

**Grand Valley State University**  
**ABA Graduate Certificate Program**  
**PSY 658: Advanced Concepts in Applied Behavior Analysis**

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**Meeting location:** Online through Blackboard

**Office hours:** Email or by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will explore the advanced applications of the theory, principles, concepts, and practices of applied behavior analysis (ABA), and their application to educational and clinical settings. Students will also learn to use supervision and management practices based in behavior principles.

**Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

1. Describe concepts and principles that underlie research and practice in behavior analysis
2. Use behavior analytic principles and strategies in educational and clinical settings
3. Demonstrate the ability to supervise and train others to implement behavior analytic programs
4. Explain the theoretical underpinnings and key concepts of verbal behavior
5. Illustrate the use of verbal behavior in professional practice
6. Demonstrate ethical and professional principles as they relate to supervision

<b>BACB 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Task List</b>	
<b>Section 1: Foundations</b>	<b>Task List Items</b>
A: Philosophical Underpinnings	A-1-5
B: Concepts and Principles	B-10-15
I: Personnel Supervision and Management	I 1-8

<b>Learning Unit</b>	<b>Task List Items</b>	<b>Content Hours</b>
Unit 1: Establishing effective behavior analytic supervision through assessment, supervision, and monitoring	I-1-3	20 hours
Unit 2: Competency-based training for personnel	I-4-7	
Unit 3: Evaluating supervision and training	I-8	
Unit 4: Advanced philosophical underpinnings: The science and dimensions of ABA, radical behaviorism, complex behavior	A-1-5	25 hours
Unit 5: Advanced concepts and principles: Stimulus control and motivating operations, generalization and maintenance	B-10-12	
Unit 6: Advanced concepts and principles: Rule governed behavior, verbal behavior, derived stimulus relations	B-13-15	

## READINGS

### Articles and Chapters:

Available on Blackboard in the Unit folders.

### Books:

Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2020). *Applied behavior analysis* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pearson Education.

LeBlanc, L. A., Sellers, T. P., & Alai'i, S. (2020). *Building and Sustaining Meaningful and Effective Relationships as a Supervisor and Mentor*. Sloan Publishing.

## COURSE INFORMATION

### **BCBA Certification Information**

This course is one of seven courses in the 21-credit Applied Behavior Analysis Graduate Certificate Program at GVSU. Successful completion of the course sequence results in the GVSU Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis. The ABA Graduate Certificate is a Verified Course Sequence (VCS) by the Association of Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). The BACB has approved the GVSU course sequence as meeting the 5<sup>th</sup> edition Task List 315-hour coursework requirements for eligibility to pursue certification as a BCBA. Additionally, the BACB requires that you show proof of a master's degree and evidence that you have accrued the required number of supervised experience hours before you can register to take the BCBA exam. You are responsible for ensuring that you meet all of the current BACB standards. For more information about the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, go to [www.bacb.com](http://www.bacb.com).

Because this course is part of the GVSU VCS, it must meet specific competency requirements from the BACB 5<sup>th</sup> edition Task List. Therefore, this course will cover the ways that ABA is used to understand the behavior of individuals with ASD and develop programs that improve their learning, social interaction, and behavior. This course does not include information about diagnostic evaluation or interventions that are not connected to ABA. However, feel free to ask me questions outside of the realm of ABA and I will do my best to help you access the information you are looking for.

### **Required Equipment (owned or accessible)**

- High-speed internet access
- Computer with a sound card and speakers and operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements (see below)
- Microphone (built in or external) - preferred
- Computer camera for videoconference, synchronous meetings (most laptops have a camera)

### **Blackboard is the Course Management System**

To access Blackboard, go to <https://mybb.gvsu.edu/> and enter your log in and password.

This course utilizes Blackboard, GVSU's online course management system. Take a look at the GVSU Online Learning pages to find numerous materials about using Blackboard and online learning <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/>.

Use of Blackboard is integral to this course and students must log on a few times each week in order to complete course requirements, receive important announcements and updates, and communicate with instructors and other students about course content.

Check the current [technical requirements](#) to use Blackboard and [preferred browser information](#).

#### Technical difficulties with Blackboard

If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, contact the help desk by email or phone - [helpdesk@gvsu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@gvsu.edu) or 616-331-3513. The help website is <http://www.gvsu.edu/it/learn/>

#### **Accessing the Library**

Many of GVSU's library resources can be accessed online [Distance and Off-Campus Learning Services](#) with many journal articles available on demand. You must have an active GVSU student account to take advantage of the library's resources and services. General library [help site](#).

#### **Graduate Writing Resources**

The [Graduate Writing Resources](#) available to assist with all kinds of writing tasks and they will give feedback on writing assignments. It is not just for students who struggle with writing. They can help any student improve writing skills.

#### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you need specific accommodations and you have a documented disability, you will need to contact the Disability Support Resources Office at 616-331-2490 to coordinate accommodations. If you plan to request accommodations in this course, please let me know right away so I can assist you.

## **COURSE ORGANIZATION and ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Synchronous Meeting (participate in 2 synchronous meetings)**

Synchronous meetings will provide an opportunity to talk about course materials and assignments as a group. The dates and times for these meetings are listed on Blackboard.

### **Readings (weekly)**

You will have book chapters and articles to read weekly. It is critical to stay up on the readings since this is where you will learn much of the content that will be used for discussion board and assignments. It is also necessary for the BCBA exam, and important for your work as a practitioner.

### **Unit Content (two-week units)**

The units will be a foundational part of the course and this is where you will find instructions for each two-week segment of the course including reading assignments, course content presentations, and assignments. Units will open up two weeks at a time with assignments due at the end of the two-week period. All previous units will be open throughout the course.

### **Discussion board – (each learning unit)**

Discussion board will be posted with each unit to promote discussion related to the topics covered in the unit. It is important to have interactions with others related to the topics in each unit. A grading rubric is provided on the Blackboard site under Course Basics.

### **Assignments – (each Learning Unit)**

You will have an assignment associated with each learning unit. These will vary in type and length but most will involve practice or application of concepts from the unit content. These are graded and will constitute an important part of your learning and grade for the course. All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner (typed, and free from spelling/grammatical errors). More information about each of these assignments will be provided on Blackboard.

### **Unit reading quizzes – (6 quizzes)**

There will be three parts to the quizzes – writing quiz questions based on the readings, taking a quiz, and grading a quiz. Participating in every part of the process will help you read, reflect, plan, study, and provide feedback to deepen your thinking about the content. More information about the quizzes will be provided on Blackboard.

## POINTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Points	Total Points for Semester
Synchronous meetings (2)	10	20
Discussion board (6)	10	60
Assignments (6)	20	120
Quizzes (6)	10	60
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>		<b>260</b>

### Final Grade Requirement

Students seeking the ABA Graduate Certificate must complete all courses with a B- or higher in each course and finish with a minimum 3.0 grade point average in the course sequence.

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	70-76%
D	61-69%
F	0-60%

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

[GVSU Student Code regarding Integrity of Scholarship and Grades:](#)

### **Section 223.00: Integrity of Scholarships and Grades**

Truth and Honesty. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing protect the validity of University grades. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned without unauthorized aid of any kind. Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work, so that honest effort will be positively encouraged.

### **Section 223.01: Plagiarism**

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. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment also is considered plagiarism. 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.

"This course is subject to GVSU's general requirements for courses. A full list with pointers to resources may be found at [www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies](http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies)."

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**Spring/Summer 2021**

Dates	Unit Content	Readings	Assignments
<i>The first half of the course will focus on training, supervision, performance management, and OBM.</i>			
<b>Unit 1</b> 5/10-5/23	Establishing effective behavior analytic supervision through assessment, supervision, and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LeBlanc et al. (2020) – Ch. 1-4</li> <li>• Garza et al. (2018)</li> <li>• Hartley et al. (2016)</li> <li>• Valentino et al. (2016) - optional</li> </ul>	Discussion board Assignment 1 Reading quiz
<b>Unit 2</b> 5/24-6/6	Competency-based training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LeBlanc et al. (2020) – Ch. 5-7</li> <li>• Reid (2017)</li> <li>• Parsons et al. (2013)</li> <li>• Little et al. (2020)</li> </ul>	Synch meeting Discussion board Assignment 2 Reading quiz
<b>Unit 3</b> 6/7-6/20	Performance management and evaluation in supervision  Professional behaviors and roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LeBlanc et al. (2020) – Ch. 9-11</li> <li>• Lerman et al. (2015)</li> <li>• Carr et al. (2013)</li> <li>• LeBlanc &amp; Nosik (2019)</li> </ul>	Discussion board Assignment 3 Reading quiz
<i>The second half of the course will focus on various advanced topics in ABA.</i>			
<b>Unit 4</b> 6/21-7/4	Advanced philosophical underpinnings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The science and dimensions of ABA</li> <li>• Radical behaviorism</li> <li>• Evolving ABA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baer &amp; Wolf (1987) - review</li> <li>• Skinner (1981)</li> <li>• Falcomata (2015)</li> <li>• Critchfield &amp; Reed (2017)</li> <li>• Axelrod (2017)</li> <li>• Kimball (2002)</li> </ul>	Discussion board Assignment 4 Reading quiz
<b>Unit 5</b> 7/12-7/25	Advanced concepts and principles I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circumstantial nature of behavior</li> <li>• Stimulus control and motivating operations</li> <li>• Generalization and maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friman (2021)</li> <li>• Sundberg (2013)</li> <li>• Edwards et al. (2019)</li> <li>• Stokes &amp; Osnes (2016)</li> <li>• Brady &amp; Kotkin (2011)</li> </ul>	Discussion board Assignment 5 Reading quiz
<b>Unit 6</b> 7/26-8/10	Advanced concepts and principles II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rule governed behavior</li> <li>• Verbal behavior</li> <li>• Derived stimulus relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baum (2017) – Ch. 8</li> <li>• Skinner (1984)</li> <li>• Ingvarsson (2016) <u>or</u> Dixon, Peach, et al. (2017)</li> <li>• Cooper et al. (2020) – Chs. 19 &amp; 20</li> <li>• Hoffman et al. 2016</li> </ul>	Synch meeting Discussion board Assignment 6 Reading quiz

## Course Readings

- Axelrod S. (2017). A Commentary on Critchfield and Reed: The fuzzy concept of applied behavior analysis research. *The Behavior analyst*, 40(1), 167–171.
- Baer, D. M., & Wolf, M. M. (1987). Some still-current dimensions of applied behavior analysis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 20(4), 313-327.
- Baum, W. M. (2017). *Understanding behaviorism: Behavior, culture, and evolution*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Brady, J., & Kotkin, R. (2011). Creating lasting behavioral change through the Generalization Analysis Worksheet. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 15, 131-137.
- Carr, J. E., Wilder, D. A., Majdalany, L., Mathisen, D., & Strain, L. A. (2013). An assessment-based solution to a human-service employee performance problem: An initial evaluation of the performance diagnostic Checklist—Human services *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 6(1), 16-32.
- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2020). *Applied behavior analysis* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pearson Education.
- Critchfield, T. S., & Reed, D. D. (2017). The fuzzy concept of applied behavior analysis research. *The Behavior Analyst: An Official Journal of the Association for Behavior Analysis International*, 40(1), 123.
- Dixon, M. R., Peach, J., Daar, J. H., & Penrod, C. (2017). Teaching complex verbal operants to children with autism and establishing generalization using the Peak Curriculum. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 50(2), 317-331.
- Edwards, T. L., Lotfizadeh, A. D., & Poling, A. (2019). Motivating operations and stimulus control. *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 112(1), 1-9.
- Falcomata, T. S. (2015). *Defining Features of Applied Behavior Analysis*. In H. S. Roane, J. E. Ringdahl, & T. S. Falcomata (Eds.), *Clinical and organizational applications of applied behavior analysis* (p. 1-18). Elsevier Academic Press.
- Friman, P. C. (2021). There is no such thing as a bad boy: The circumstances view of problem behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jaba.816
- Garza, K.L., McGee, H.M., Schenk, Y.A. et al. (2018). Some Tools for Carrying Out a Proposed Process for Supervising Experience Hours for Aspiring Board Certified Behavior Analysts®. *Behavior Analysis in Practice* 11, 62–70. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-017-0186-8>
- Hartley, B. K., Courtney, W. T., Rosswurm, M., & LaMarca, V. J. (2016). The apprentice: An innovative approach to meet the behavior analysis certification Board’s supervision standards. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 9(4), 329-338.
- Heward, W. L., & Cooper, J. O. (1992). Radical behaviorism: A productive and needed philosophy for education. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 2(4), 345-365.



- Hoffmann, A. N., Contreras, B. P., Clay, C. J., & Twohig, M. P. (2016). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for individuals with disabilities: A behavior analytic strategy for addressing private events in challenging behavior. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 9*, 14-24.
- Ingvarsson, E. T. (2016). Tutorial: Teaching verbal behavior to children with ASD. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 9*(2), 433-450.
- Kimball, J. W. (2002). Behavior-analytic instruction for children with autism: Philosophy matters. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 17*(2), 66-75.
- LeBlanc, L.A., & Nosik, M.R. (2019). Planning and leading effective meetings. *Behavior Analysis in Practice 12*, 696–708.
- LeBlanc, L. A., Sellers, T. P., & Alai'i, S. (2020). *Building and Sustaining Meaningful and Effective Relationships as a Supervisor and Mentor*. Sloan Publishing.
- Lerman, D. C., LeBlanc, L. A., & Valentino, A. L. (2015). Evidence-based application of staff and caregiver training procedures. In H. S. Roane, J. E. Ringdahl, & T. S. Falcomata (Eds.), *Clinical and organizational applications of applied behavior analysis* (p. 321–351). Elsevier Academic Press.
- Little, A., Tarbox, J., & Alzaabi, K. (2020). Using acceptance and commitment training to enhance the effectiveness of behavioral skills training. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science, 16*, 9-16. doi:10.1016/j.jcbs.2020.02.002
- Parsons, M. B., Rollyson, J. H., & Reid, D. H. (2013). Teaching practitioners to conduct behavioral skills training: A pyramidal approach for training multiple human service staff. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 6*(2), 4-16.
- Reid, D. H. (2017). Competency-based staff training. In J. K. Luiselli (Ed.), *Applied behavior analysis advanced guidebook: A manual for professional practice* (pp. 21-40) Elsevier Academic Press.
- Skinner, B. F. (1981). Selection by consequences. *Science, 213*(4507), 501-504.
- Skinner, B. F. (1984). An operant analysis of problem solving. *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 7*, 583-613.
- Stokes, T., & Osnes, P. (2016). An operant pursuit of generalization - republished article. *Behavior Therapy, 47*(5), 720-732.
- Sundberg, M. L. (2013). Thirty points about motivation from Skinner's book *Verbal Behavior*. *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior, 29*, 13-40.
- Valentino, A. L., LeBlanc, L. A., & Sellers, T. P. (2016). The benefits of group supervision and a recommended structure for implementation. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 9*(4), 320-328.

### Thoughts on a Successful Online Learning Experience

Taking an online course is different from traditional classroom courses. You will take a larger role in organizing your time and guiding your own learning. The role of the instructor becomes facilitator, guide, and resource to help you learn the course material and apply it in your personal and professional life. I am here to assist you, but you need to let me know what you need.

As a successful online learner, you will interact with the course materials regularly; manage your time; share thoughts and experiences with others; critically reflect on material; and apply what you are learning. You are the conductor of your own learning, which is what lifelong learning is all about!

Much to the surprise of many students, online courses are not easier than traditional courses. Quite the contrary. You may have more flexibility and less travel, but the content is the same and you have a greater responsibility for your learning. There are also more opportunities and expectations to participate in discussions. Online learning is an excellent format, but it is not and should not be passive. You want to be actively engaged with your instructor, other students, and your own thinking.

### **Tips for a Successful Learning Experience**

*\*Although these might seem obvious and simple, they will make a difference*

- Read the syllabus and all preparatory information on Blackboard
- Stay organized and track due dates
- Plan weekly study times
- KEEP UP ON THE READING
- Log onto Blackboard at least 3 times per week to check announcements, discussion board, and interact with course material
- Get to know the other students in the class and help each other learn the language and the concepts
- Post questions, comments, and ideas on discussion board
- Ask questions of the instructor. Not just clarification questions about logistics, but content questions.