

# PSY 310-06: Behavior Modification

## Fall 2016

Luke Scholten, EdS. & Kurt Alderink,  
EdS; Psychology Department  
[scholtl1@gvsu.edu](mailto:scholtl1@gvsu.edu)  
Office hours: M 5:30 – 6:00 (or by  
appointment), 2115 ASH

2302 Au Sable Hall  
Monday 6:00 – 8:50  
Pre-requisites: PSY 101  
CRN: 23231

### Required Text:

Martin, G. & Pear, J. (2016). Behavior Modification: What it is and How to Do it. (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Additional required readings will be placed on course reserve

### Course Description:

This course is designed as 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. 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.

### Grading:

Grades will be calculated by dividing the total number of points earned by the total number of possible points (600). A letter grade will be assigned based on the grading scale listed below.

		Grading Scale	
Course Requirements		93% and above	A
Examinations (3 @ 100pts each)	300pts	90% - 92%	A-
Final Exam	100pts	87% - 89%	B+
Behavior Modification Project	100pts	83% - 86%	B
In-class activities and assignments	100pts	80% - 82%	B-
Total	600pts	77% - 79%	C+
		73% - 76%	C
		70% - 72%	C-
		67% - 69%	D+
		60% - 66%	D
		59% and below	F

**Note:** I do not offer extra credit to students on an individual basis under any circumstances. Please do not ask if you may complete an extra credit assignment to bring up a low grade.

## **Course Requirements and Assignments**

### Exams (4 @100 pts. 400 points total)

There will be a total of four examinations in this class (3 unit exams and 1 final exam). The dates for each examination are listed on the course schedule. Each examination will be worth 100 points and will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and/or short answer/essay questions. **The final examination in this course is cumulative.** The content on the exams will be drawn from the textbook, assigned readings, and lecture. Please note that not all content from the text will be covered in lecture, and not all content in lecture is in the textbook. For the exams, students are responsible for all content in assigned readings and lecture.

**Exam Policies:** Make-up exams are only allowed in the case of an unavoidable emergency. An unavoidable emergency may include the following: serious illness, funeral, or unexpected car trouble. In order to make up an exam you **MUST** have documentation. Documentation can include: doctors note, towing or car repair receipt, program from funeral, etc. You must provide this documentation within 24 hours of the missed exam. Please note that make-up exams must be completed within 1-week of the scheduled exam date. **Failure to notify me in advance, provide documentation, or complete the exam within the time frame, will result in a zero.**

During exams, you will be required to turn off all digital devices, such as cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, iPods and hand-held computers. Any student identified with such a device powered on during an examination will receive an F on the test at the instructor's discretion.

### Behavior Modification Group Project (100 pts)

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 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, submit progress and present information/results integrating these components. **All individuals should work on ALL aspects of the project. Failure to do this will result in point reduction on the project.** All project portions will be turned into Blackboard. You are required to upload your project sub-parts and presentation to Blackboard before the beginning of the class in which it is due. This project is described in greater detail later in another document.

### In-class activities and assignments: (100 pts. total)

There will be several unannounced in-class activities and assignments that are required throughout the term. These assignments are typically completed in class but may also require you complete tasks outside of class. In order to receive points for the assignments, you must be present in class. There are no excused absences for these assignments. Therefore, even if you have a valid excuse, you will not be able to make up the points.

### **Course Policies**

Attendance: Lecture attendance is essential for earning a satisfactory grade in this class. Attendance will not be taken during lectures. If you do need to miss a class period, please be aware of the following: (1) I will not “re-teach” the lecture to you or help you complete the lecture notes (you must consult with a peer in this class), (2) I present a significant amount of content that is not in the textbook and this content is often within lecture notes and/or within class activities, and (3) Announcements about assignments and exams may be made during lecture and not updated on Blackboard.

Lecture notes: Typically, I will post my lecture notes on blackboard prior to lecture. These notes typically outline the lecture, and do not contain all important information. Therefore, it is recommended that you take notes during lecture, as you will be held accountable for the lecture content, including information that is not posted on the slides. Although I will make every effort to post slides prior to lecture, it is not guaranteed. It is likely that there will be days that slides are not posted prior to class. In addition, be aware that I provide these notes at my discretion – I reserve the right to discontinue providing notes at any point during the semester if I find that it is not an effective method of providing information. Please do not email me and ask when the slides will be posted. In addition, some slides may be changed/added after I post.

Preparation for lecture: I expect that all students will be fully prepared for lecture. This is defined as reading the assigned text prior to the lecture and identifying any questions for clarification. I often plan small group activities/discussions for during lecture, and it is essential that you are prepared to fully participate/benefit from these activities.

Electronic Devices: All electronic devices (cell phones, etc.) are to be **TURNED OFF** and **PUT AWAY** during lecture. It is unacceptable to have your cell phone out and on your desk during lecture. Please refrain from text messaging, emailing, surfing the web, etc. during lecture. This is very disruptive to other students. Laptop computers are permitted for taking course notes only. If it becomes apparent during the term that laptops are being used for other purposes (emailing, instant messaging, surfing the web, etc.) I reserve the right to institute a “no laptop policy”.

Canceled Classes: If classes are canceled at the university, any exam or assignment missed due to the cancellation will take place at the next scheduled class meeting time. If I cancel a class, I will notify the class via email/Blackboard.

Assignment Submissions: Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. You may turn in a hard copy OR submit the assignment on Blackboard. Via Blackboard is preferred. The format of some operating systems/software is not always compatible with Blackboard, please ensure that your software/file format is compatible **Emailed submissions WILL NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.** If an assignment is not turned in at the beginning of class, late penalties will apply. Please see the individual assignment descriptions for specific late penalties.

### **University Policies**

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact me or Disability Support Services (DSS) at 331-2490. Although students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as all other students, accommodations will be provided for you, as appropriate. Where warranted, accommodations will also be provided to students without a diagnosed disability if that student discusses the specific need with me and the accommodation appears to be justified. Furthermore, if you have a 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.

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.

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. This 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.

If you have questions regarding the appropriate use of citations and plagiarism, please contact the instructor BEFORE turning the assignment in. Please note that taking extensive content word-for- word from a journal, book or website is considered plagiarism.

### Course Schedule

Date		Topic	Readings and Assignments
Week 1	8/29	Syllabus, Introduction Behavior Modification	Chapter 1, 2, 29
Week 2	9/5	Labor Day Break	<i>No Class</i>
Week 3	9/12	Respondent Conditioning Ethics Behavior Assessment	Chapter 3 Chapter 30 Chapters 20 <b>Behavior selection due</b>
Week 4	9/19	Behavior Assessment Research Designs	Chapter 21 Chapter 22
Week 5	9/26	Exam 1 Group Project Work Time	<b>Chpts: 1, 2, 3, 20, 21, 22, 29, 30</b> Meet with group
Week 6	10/3	Positive Reinforcement Conditioned Reinforcement	Chapter 4 Chapter 5 <b>Project Research due</b>
Week 7	10/10	Schedule of Reinforcement Escape & Avoidance	Chapter 8 Chapter 14 <b>Baseline, Graph, and Goal due</b>
Week 8	10/17	Differential Reinforcement Punishment Extinction	Chapter 12 Chapter 13 Chapter 6 <b>Data update 1 due</b>
Week9	10/24	Exam 2	<b>Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14</b> <b>Drop Deadline</b> <b>Data update 2 due</b>
Week 10	10/31	Stimulus Discrimination/Generalization Fading/Shaping/Chaining	Chapter 9  Chapter 7, 10, 11 <b>Date update 3 due</b>
Week 11	11/7	Stimulus Control: Rules, Modeling and Motivation	Chapter 17, 18, 19 <b>Data update 4 due</b>
Week 12	11/14	Generality of Behavior Change	Chapter 16 <b>Bullets points for project due</b>
Week 13	11/21	Exam 3	<b>Chpts: 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19</b>
Week 14	11/28	FBA <b>Group Presentations</b>	Chapter 23
Week 15	12/5	<b>Group Presentations</b> Catch up/review	Exam Review
Finals	12/12	6:00pm	<b>Final Examination: Cumulative</b>

\*This schedule is tentative and likely to change.

## **Behavior Modification Project and Paper**

This project will involve completing scholarly reading in behavior modification, and applying the principles of behavior modification that you learn this course. You will design, implement, and evaluate a behavior modification plan. This project has several different components and will require significant time effort throughout the entire semester. You are encouraged to select a project that is meaningful to you and members of the group rather than simply meeting a course requirement.

### **Groups**

You will be working in groups of 2-3 students. You may select your own group members if you wish. If you find that your interests are not similar to your group members, please talk with me early in the semester, and I may be able to find you a group with similar interests.

### **Group Work Participation**

It is expected that all group members will fully participate and contribute to this project. This includes: attending groups meetings, actively participating in group meetings, responding to emails from group members, completing tasks in a timely manner, and ensuring assigned tasks are high-quality. A small portion of your grade is based on group member ratings. In addition, the following policies apply:

1. It is recommended that you take data on group participation. This may include keeping a sign-in sheet for group meetings, recording assigned tasks and due dates, etc. This is optional and does not need to be turned in, however if there are problems in the group, it is typically better to have data.
2. If a group member is not fully participating, please talk with the group member early in the term. If you are not comfortable, I am happy to facilitate a discussion.
3. If the problem persists after attempts for discussion have been made, the group may request that the member leave the group. I will review the situation and make a decision. The individual will then be required to complete the project independently.
4. Group Ratings: If a group member receives consistently low ratings from all group members, the maximum points on the project for that member will be 70%, regardless of the grade on the projects. This is non-negotiable and final.

For this project, you will be required to write a summary of 1 research article for each member of your group. This will connect research in the field to the behavior that you have selected to modify and/or the method that you are choosing to modify the behavior you have chosen. Each group member will collect and submit data regularly within the project. As a culmination of the project each group will provide a 10 minute (maximum) presentation of their project and results. The presentation will follow a set format and number of slides. **I strongly encourage you to ALL work on ALL aspects of this project, rather than delegating certain parts to certain people. This approach tends to**

**prevent problems with people not carrying their own weight, and since you are graded based on the TOTAL project, you should have contact with ALL parts.**

## **Project Requirements**

### Step 1: Select a behavior to modify

Due 9/12/2016

Identify a general behavior category that the group would like to modify. It is likely that your individual behaviors will have different operational definitions, but it is helpful if there is some unifying general topic for the whole group. Because, at this point, you may have no idea how to do the project, you are *expected to frequently consult with me as a group to begin to develop some project ideas*. As a word of caution, **you should begin working on this project as soon as possible**, because if you procrastinate, you will not be likely to collect sufficient data to evaluate your project. I am willing to devote time to provide direction to you, but it is your responsibility to seek out that assistance. Here are some topics that you may consider for your project:

- a. Smoking cessation/reduction
- b. Weight control
- c. Physical fitness/maintenance
- d. Time management/procrastination
- e. Stress management/increasing balance of activities
- f. Class performance (test scores, reading), improving study habits
- g. Child behavior problems (if you have your own child)
- h. Discrimination training
- i. Stimulus control
- j. Animal training (if you have your own pet, preferably a dog)

You can work with humans or non-humans. You may identify other topics of interest to you as well. Please let me know ASAP what topic you are considering so I can provide you with some feedback. All members of your group should come to some consensus as to the general topic of behaviors that each member will be modifying. All members of the group are required to implement the treatment and track individual data. There may be some individual variability in terms of the specific topography of the behavior (for example, you may choose to target exercise, but some members may engage in sit-ups, others in weight-lifting, others in running, etc.). You should just be thoughtful to make your general topic of the paper sufficiently broad to cover all group members' topography. Each group member will have their own operational definition of their behavior within that general topic of behavior change. **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.**

### Step 2: Define the behavior you intend to modify

Due 9/19/2016

You will submit (via Blackboard) an operational definition of the behavior you intend to modify. A stem to provide a operational definition of a behavior will be provided during lecture prior to the due date of this portion of the project.

Step 3: Research your topic to select an appropriate treatment

Due 10/3/2016

Go to the library and begin to search for at least one scholarly article related to the type of behavior that you want to work on (one article for each group member). Below you will find a list of suggested relevant journals that may contain appropriate articles for your project. Please remember that articles from popular magazines (e.g., Psychology Today, Newsweek, Good Housekeeping, Cosmopolitan, People, etc.) are not acceptable sources for your project. The studies that you identify must utilize a behavioral technique for modifying a behavior. When you identify articles that may be appropriate, read the articles and learn more about the selected topic. Pay attention to how the study was conducted, how data was collected, the methodology used, etc. You will use these articles to design your project and will discuss these articles in your project paper. *You will be required to appropriately cite and discuss them in your project paper.* The journals listed below are likely to contain studies that are (1) behavioral in nature, and (2) relevant to your topics. I highly recommend examining the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis. It is the premier academic journal in the area of Behavior Modification.

- Behavior Modification
- Behavior Research and Therapy
- Behavior Therapy
- Child and Family Behavior Therapy
- Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis
- Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry
- Journal of Clinical and Consulting Psychology
- Journal of Organizational Behavioral Management
- Journal of Behavioral Education
- Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions
- American Journal of Mental Retardation
- Animal Learning and Behavior
- Applied Animal Behaviour Science
- Child Development
- Exceptional Child
- Health Education Research
- Journal of Abnormal Psychology
- Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology
- Psychological Report
- Education and Treatment of Children

Please allow adequate time to complete this task. It is likely that you will need to find and read more than just 1 scholarly article before sufficiently narrowing your topic. DO NOT simply select the first study that you come across. The studies should specifically address your topic, use a behavioral modification technique, and be



published in a scholarly journal. In addition, these articles should guide your decision on the type of treatment you implement.

The results will be a paper submitted on Blackboard that includes the correct APA citation of your selected article(s) and a single paragraph that summarizes the study, how it relates to your selected behavior (to modify), and how your project will be similar to the cited research.

#### Step 4: Design your project

Due 10/10/16

Design your project to include baseline data, a graph that will be used to collect data, and a goal. Baseline data and a draft graphic of your graph (that includes that baseline data point(s)) will need to be ready to be submitted at the beginning of class on 10/10/16. Goal setting information and feedback on your design will be discussed/provided during the class on 10/10/16. Bring 2 copies of your draft graph that includes your name, labeled X & Y axis that clearly indicate how/what will be measures, a title, and all baseline data to class, one will be submitted for points. The other copy will serve as your notes as you continue the project. Each group member will submit a single graph.

#### Step 5: Implement your project/Collect and Graph data

Weeks 9-11: Bring updated graph to each class. Hard copy handed in at beginning of each class.

#### Step 6: Outline of your completed project

Due 11/14/16

Submit via Blackboard bullet points for your presentation. This should be brief and should align with the slides that you will use for your group presentation during week 14 or 15. The following are both the bullet points for your outline and the slides for the presentation:

Behavior Definitions:

Research Connections (include APA citation):

Behavior Modification Designs:

Results:

Discussion (What worked, did not work, and changes if attempted again):

#### Step 7: Oral Presentation of project

Due by 11/28/16 or 12/5/2016, depending on assigned presentation date

Each group will provide a 10-minute presentation of their project. All group members are expected to present. Points will be awarded based on the content of the presentation with an emphasis on what is presented orally, not solely the content of the slides. Put another way, brevity within the text of the slides is allowable. Content of the oral presentation during class is of higher importance. Each presentation should be only 5 slides long and should not exceed 10 minutes. Slides do not need to include your graph(s). Submit slides presentation via Blackboard by the beginning on class in which your group presents.

### Project Grading Rubric

Project Component	Points	Due Date
Behavior Selection	5	9/12
Behavior Definition	5	9/19
Research Summary	10	10/3
Baseline data/graph	5	10/10
Data updates weeks 8-11	5 pts each (20 total)	10/17 to 11/7
Bulleted Summary	5	11/14
Group Presentation	50	11/28 or 12/5
Total	100	

Read the following notice about your project. Fill out the bottom portion after you have read it and return it to your professor BEFORE YOUR START YOUR PROJECT. IF YOU DO NOT TURN IN THIS NOTICE BEFORE YOU START THE PROJECT, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR YOUR PROJECT 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, his/her legal guardians, or his/her owners (in the case of pets). 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.
6. *HRRC Contact:* If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to the rights of human subjects, please feel free to contact me (Scholten) via email. You may also contact Dr. Hendersen, the chair of the Department of Psychology at 331-2195, or the Human Research Review Committee, Dr. Paul Reitemeier (331-3417) if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant.

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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