

Grand Valley State University
Psychology 310 ONLINE
Behavior Modification
Winter 2021

COURSE SYLLABUS

<u>Instructor:</u>	Tara Cornelius, Ph.D. (Pronouns: She/Hers/Her)		
<u>Office:</u>	1321 Au Sable Hall (and in virtual space)		
<u>Virtual Office Hours:</u>	T and TH 7:30am-8:30am (ONLINE), and by appointment		
<u>Phone:</u>	(616) 331-8702		
<u>Email:</u>	cornelta@gvsu.edu		
<u>Course Sections/Locations:</u>	Section 05:	Monday 1:30-2:45pm	Online Synchronous Class

Required Text:

Martin, G. & Pear, J. (2019). *Behavior Modification: What it is and How to Do it*. (11th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Reserve readings, provided on Blackboard.

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.
- **This course is 100% online.** The core of this course will consist of online participation in classes that will be held EVERY MONDAY and discussion through the Discussion Board feature on Blackboard. This allows students to explore the content of the course in an open forum using discussion boards, while still connecting with the class each week in a virtual setting. **Computer use is required for all assignments, and while we will not meet together in person, we will meet virtually every Monday at the link provided on Blackboard. You are required to utilize a device with a webcam during these sessions.** I have developed this course to make your learning flexible, convenient, interesting and intellectually stimulating. However, please be aware that online courses have high expectations for student behavior and performance. Many students find online courses difficult as it requires a great deal of self-motivation, diligence, and discipline. Inactivity on Blackboard, failing to consistently show up for online classes, not posting on the Discussion Boards, or failing to closely attend to deadlines will be detrimental to your overall grade in the course. *You should expect to devote 3-4 hours a week to complete all the requirements for this course well.*

Virtual Class Meetings:

- EVERY Monday, we will meet together as a class at the regularly scheduled class time for a virtual class. These will be conducted via either through Blackboard Collaborate or Zoom. The link will be provided to you on Blackboard. **You are required to attend these sessions, and you should activate your webcam during these sessions.** This is an important opportunity for us to engage in activities that we would normally conduct in-person, but cannot this

semester due to safety concerns. Please make it a priority to attend these classes. Recordings of these will be available under the learning module each week if you are unable to attend.

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.

Blackboard:

- Blackboard will be our online learning forum for this course. It is the student's responsibility to use Blackboard daily and to complete all coursework and submit assignments through this platform. Please be sure that you review the online resources on www.gvsu.edu related to interacting with Blackboard to be sure you have the basic technological skills to complete this online course.

Course Organization and Communication:

- The material that you will need for the course is on Blackboard. Each week a new module will be presented in Blackboard. You will need to click on the **Learning Module** tab on the left side of your Blackboard screen. You will then see the list of tasks that need to be completed for that week. There will typically be a weekly reading from the textbook, lecture notes/video, short video clips, an assignment, and a Discussion Board assignment. Many weeks will include a low-stakes quiz to ensure mastery of the material. All work should be completed in the order it is presented in the Learning Module.
- **READ EVERYTHING!** Everything that you need to know for the class will be in the syllabus posted on the Announcements, or sent via email in Blackboard. Please make sure that you are checking your GVSU email frequently to stay up to date on the course. There is a Discussion Board that is available for any questions you may have that may pertain to the entire class. For more personal concerns, please email me directly through Blackboard.

Computing Policies:

- Please attend to the Netiquette guidelines posted on our Blackboard site. Please be aware that all writing in this course, including Discussion Board posts, should include proper grammar, spelling, and citations.
- You will need to be able to open PDF files for this course. You can find links to download this from the "Online Orientation" from the GVSU IT website. You will also find information on the self-directed Blackboard Orientation and links to additional Help documents. For technology related questions, please contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@gvsu.edu, or 616.331.2101.
- The standard GVSU word processing program is Word, and that is what I will use. Word documents in the course site are posted as .docx. Please submit your documents as Word files. I will not accept incompatible programs. As a GVSU student, you have access to Microsoft Office for free.
- All official GVSU email goes to your student (Gmail) account, including email sent from Blackboard. I will send email through Blackboard, so it is very important that you check your GVSU Gmail account on a regular basis. Many times, I will send reminders, tips and general FYI information as an email message.
- 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. 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.
- Please consider the **Three Before Me** rule, where before emailing me concerning technical questions or other class logistics, try learning your answer through other means first:
 - For technical support, contact the Help Desk by phone (616.331.2101) or email: helpdesk@gvsu.edu. You can also review the support documents in our Blackboard course site or by clicking the "Help" button at the top of your Blackboard window.
 - Refer to course resources such as the syllabus, calendar, assignment details, etc. You can also consult the Discussion Board that is devoted to general questions about the class.

- Email another student in the class and/or post your question on the question forum on the Discussion Board.
- Please be advised that use of university technology, including email, for commercial use is prohibited. Resources should be used for GVSU purposes or academic work.

Discussion Boards:

- Most Learning Modules will include a Discussion Board assignment worth 10 points each. I will provide the class with a question based on that week's content. Discussion Boards have specific requirements which are outlined below. You should be on the Discussion Board several times each week and should read the majority of your peer's posts.
- You are required to post a thread for each Discussion Board. You must answer the question each week. Answers to the Discussion Board should be well thought out and thorough answers including specific details and examples which demonstrate your understanding of course material. I recommend writing your Discussion Board post in a Word document, saving it, and then copy and paste it into the Discussion Board text box.
- You must also respond to two of your fellow students' posts. Your peer responses must be posted by the deadline specified in the learning module. Peer responses must be thorough and well thought out. "Good answer" and "Ya, you're right on" are not proper responses. Responses should be substantive. Statements of agreement in response to a topic or a peer response often demonstrate a lack of substantive content and should be avoided. Please feel free to respond to as many of your peers as you would like, as this will help facilitate a good discussion. Just remember that two is the minimum to receive the maximum points for the Discussion Board.
- You will have a minimum of three posts each week (Your initial post and two peer responses). **You may not post all of your posts on the same day.** Please revisit the Discussion Board throughout the week. For example, you may submit your initial post to the Discussion Board on Wednesday, then you must come back on another day to post your peer responses. Any combination of posting is acceptable, *as long as all three posts are not on the same day.*
- You are expected to check back on the Discussion Board several times throughout the week to keep the discussion moving along. Please be sure to return to the Discussion Board frequently to see if someone has responded to your questions or comments. Following up in a timely matter will ensure that a discussion does not hang up or end without issues being resolved or addressed. Student-to-student discussions are a valuable part of this class.
- The Discussion Boards are used to facilitate group discussion and the sharing of ideas related to the class content. Please remember our Netiquette guidelines and be respectful to your peers.

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.
- This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at: <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>

Reading Assignments:

- You should read the assigned chapters BEFORE we meet together as a class on Mondays. This will assure that you have some basic knowledge of the topic matter before exploring the online resources in the Learning Module and attending virtual class. This will also assure you the opportunity to ask questions regarding unclear material and engage in the online material 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 boards.

Online Assignments:

- For many Learning Modules, there will be an online assignment to provide an opportunity for you to practice with the content. These will be downloaded from Blackboard, completed in Word, and then submitted to Blackboard. ***I do not accept emailed assignments.*** Please carefully attend to the due dates for these assignments because I ***do not accept late assignments.*** Each of these online assignments are worth 10 points, and I will drop your lowest score.

Online Quizzes:

- Most Learning Module units will include a "low-stakes" quiz. The idea behind a low stakes quiz is to assess your knowledge of the learning module after you have completed the required assignments and reviewed the required

components. This is an opportunity for you to make sure you are grasping the course material, and also provides a means for me to identify areas where you are struggling. These online quizzes are timed, and you are expected to complete the quiz without consulting your class notes or your textbook. Each of these low stakes quizzes is worth 15 points. I will drop your lowest quiz score.

- Quizzes will have a deadline that is specified in the Learning Module and will automatically deactivate after that due deadline has expired. Make-up quizzes will be given in the event of extreme, unavoidable circumstances (e.g. death in family, illness) 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 a quiz deadline due to an extreme circumstance must contact me at least 24 hours prior to the deadline to be considered for a make-up quiz.

Accommodations for Disabilities:

- Any student who requires accommodation because of a physical or learning disability must contact Disability Support Resources at 616-331-2490 as soon as possible. After you have documented your disability, please make an appointment to discuss your specific needs. 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 Discussion Boards (150 points), the assignments (100 points), and the low stakes quizzes (180 points). Percentages are calculated by dividing the total points obtained by the total points possible (330) in the class.
- The following grading system will be used:

<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Grade</i>
93 – 100%	A
90 – 92%	A-
87 – 89%	B+
83 – 86%	B
80 – 82%	B-
77 – 79%	C+
73 – 76%	C
70 – 72%	C-
66 – 69%	D+
61 – 65%	D
60% or less	F

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week 1	Syllabus/Chapters 1 and 2	Syllabus; What is Behavior Modification?
Week 2	Chapter 29	Ethics in Behavior Modification
Week 3	Chapters 3 and 22	Behavioral and Functional Assessment
Week 4	Chapter 4	Behavior Modification Designs
Week 5	Chapters 6 and 7	Positive Reinforcement
Week 6	Chapter 16	Negative Reinforcement
Week 7	Chapter 15	Punishment
Week 8	Chapter 8	Extinction
Week 9	Chapter 14	Differential Reinforcement
Week 10	Chapter 10	Reinforcement Schedules
Week 11	Chapter 11 and 19	Rule Governed Behavior; Verbal Behavior
Week 12	Chapters 9, 13	Shaping, Chaining
Week 13	Chapter 18	Generality of Behavior Change
Week 14	Chapter 25 and 24	Self-Management/Token Economies
Week 15	Chapters 27, 26	Behavior Therapy; Cognitive Behavior Therapy