NOT a table) of your data results. Your graph should be placed on the last page of your paper as a figure and referenced as “Figure 1”. The graph DOES NOT count as part of the 3-4 page requirement for your paper. Your paper should be 3-4 pages of text not including the graph. Your graph should have the following elements:
      - a. Axes labels, title for graph
      - b. Dividers for baseline and treatment condition(s) with labels denoting which section is which

- c. Indicators for when treatment was applied (i.e., when reinforcement and/or punishment was given and not given)
    - 2. Describe the graph briefly– what are the trends you see?
  - iii. Discussion (1-2 pages):
    - 1. What did the data mean? Did the intervention work? Why or why not? What principles could have enhanced the effectiveness? How does your project relate to class material? What could have been done differently and/or what could have helped? Any problems with the research methods?
- b. I highly recommend that you edit and proofread your final paper before turning it in; the first draft is rarely the best one, and errors will negatively impact your grade. You can also ask a peer to read over your paper for errors. Although I will not read over entire drafts of your paper, I am happy to answer specific questions about your paper or sections of your paper.

## Behavior Modification Project - Consent Form

Read the following notice about your project and sign the bottom. **This is due along with your project topic before class on 9/23.** You can either turn in a paper copy or scan/take a photo and upload it to Blackboard along with your project topic. If you do not turn it in on time, you will receive a 5 point deduction for your project topic. If you fail to turn this consent form in before your final paper is due, you will receive a zero for your final paper.

1. *Confidentiality Issues:* All students and the professor will keep all information about the student's project confidential, unless required by law to do otherwise. In the event that the instructor decides to later publish portions of this project to illustrate its teaching effectiveness, I understand that any relevant variables or characteristics that could be used to identify me will be altered or changed in order to preserve my confidentiality.
2. *Consent Issues:* If your project involves working on the behavior of anybody but your own, you should obtain written permission from that person, his/her parents or his/her legal guardians. This should be obtained before you proceed with the project.
3. *Therapy Issues:* Doing a behavior modification project for a college course is an educational activity and is not intended or indicated to be a form or take the place of psychotherapy. **You are not to conduct a project as therapy, including goals such as reducing clinical depression, anxiety disorders, or other DSM-V diagnoses.** You could do more harm than good. Students who have psychological difficulties should consult the GVSU Counseling Center located in the Student Services Building. If you are already in therapy and the project relates in any way to the psychological condition for which you are being treated, you must *consult your therapist regularly for help and supervision in designing and carrying out the behavior modification project.*
4. *Physical Health Issues:* You should not design a project that could conceivably harm your physical or psychological health as exemplified by the following cases: a) you want to lose a great deal of weight quickly; b) you want to lose weight but are already within the standard healthful weight range for your height and age; c) you have a serious medical disorder that could be affected by your project behavior. You also are not permitted to design a project that involves aversive control, or any method that could reasonably result in psychological or physical harm. If you have any reason to believe that your project will result in any of these or other negative consequences, you should consult with a medical or licensed mental health professional and get approval prior to implementing your project
5. *Alternate Activity:* If you have a legitimate reason why you would prefer not to implement this project to alter your own or another's behavior, please contact the instructor and she will arrange for an alternate activity. This will require analysis of an existing, fictitious behavior modification data set and literature search of that literature.

*I have read the above project notice and agree to follow its recommendations.*

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of individual (and guardian if appropriate) on whom I will be conducting this project (write your own name if it is yourself):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of individual or guardian on whom I will be conducting this project (sign your own name if it is yourself):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_