

PSYCHOLOGY 285:
PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING
SPRING 2018
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Alexander Swan

Office: Burgess Hall 106B

Email: aswan@eureka.edu

Office Phone: 309-467-6418

Office Hours: MWF 10-11 AM; W 1-3 PM; MF 2-5 PM; TR 3-5 PM OR GO HERE:

<http://swanpsych.com/contact-about-me/>

My Website: www.swanpsych.com

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

MEETING:

When: MWF 11:00 – 11:50 AM

Where: Burgess Hall 103

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK/MATERIALS:

Powell, R. A., Honey, P. L., & Symbaluk, D. G. (2017). *Introduction to Learning and Behavior*. 5th Ed. Cengage Learning.

COURSE WEBSITE:

All the course announcements, quizzes, grades, this syllabus, and other resources will be available through the course portal on Brightspace. I will try my best to make the Powerpoint slides used for the lectures available online BEFORE each lecture. However, sometimes life will happen and they might not make it until afterward.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Course catalog description: Principles, theories, concepts, and experimental literature related to learning, conditioning, and motivation. Research pertaining to animal as well as human subjects is considered.

John Krantz's take: What is learning? How do we learn? How is it different from that other course we teach here called Cognition? These are the topics of this course. Briefly learning is the acquisition of new behaviors as a result of experiences in the environment. We will develop this definition further in the class. This course will examine the discoveries and applications from this area of psychology. In many ways, these discoveries form the foundation of much of our other knowledge in psychology. We will also take a look at the controversies that have arisen as a result of how this knowledge has been interpreted. Much, but not all, of the material in this course is grounded in the behaviorist tradition so we will have to examine the implications and range of ideas that the term behaviorist encompasses. This grounding of a set of findings in a tradition that makes many of us uncomfortable in its implications will give us a good opportunity to examine the nature of theory and the relationship between theory and data.

CLASS FORMAT:

The course will consist of lectures, demonstrations/activities, videos, and class discussion. Reading assignments should be completed before the chapter is discussed in class.

INTENDED LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Students will be able to explain the historical influences on the scientific study of learning and behaviorism.
- Student will be able to describe general principles of learning and memory as they relate to human and non-human adaptations.
- Students will be able to describe the role of biology on learning and memory.
- Students will be able to identify the principles of learning and memory in everyday life.
- Students will understand and be able to use correctly the jargon of learning and behavior modification.
- Students will apply the principles of learning and behavior in a field experiment and reflect upon this experience utilizing the jargon of learning and behavior modification.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Four (4) In-Class Quizzes | 40% (10% each) | Various Dates: Listed on Course Schedule |
| Agent of Behavior Mod Paper | 20% | DUE: Monday, March 19, 2018 by 11 AM |
| <i>The Lorax</i> Analysis Paper | 20% | DUE: Monday, April 23, 2018 by 11 AM |
| Auto-graded Reading Checks | 10% | Various Dates |
| In-class Participation | 10% | Various Dates |

GRADING SCALE:

The grading scale I will use for the course is the following:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|----|
| ≥ 93% | A | ≥ 80% and < 83% | B- | ≥ 67% and < 70% | D+ |
| ≥ 90% and < 93% | A- | ≥ 77% and < 80% | C+ | ≥ 63% and < 67% | D |
| ≥ 87% and < 90% | B+ | ≥ 73% and < 77% | C | ≥ 60% and < 63% | D- |
| ≥ 83% and < 87% | B | ≥ 70% and < 73% | C- | < 60% | F |

NOTE: Grades will not be changed for any reason, except for clerical errors!

A. QUIZZES:

- The in-class Quizzes (3 “Units” & Final) consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions and are based on both the lectures and text readings. Each Quiz (including the Final) will only cover material from the unit. Although none of the Quizzes are cumulative, new material tends to build upon previous material. ANY material covered in the lectures or reading may appear on the Quiz, but I will provide a study guide to focus studying. Some of the material in the readings will not be covered in the lecture and some of the material in the lecture will not be covered in the readings. **You are responsible for both!**
- Quizzes must be taken on the date scheduled. Vacation is not a valid excuse, nor is an exam scheduled at the same time. If you must miss a Quiz due to some emergency, then you can make it up by taking an essay exam. A doctor’s note or some other formal verification of absence is required to make up a Quiz. This is the ONLY condition under which I will give a make-up. All make-up Quizzes are ESSAY in format and must be taken during a make-up period agreed upon by you and me.
- No use of notes is allowed for any Quiz. Please be aware that cheating on a Quiz will result in a grade of 0 for the exam and reporting of the incident to the Division Chair and Provost. Cheating includes use of notes, books, cell phones, or copying from someone else’s Quiz.

B. SHORT PAPERS:

- 1. AGENT OF BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION:** The first paper you will write in this course is based in an active learning experience. Rather than simply reading and retaining the theories and principles of conditioning, I want you to put them to the test. After the operant conditioning unit, I ask you to engage with a subject (a friend, family member, coworker) and write about your experiences. This is as much a creative writing assignment as it is an application of the psychological principles of operant conditioning. For this paper, you will use reinforcement or punishment to increase or decrease, respectively, a particular behavior in your subject. You will utilize principles to make it happen. You **MUST** do this project on a person, **NOT** a pet/animal subject. After a period of reinforcement or punishment, you will observe if your behavior modification was successful. You should choose a behavior that has the potential for change in approximately three weeks. **You must also choose behaviors that are not harmful or degrading; behavior modification must be in a prosocial direction!**

You will write a brief report of 3-4 pages that describes: 1) Why you chose the TARGET person and the particular behavior; 2) Your planned change strategies and specific tactics, including your schedules of reinforcement/punishment; 3) Your actual timeline and procedure; 4) Objective assessment/evaluation of your efficacy, how well did it work; and finally, 5) What you learned from this experience.

- 2. THE LORAX ANALYSIS:** We are going to be watching Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* (2012) in class. There are significant learning principles portrayed throughout the film. In this 2-page paper, you will analyze the content of the film with this lens. You should incorporate information from the course, and at least three concepts, such as classical conditioning, operant conditioning, observational learning, biological factors, etc. **One or two peer-reviewed sources** are expected to support any arguments you create.

C. READING CHECKS:

- There will be online, self-graded checks on each of the chapters available on Brightspace. These will be multiple choice, and 5 questions each. Since these checks are low-stakes and are only meant to help you digest the material for the in-class Unit Quizzes, you will have 2 attempts for each one. The attempt that achieves the highest score will be recorded. Don't fret too much about these checks; just try your best—they are meant to prepare you for the in-class Unit Quizzes so those aren't too shocking or overwhelming. Though you can use your textbooks on these reading checks (no time limit), try your best to answer the questions without it, since you won't have the texts on the in-class Unit Quizzes!
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are 100% responsible for completing these on time (by their due dates). You will be unable to complete these checks once the due date has passed. Each check will be available at the start of the semester, so you may also complete them earlier than the date of the topic discussion.

COURSE POLICIES

1. GETTING INFORMATION:

- **EMAIL PROTIP:** I use email for almost all communications/announcements. If you do not check your Eureka email often, forward it to an address you do check. **YAHOO ADDRESSES GET SENT TO MY SPAM FOLDER.** The best way to contact me is always via email. If you cannot come to office hours and/or decide to send an email, be sure to use the following format so that I can help you:

To:
Subject Line: "PSY 285: (insert your topic here)"
From: your full address

Dear (insert name of person you are contacting here),

Hello, my name is (your full name here) and I am a student taking PSY 286/Learning. I have a question regarding (insert your question here).

*(Considerate closing of your choosing),
Your full name*

A word of caution: I will do my best to reply within 48 hours. Depending on the nature (and popularity) of your question, my answer may be direct OR posted as a general class announcement on Brightspace. Please hold off on resending a message until 48 hours have passed. Finally, I may not respond to emails between the hours of 8 PM and 8 AM, so please keep this in mind when deciding whether to resend the message.

- **OFFICE HOURS:** I have plenty of office hours. I generally have an open-door policy: if the door's open, please feel free to bug me. You can check my website for these times rather than emailing me to ask me if I'll be there. You might want to email me to let me know you're coming, but walk-ins are welcome. I will specify whether there are circumstances that will cut into my office time as needed.

2. LATE WORK AND MAKE-UP POLICY:

- If participation in university-sponsored events (e.g., athletics) or observance of a religious holiday or other sanctioned event prevents your attendance, you must contact me prior to the relevant date, and you must have any appropriate documentation. If an assignment is due on that date, arrangements must be made to complete the assignment ahead of time, if possible.
- Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due at the beginning of class (unless otherwise noted for electronic assignment submissions). Late assignments will only be accepted in the case of extraordinary circumstances and appropriate documentation, and may involve point/percentage deductions (standard penalty is 10%/24-hr period). Please alert me to these extraordinary circumstances by email within 24 hours of the missed class, and we will set up a time to discuss these on a case-by-case basis.
- Without appropriate circumstances and documentation, early Quizzes or Quiz make-ups will not be granted.
- **BENEFIT OF DOUBT POLICY:** However, I recognize that sometimes life happens; therefore, I have built some flexibility into the course to allow for illness, other obligations, and bad days.
 - i. First, on Quizzes, extra credit will be offered from one Quiz to the next if there is a 10% improvement. For example, if Quiz 1 receives a 60%, a 70% or higher on Quiz 2 will result in an additional percentage increase of extra credit. If you miss a Quiz AND notified me appropriately, and cannot make-up the Quiz prior to the next Quiz, I will count your next Quiz score twice (so no zeroes are given out).
 - ii. In addition, your lowest Reading Check and one Participation assignment will be dropped from your final category computation. You will not be able to make these up—they are dropped for whatever reason you missed, no questions asked!

3. GRADE DISPUTE POLICY:

- If you disagree about how your term paper was graded, you must dispute the issue *in writing* (not email). Write a paragraph about why you think your attempt was correct/sufficient and turn it (with

the original assignment) in to the instructor at the lecture following the return of the relevant assignment. Only reasonable and well-justified complaints will be considered, and all decisions are final. Please note that if you submit a complaint, the instructor will re-grade the entire assignment, and your grade could increase, decrease, or remain the same. **This policy does not apply to final course grades.**

4. CLASS ETIQUETTE:

- **Please do not use your cell phones during class.** I would prefer them to be put on silent or off. If your cell phone goes off during class or an exam, please silence it immediately; do not let it ring through. I will remind everyone prior to exams to make sure their phones are turned off. Please refrain from text messaging during class. I know you think you're being subtle; I assure you that I can see you texting.
- Please do not leave the class partway through unless it is an emergency; it is very disruptive. If you must leave, please sit in the back and at the edge of an aisle so as to not disrupt your fellow classmates.
- Please have respect for the class, your peers, and yourselves by being fully present in the class. Please avoid anything not relevant to the class, such as sleeping, surfing the Internet, or doing homework for other classes.
- **LATENESS:** Please try to arrive a few minutes before the start of lecture. We will begin promptly at 8:00 AM, and it can be distracting to me and to your peers if you arrive late. I will try not to keep you late.

5. LAPTOP & TABLET POLICY:

- a. Research indicates that taking notes by hand results in significantly better retention of conceptual information than taking notes on a laptop (see Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014), even when students are engaged in the material (i.e., are not also checking their email or Facebook feed).
- b. Further, laptop use can be distracting in various ways to the entire class. Because my goal is to maximize the likelihood of a favorable learning environment, **I strongly recommend that you not use laptops in class.**
- c. However, laptops will be permitted on a probationary basis; should the use of laptops be taken advantage of or prove distracting to other students, I will revisit this policy then.

6. ATTENDANCE:

- Students who take notes, ask questions, respond to questions, and come to office hours are typically the ones who succeed in this class.
- Though attendance is not required by College policy, I strongly recommend you attend class prepared and present. As such, you will not be penalized in your grade for missing a class. However, I WILL REWARD folks who arrive to class on time and attend each class, most likely with some helpful exam advice, if you catch my drift. If you do happen to miss a class, that's OK, but you will be responsible for *all* material covered in lecture, some of which will not be covered by the textbooks. If you know about an absence beforehand, please shoot me and email to let me know.

ADDITIONAL COURSE AND COLLEGE INFORMATION

ACCESSIBILITY (ADA) STATEMENT:

The Learning Center, located on the first floor of Alumni Hall, provides academic services to all Eureka College students. Consultations are available in the areas of math and writing. Study groups, individual academic counseling, and course specific tutoring are also available by contacting Jason Zimmerman at x6520 or jjzimmerman@eureka.edu.

Any Eureka College student with a disability or other special circumstances requiring accommodations or other consideration in order to successfully complete the requirements of this course is requested to identify himself/herself to the instructor and discuss the matter privately. This disclosure should be made within the first week of the course so proper accommodations can be made.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY STATEMENT:

Eureka College strives to instill individual responsibility and integrity in its students, and expects its students to behave with integrity throughout their time at the College. Any giving or receiving of unpermitted aid on tests or assignments is considered cheating. If a student is uncertain about how to document sources or incorporate materials into a paper, it is his or her responsibility to seek help by speaking to the faculty member, another professor, or a Writing Center tutor. The College's Academic Dishonesty policy is outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic dishonesty constitutes a major breach of the trust that exists between the instructor and the student. It includes passing off another's ideas as one's own, any attempt to gain information about a test or exam prior to the test or exam date without the instructor's consent, and providing unauthorized assistance on a test, exam, paper, or other assignment to another student. Cheating on a test, exam, quiz, paper, or other assignment will result in a failing grade for the assignment. Further dishonesty will result in failing the course. Students who fail for academic dishonesty will not have the option of withdrawing from the course. If you are in doubt about what plagiarism means, or about how to appropriately document sources in your work, please contact me; I will be happy to help.

COUNSELING SERVICES:

Provided by Tazwood Center for Wellness, seeing a professional counselor as a Eureka College student is easy and free. Whatever is on your mind, don't be afraid to talk to someone.

Tazwood Center for Wellness visits campus twice a week for on campus counseling appointments. Each student receives 6 free sessions per semester.

Tazwood Center for Wellness
3248 Vandever Ave. Pekin, IL 61554
309-437-5522 (Phone)
309-347-1148 (Emergency Response Services)

CHANGES TO SYLLABUS:

The Instructor reserves the right to make policy and course changes to the syllabus at any time with advance notice to students.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Schedule is subject to change depending on the progress of the course or at the instructor's discretion.

| Week | Day | Date | Lecture | Lecture Topic | Readings |
|------|-----|------|---------|---|----------|
| 1 | M | 1/8 | ---- | NO CLASS – OPENING WEEK | |
| | W | 1/10 | 1 | Course Introduction | |
| | F | 1/12 | 2 | Introduction to Learning (A History & Schools of Behaviorism) | Ch 1 |
| 2 | M | 1/15 | ---- | NO CLASS – MLK JR. DAY; CAMPUS SERVICE DAY | |
| | W | 1/17 | 3 | Research Methods in Learning | Ch 2 |
| | F | 1/19 | 4 | Elicited Behaviors | Ch 3 |
| 3 | M | 1/22 | 5 | Introduction to Classical Conditioning | Ch 3 |
| | W | 1/24 | ---- | QUIZ 1 | |
| | F | 1/26 | 6 | Classical Conditioning Phenomena | Ch 4 |
| 4 | M | 1/29 | 7 | Specificity in Classical Conditioning | Ch 4 |
| | W | 1/31 | 8 | Underlying Processes of Classical Conditioning | Ch 5 |
| | F | 2/2 | 9 | Practical Applications of Classical Conditioning | Ch 5 |
| 5 | M | 2/5 | 10 | Introduction to Operant Conditioning | Ch 6 |
| | W | 2/7 | 11 | Operant Contingencies | Ch 6 |
| | F | 2/9 | 12 | Operant Contingencies: Tricky Examples | |
| 6 | M | 2/12 | 13 | Focus on Positive Reinforcement | Ch 6 |
| | W | 2/14 | 14 | Schedules of Reinforcement I | Ch 7 |
| | F | 2/16 | 15 | Schedules of Reinforcement II | Ch 7 |
| 7 | M | 2/19 | 16 | Theories of Reinforcement I | Ch 7 |
| | W | 2/21 | 17 | Theories of Reinforcement II | Ch 7 |
| | F | 2/23 | ---- | <i>Quiz 2 In-Class Review Session (Q&A)</i> | |
| 8 | M | 2/26 | ---- | QUIZ 2 | |
| | W | 2/28 | 18 | Film: <i>The Lorax</i> | |
| | F | 3/2 | 19 | Film: <i>The Lorax</i> /Film Discussion | |
| 9 | M | 3/5 | ---- | NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK | |
| | W | 3/7 | ---- | NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK | |
| | F | 3/9 | ---- | NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK | |
| 10 | M | 3/12 | 20 | Extinction | Ch 8 |
| | W | 3/14 | 21 | Stimulus Control | Ch 8 |
| | F | 3/16 | 22 | Escape and Avoidance | Ch 9 |
| 11 | M | 3/19 | 23 | Punishment | Ch 9 |
| | W | 3/21 | 24 | Noncontingent Punishment | Ch 9 |
| | F | 3/23 | 25 | Choice and Matching | Ch 10 |
| 12 | M | 3/26 | 26 | Self-Control | Ch 10 |
| | W | 3/28 | ---- | QUIZ 3 | |
| | F | 3/30 | ---- | NO CLASS – GOOD FRIDAY | |
| 13 | M | 4/2 | ---- | NO CLASS – EASTER MONDAY | |
| | W | 4/4 | 27 | Observational Learning | Ch 11 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|------|------|--|-------|
| | F | 4/6 | 28 | Rule-Governed Behavior | Ch 11 |
| 14 | M | 4/9 | 29 | Preparedness | Ch 12 |
| | W | 4/11 | 30 | Operant-Respondent Interactions | Ch 12 |
| | F | 4/13 | ---- | NO CLASS – DR. SWAN @ MPA | |
| 15 | M | 4/16 | 31 | Adjunctive Behavior; Activity Anorexia | Ch 12 |
| | W | 4/18 | 32 | Comparative Cognition: Memory in Animals | Ch 13 |
| | F | 4/20 | 33 | Comparative Cognition: Clever Hans | Ch 13 |
| 16 | M | 4/23 | 34 | Comparative Cognition: Use of Tools | Ch 13 |
| | W | 4/25 | 35 | Comparative Cognition: Language | Ch 13 |
| | F | 4/27 | ---- | NO CLASS – COURSE ENDED | |
| F | T | 5/1 | ---- | FINAL QUIZ (8:00 AM – 10:00 PM) | |