

**Grand Valley State University  
ABA Graduate Certificate Program  
Psy 522: Behavioral Foundations**

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**Meeting date and time:** 4-5:15PM on selected Tuesdays: 9/2, 10/7, 11/4, 12/2

**Meeting location:** 1117 Au Sable Hall

**Office location:** 2139 Au Sable Hall

**Office hours:** Tuesdays (in-person or Zoom) from 11:30AM-12:30PM or by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Students will study the foundational concepts and principles of applied behavior analysis as they relate to the work of school-based professionals (i.e., school psychologists). Students will gain an understanding of factors that govern behavior, processes for measuring behavior, and methods for preventing behavior problems and improving learning and performance.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of concepts and principles from the natural science of learning and define key behavior analytic terms.
2. Explain how principles of learning relate to the work of school psychologists in the areas of assessment/eligibility determination, consultation, and evaluating intervention effects
3. Define and provide examples of behavioral principles and processes including: respondent and operant conditioning; reinforcement and schedule effects; punishment; extinction; stimulus control; motivating operations; generalization and maintenance; rule-governed behavior; and symmetric relational responding.
4. Explain the use of measurable goals, direct measurement of behavior, and visual inspection of graphic data as they relate to data-based decision making in schools, both at the individual and systems level.

### **READING MATERIALS**

Madden, G. J., Reed, D. D., & Reed, F. D. D. (2021). *An introduction to behavior analysis*. John Wiley & Sons.

*\*This text is available as an e-book via GVSU SAVE. This means your course material will be delivered to you via a link on our Blackboard Ultra page and that you have been automatically charged. If you prefer to opt out of GVSU SAVE and access materials via a different method, please see our course page for simple instructions to opt out and obtain a refund before the posted deadline.*

## **COURSE LOGISTICS**

### **What do I need to know about my instructor?**

I am committed to foster a learning environment that is welcoming, fair, and productive for all students. Toward this goal, students can expect me to:

- Provide materials and activities to help you develop key understandings in each unit
- Answer your questions and partner with you to navigate any challenges that arise
- Model effective teaching practices and professional conduct
- Provide thoughtful feedback on your contributions in class and online
- Check GVSU email daily (Monday-Friday) and respond to email within 48 hours
- Maintain the Blackboard page with accurate, accessible information and promptly address any errors detected or issues raised by students

### **What do I need to know about Behavior Analysis and the Behavioral Foundations course?**

Behavior analysis is the natural science of environmental (contextual) influences on behavior. In Behavioral Foundations, you will gain a working knowledge of basic principles of learning to help you predict and influence socially important behavior change, both professionally and personally. This course is a bit like what you might experience in an introductory class in any subject that require a technical understanding of concepts before putting them into practice. Learning to think and problem solve like a behavior analyst requires some new vocabulary as well “unlearning” some less workable assumptions about why we do what we do.

When you understand more about how environmental circumstances influence human behavior, it may cause a shift in perspective for your work as a school psychologist and beyond. Why do so many of us procrastinate working on things that we say matter to us? How do you make a new habit stick? Why do so many students dislike math? What does it take to get teachers excited about data collection? Why do “good” people do bad things such as lie, cheat, lash out, and pollute? Behavior analysis is an inherently pragmatic science, meaning that we should judge it by its usefulness for addressing questions of social importance. My hope is that you will end the semester with a) deeper insight and compassion regarding why we do what we do and b) readiness to learn how you can apply basic principles to create environments that bring out the best in people (and yourself!) in subsequent courses.

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

- High-speed internet access
- Operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements (see below)
- Computer with a sound card and speakers
- Microphone (built in or external)

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

To access Blackboard, go to <https://lms.gvsu.edu/> and enter your network login 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. Some courses may have reading materials in [course reserve](#).

#### **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 are in need of accommodation due to a learning, physical, or other disability you must present a memo to me from Student Accessibility Resources (SAR), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested reasonable accommodations. If you have not already done so, please contact the [Student Accessibility Resources](#) office (4015 JHZ) by calling 331-2490 or email to [access@gvsu.edu](mailto:access@gvsu.edu). Please note that I may not be able to provide accommodation based upon disability until I have received a copy of the SAR issued memo. All discussions will remain confidential.

#### **COURSE ORGANIZATION and ASSIGNMENTS**

The learning activities for this course take a few different forms, but I have scheduled each activity in a predictable rhythm within each 2-week unit. Please contact me early in the semester if you have questions about expectations for the course or how to establish a work pattern that fits both our course calendar and your unique schedule and responsibilities.

#### **Learning Units** (2-week modules)

Psy 522 is organized into 2-week segments, each with a new set of reading assignments, course content presentations, discussion boards, practice quizzes, and assignments. Units will open up every other Monday morning and all unit activities will be due before the end of the 2-week period at 11:59PM on Sunday evening. All previously completed units will remain open throughout the course so you can refer back to materials at any time.

Many units will have optional readings, practice activities, or supplemental resources. Benefits of completing optional or supplemental activities, while ungraded, include getting a little more comfortable with challenging material or sampling different perspectives on the current topic.

**Class Meetings** (participate in 4 meetings)

Class meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss and apply what we are learning in class. The dates, times, and locations for these meetings are discussed with the group at the beginning of the semester and listed on Blackboard as well as this syllabus.

**Readings** (weekly)

You will have multiple book chapters and readings in each unit. It is critical to engage with the readings early in each unit and to create original notes and study resources based on those materials. Assigned readings address most of the knowledge and skills we discuss in this course including ABA terminology that you will encounter again in later courses. Most importantly, the ideas and strategies from your readings will be useful for your future work in schools.

**Study Products** (submitted bi-weekly, starting unit 2)

Active study and review strategies will help you to learn material faster, retain it longer, and apply it with greater ease in the future. You will earn a small number of points for turning in evidence of your study activities in each unit. More information about this recurring assignment is available in the Study Products folder on Blackboard.

**Discussion Board** (each learning unit)

Discussion board questions are posted with each unit to collaborate on more precise or complete understandings of course objectives and to wrestle with essential questions or big ideas from each unit. More information about discussion board and a grading rubric are provided on the Blackboard site.

**Practice Quizzes** (each learning unit)

You will complete a practice quiz for each unit. These short quizzes are worth a small number of points and the grade is based on quiz completion, not the number of correct answers on your initial quiz submission. Practice quizzes provide a quick way to assess whether you are grasping key information related to the big ideas, objectives, and terms in each unit.

**Assignments** – (each learning unit)

You will have an assignment associated with each unit of material. These will vary in type and length, but most will involve applying what you've learned to hypothetical scenarios. Assignments will constitute an important part of your learning and grade for the course. All

written work should be prepared in a professional manner (typed, proofread, original). More information about each unit assignment will be provided on Blackboard.

### **Exams –**

You will have 3 exams scheduled throughout the semester, each covering 4-6 weeks of course content and constituting a major portion of your final grade. Exams consist of both multiple-choice and short essay questions. Multiple choice questions are administered online. Short essays are administered as open-note activities. Students must work independently on all components of their exams, and AI should not be used for any aspect of exams.

Exams are posted at 5PM on Sundays and final submissions are due before 11:59PM on Tuesday evenings. This wide window is designed to give you the opportunity to take the exam when you are most prepared and available to do your best work. Your instructor reserves the right to shorten this testing window if student performance suggests the presence of academic integrity issues (e.g., students utilizing AI inappropriately, students discussing exam content before the final submission deadline).

### **POINTS AND GRADING**

Assignment	Points	Total Points for Semester
Class meetings	5	20
Scavenger hunt	2	2
1-on-1 Check-In	5	5
Study Products (6)	3	18
Practice Quizzes (7)	5	35
Discussion Boards (7)	8	56
Assignments (7)	20	140
Exams (3)	60/60/60	180
TOTAL POINTS		421

### **Grading Scale**

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%

## COURSE POLICIES

### [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)."

#### **Attendance Policy**

In the event of an unavoidable absence from a meeting or exam window (e.g., illness, family emergency, weather-related disruption), students will have the opportunity to complete an alternative activity or to reschedule as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours. Please notify your instructor of any planned, non-emergency scheduling conflicts within the first week of the semester.

#### **Makeup/Late Work Policy**

Students will not generally have the opportunity to make up points lost due to late or missing discussion posts, assignments, or practice quizzes. Exceptions to this policy may include isolated instances of personal illness; program-related conflicts communicated in advance; and emergencies. Please notify your instructor as soon as you become aware of circumstances that could affect your timely completion of assigned work in this course.

#### **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

Many faculty and students are exploring the ways that ChatGPT and other AI resources can facilitate their learning and communication. Early in the semester, I will communicate guidelines for appropriate uses of AI in each type of activity via parameters in the [AI Assessment Scale](#) (Perkins, Furze, Roe, & McVaugh, 2024). I welcome you to develop your repertoire for ethical use of AI in my course after weighing the potential downsides (e.g., [impact on your learning habits](#); [impact on environment](#)). Please contact me with questions at any time if you are unsure about permissible uses of AI in this class.

If and when you choose to use generative AI for an assignment that you submit in my class, please follow [guidance from the American Psychological Association](#) for citing information from AI sources and provide an AI disclosure with the following format: I acknowledge the use of [*insert AI system(s) and link*] to complete aspects of this work. The prompts used included [*list prompts; attach screenshot or exported file, if requested*]. The output from these prompts was used to [*explain use*]. I attest that I critically evaluated AI-generated output based on my understanding of course content and comparison to primary sources prior to applying it in my original work product.

### **Religious Observances**

Your instructor is dedicated to maintaining the rights of students to observe religious holidays. If you need to miss a class to observe a religious holiday, please contact your instructor a week in advance to discuss any arrangements.

### **Student Support**

GVSU and your instructors are dedicated to helping you meet your academic and career goals. Please do not hesitate to contact your instructors if you wish to discuss your course performance or other academic issues. Additionally, if you would like to talk to a professional counselor about mental health concerns, phone the GVSU Counseling Center during normal business hours at 616-331-3266. If you are experiencing a crisis or are considering suicide you can call [988](#) at any time.

## Psy 522: Behavioral Foundations

Session Dates	Learning Unit	Readings	Assignments
<b>Unit 1</b> Aug 25- Sept 7	<b>Foundational Concepts &amp; Principles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ABA and The Circumstances View</li> <li>Respondent conditioning</li> <li>Operant conditioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Madden Ch. 1 &amp; Ch. 4</li> <li>Ervin &amp; Ehrhardt (pp. 113-116)</li> </ul>	<b>F2F meeting Tues 9/2</b> Practice quiz Discussion board Assignment 1
<b>Unit 2</b> Sept 8-21	<b>Increasing Behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforcers v. rewards</li> <li>Positive reinforcement</li> <li>Negative reinforcement</li> <li>Conditioned reinforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Madden Figure 5.5 (p. 129)</li> <li>Madden Ch. 6 &amp; Ch. 8</li> <li>Lane Ch. 3 (pp. 36-40; 46-51)</li> </ul>	Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 2
<b>Tues, Sept 23</b>			<b>Exam 1</b>
<b>Unit 3</b> Sept 22- Oct 5	<b>Decreasing Behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive punishment</li> <li>Negative punishment</li> <li>Extinction</li> </ul> <b>Motivating Behavior Change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivating operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Madden Ch. 7 &amp; Ch. 10</li> <li><i>Supp Witt &amp; Elliott (1982)*</i></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Madden Ch. 9</li> <li><i>Cipani (pp. 14-26)*</i></li> <li><i>Rispoli et al. (2011)*</i></li> </ul>	Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 3
<b>Unit 4</b> Oct 6-19	<b>Behavior Analysis of Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaker and listener behavior</li> <li>Rule-governed behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Madden Ch. 14</li> <li><a href="#">ACT auntie video</a></li> <li>Harris Ch. 2</li> </ul>	<b>F2F meeting Tues 10/7</b> Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 4
<b>Unit 5</b> Oct 20- Nov 2	<b>Supporting Independent Behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discrimination and instructional control</li> <li>Generalization</li> <li>Fidelity and systems supports</li> </ul> <i>Modified schedule for Fall Break (see Blackboard)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Madden Ch. 12</li> <li>Miltenberger Ch. 10</li> <li>Mayer Ch. 3</li> </ul>	1-on-1 check-in meetings Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 5
<b>Tues, Nov 11</b>			<b>Exam 2</b>
<b>Unit 6</b> Nov 3- Nov 16	<b>Behavioral Approach to Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measurable, meaningful goals</li> <li>Direct measurement of progress</li> <li>Visual analysis and decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Madden Ch. 2</li> <li>Lee et al. (2011)</li> <li>Lane Ch. 3 (pp. 52-60)</li> <li><i>Madden Ch. 3 (pp. 64-76)*</i></li> </ul>	<b>F2F meeting Tues 11/4</b> Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 6
<b>Unit 7</b> Nov 17- Dec 7	<b>Function-Based Approach in Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on form v. function of behavior</li> <li>Role of individual learning history</li> <li>Role of current contingencies</li> </ul> <i>Extra week for Thanksgiving Break (see Blackboard)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cipani (pp. 1-14; 2024)</li> <li>Dunlap et al. (1991)</li> <li>Koegel et al. (1987)</li> </ul>	<b>F2F meeting Tues 12/2</b> Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 7
<b>Week of Dec 8 - TBD</b>			<b>Exam 3</b>

*\*Italicized readings are not required. However, they present relevant illustrations and explanations that students may find clarifying, interesting, or both : )*



## Thoughts on a Successful Hybrid Learning Experience

Taking an online or hybrid course is different from taking a traditional classroom course. For example, you will play a larger role in organizing your time and assessing your own learning. The role of the instructor becomes facilitator and guide to help you learn the course material and apply it in your personal and professional life. I (your instructor) am here to assist you by providing materials, activities, and feedback on your performance. You can help me customize my teaching to your needs by communicating early and often when you encounter challenges or barriers to your success in the course.

As an effective learner in a hybrid course, you will: interact with the course materials 3 or more times per week; keep track of deadlines; share thoughts and experiences with others; ask questions when something is unclear; critically reflect on material; and apply what you are learning. Active engagement and open communication are great strategies for hybrid learning AND for lifelong learning.

Much to the surprise of many students, online or hybrid courses are not easier than traditional courses. Quite the contrary. You may have more flexibility and less time in a lecture hall, but the goals of the course are unchanged. Courses like this one have all the essential features to support learning, but it's ultimately your choice whether to engage with those features – and to have meaningful interactions with me and your classmates – so we can maximize growth and enjoyment this semester.

### Hybrid Learning Tips Checklist

- Read the syllabus and all preparatory information on Blackboard
- Stay organized and track due dates
- Schedule weekly study and reading times early in each unit so we can address any questions before the assignment and practice quiz deadlines for that unit
- Log onto Blackboard at least 3 times per week to check announcements, discussion board, and to interact with course material
- Get to know the other students in the class and help each other practice terms and apply concepts
- Study the course terminology and monitor your progress (e.g., practice quizzes, flashcard practice)
- Post questions, comments, and ideas on discussion board (unit discussion board and open forum)
- Keep a record of your trickiest original examples or toughest unanswered questions to bring along for face-to-face meetings where we can discuss them and share resources with greater ease
- Ask questions of the instructor. Not just questions about logistics or grades, but content questions and personalized questions that can help your instructor present content in a way that is relevant and engaging for you (e.g., related to your career, interests, values, and prior experience)