

Psychology of Learning, Spring 2017 Psy 3620-600 (Internet Section)

Catalog Course Description

Introduction to basic principles and concepts of learning with particular emphasis on the application to problems of human learning. Prerequisite Psy 1879 (Introductory Psychology).

Overview

This course begins with a brief historical overview of important figures that have influenced the scientific study of learning, then progresses to the general methods used to study human behavior and specific methods that are relatively unique to the study of learning. Our in-depth analysis of classical conditioning will have you salivating, and you will appreciate the complexity of this simple associative learning. The next major section of the course deals with operant conditioning, which is primarily how the consequences of our behavior (e.g., reinforcement and punishment) produce a change in the future probability of a behavior, including the role of schedules of reinforcement. Some of the direct applications in this section deal with issues of self-control, parenting, and treatment for OCD and depression. Next, we will study how we learn through watching others undergo classical and operant conditioning. Finally, you will come to appreciate the interrelationship between the types of learning and the limits of learning imposed by biological constraints.

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Course Materials

Introduction to Learning and Behavior 4/e, by Powell, Honey, & Symbaluk (2013). [View the textbook resources](#), which include flashcards and practice quizzes!

If you are near campus, pick up your textbook from Textbook Rental. If you live outside of Coles County, your textbook will be mailed to you. Please refer to the [FAQs on the Textbook Rental Services web site](#).

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the important historical contributions to the study of learning
2. Critically examine and write about current research on learning.
3. Compare the different research approaches to learning and ways of measuring learning.
4. Evaluate theories that explain Classical, Operant, and Observational learning.
5. Identify the biological dispositions that influence learning.



Teaching Philosophy

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled" --Plutarch

6. Apply principles of learning to everyday life to become better learners and teachers.
7. Enjoy learning about learning.

Guidelines for Studying and Test Taking

- Are you prepared to take an internet class? You can [take a survey](#) to find out
- I also strongly recommend viewing Dr. Stephen Chew's video series on "[How to get the most out of studying](#)"



Requirements and Grading

Requirement	Points
Chapter quizzes	240
Journal article critiques (2 x 40 pts)	80
Chapter key term applications	50
Self-Change Project	50
Final exam	50
Discussion replies	30
Total	500

Final Grade	Points
A (89%)	445-500
B (79%)	395-444
C (69%)	345-394
D (59%)	295-244
F (<59%)	<295

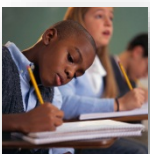
Generally, the tasks for each chapter are to read the textbook, review the accompanying narrated PowerPoint lecture, post examples of key term applications on the discussion board (see below), and take a chapter quiz. To help pace your study, the assignments have due dates spaced throughout the semester. Late assignments may be penalized by a 20% reduction of the total points possible, except for excused situations. You may work ahead if you wish!

News

Announcements to the class are posted in D2L on the home page under "News." Please be sure to sign up for text message or email notifications when news items are posted so you don't miss them. (After you login to D2L, click on your name at the top right of the menu, then select "Notifications" and follow the instructions on that page)

Quizzes (Course Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6)

- **You may use your textbook, notes, and other resources for your quizzes, but you must do your own work. Collaborating with others on the quiz is considered academic misconduct.**
- Quizzes are designed to assess your fulfillment of the course objectives. Questions on the chapter quizzes are multiple-choice and cover material from the textbook. The questions are conceptually based on the application of the information you have learned and will test your critical thinking and analytical skills.



- Quiz questions are randomly selected from a set of questions. Thus, you may end up with 2 questions that test similar concepts and you will probably not have the exact same questions as another student. Don't worry, across all the quizzes, the average difficulty for everyone in the class will be similar.
- The quizzes are timed and the timer begins once you open the quiz, but you should have plenty of time to complete the quiz. If you have problems while taking a quiz, such as the network going down or your computer crashing, please complete the quiz at the next possible time. You may have a warning that your time has expired, but it will still save your answers. Then, send me an e-mail explaining why your time went over. D2L records all quiz times.
- You are allowed 2 attempts at each quiz and I use the highest score of the two attempts. If you are happy with your 1st attempt score, it is not necessary to take it a second time. It is likely that you'll get some of the same questions on both attempts, so it is helpful to view your quiz results to see which ones you got wrong. I recommend you take your first attempt after you've read the chapter and think you have a pretty good grasp of the information. Then, after you find out which questions you missed, study those topics until you've mastered them and then retake the quiz. It's up to you how to best use the opportunity. Research on testing suggests that by simply asking students to retrieve information (as in testing), they are more likely to remember it.
- As part of a cumulative testing strategy, each quiz contains questions from prior quizzes. As such, each subsequent quiz will have more questions (and more time to complete them). See further explanation in D2L under "Getting Started."
- After the quiz has been automatically graded, you can view your results of the questions you missed.

Tips for doing well on the quizzes:

- Read and understand the chapter.
- Review the narrated PowerPoint lecture for the chapter.
- Be able to answer all of the questions listed under "Study questions" found at the end of each chapter in the textbook.
- Complete the online practice quizzes, found on the publisher's web site for the textbook.
- Use the practice chapter test at the end of each textbook chapter.
- Don't try to rush through the course. Take time to really understand what you're learning.
- If you don't understand anything, please post a message on the discussion board or email the instructor.
- View EIU Student Success Center's test taking tips at <http://www.eiu.edu/~success/testtaking.php>

Journal Article Critiques (Course Objectives 2, 4)

This assignment helps students gain skills necessary to read, interpret, and synthesize original research, which will be applicable in research methods, capstone courses, and other courses in the major.

Journal Critique Learning Goals

1. Summarize, analyze, and evaluate research methods of articles published in peer-reviewed journals.
2. Integrate material learned in the course with current empirical research.
3. Use electronic library resources (Booth Library, Google Scholar, etc.) to improve information literacy.
4. Earn course credit through critical writing as a complement to taking tests or other assignments.

Furthermore, this writing assignment helps fulfill six of the [Psychology Department Learning Goals](#) (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, and 3), which are based on the American Psychological Association's [Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major v2.0](#).

Instructions

There are two journal article critiques that must be completed according to the instructions listed in D2L under the content topic "Journal Critiques"

- When you search for articles, you should find plenty of them if you use search terms such as operant conditioning, behavior therapy, classical conditioning, Pavlovian conditioning, vicarious learning, or observational learning.
- Submit your completed critiques from the course menu link *Assessments>Dropbox*.

After both of the journal critiques have been graded, you may rewrite one of them to earn up to full credit (I would choose the one with the lowest grade!). If you would like to rewrite one of them, you may do so by resubmitting your revised critique through the same dropbox link as you submitted the original. Every file that you submit is saved so it is easy to see which one you submitted most recently. You can improve the paper that you wrote by making changes to it (which I recommend) or you can write a completely different one (only if there's no hope for improving the one you already did). The deadline for the rewrite will be two weeks after the 2nd critique is due. You may only submit one rewrite of your journal critique by the deadline.

If you wish to submit one of your journal critiques to your EIU electronic writing portfolio, then you must do so by the **last Friday of class before finals week** (this is earlier than the deadline posted on the [EWP web site](#)).

Chapter Key Term Applications (Course Objectives 2, 4)

For the first 10 chapters, you will post a message to that chapter's discussion topic that contains an example of real-life application of 3 different key terms or concepts listed at the end of each chapter in the textbook (under the heading "Concept Review"). If you post key term examples to the last unit (Chapter 11/12), you will earn 5 points extra credit.

Key term applications should come from your own experiences, although you can make up your own example if needed. This will help fulfill the course objective "Apply principles of learning to everyday life to become better learners and teachers." It will also provide me with new

examples to share with other students. You can earn up to 5 points for each chapter's examples. Keep in mind that if you generate an incorrect example, you will not get the full credit. The examples should be brief, clear, and correct. For example, in the chapter on reinforcement, you could tell how a behavior such as flipping a light switch is positively reinforced by the appearance of the light.

- Type your examples directly into the discussion posting message instead of including your response as an attachment to the message.
- Please do not select terms from the chapter that are theories, philosophies, or schools of thought. For our mutual benefit, please choose terms that have specific, concrete examples associated with them.
- Appropriate network etiquette should be followed at all times.
- Please do not disclose traumatic or exceptionally personal events that could make other students feel uncomfortable (e.g., divorce, abuse, personal health concerns).
- The chapter examples have the same due date as the chapter quiz.

Discussion Board Participation

To encourage class participation, 30 points of your final grade will come from interaction that you have with other students in the class. I will assess the amount and quality of discussion board postings that you make in reply to other students' key term applications.



You are required to post one quality reply (at least several sentences long) to a fellow student for each of the 10 assigned chapters (3 points each chapter). In your response, you should include an evaluation of the student's application of key terms (i.e., explain why your peer's examples are correct, or—if an example is not correct—describe what could be changed to improve the accuracy of the example). You may also include other relevant comments. The intent is to help each other have an accurate understanding of the key terms from each chapter and to be supportive of each other's learning.

Of course, you are welcome to respond to other students' posts more often if you'd like. Multiple responses for a chapter will be graded as a whole.

Discussion topics will be locked one week after the chapter due date to encourage replies within a reasonable amount of time.

Self-Change Project

See the complete instructions in D2L.



Narrated PowerPoint Lectures

The PowerPoint lectures should supplement your textbook reading. They are not a replacement for the textbook, but they will have helpful information.

Most of the PowerPoint slides contain audio narration that you will hear while viewing the presentation in Slideshow mode. If there is accompanying narration, it will automatically start

playing within a second or two after you advance to the slide. Some of the slides have a multiple-choice question to check your understanding. For these, you will need to click the mouse, or press spacebar (or right arrow-key) to advance to the next slide after you have taken time to answer the question. The correct answers for these questions are found in the notes panel of the slide (when not in "SlideShow" mode). However, sometimes I answer the question for you in the accompanying narration 😊.

EIU Students have free access to [download Office 365](#).

There are occasional text links in the PowerPoint lectures that will take you to other web sites. If you find a broken link in the presentation, please let me know which presentation and slide number



Final Exam

About half of the final exam will be composed of questions randomly selected from the same pool of questions as the previous chapters, while the other half will come from the assigned readings from chapters 11 and 12 (see below for specific page numbers). There is one open-ended question that you'll get credit for after I manually grade the quiz (plan on getting the points as long as you answered it). If you take the final twice, you don't need to answer the last question the 2nd time.

Reading Schedule, Important Dates

Chapter and Topic	Due Date
Chapter 1: Introduction to Learning	17-Jan
Chapter 2: Research methods	23-Jan
Chapter 3: Elicited behaviors and classical conditioning (Excluding "Opponent Process Theory" pp. 104-109)	30-Jan
Journal Critique #1	6-Feb
Chapter 4: Classical conditioning: Basic phenomena and various complexities (Excluding "Additional Phenomena" pp. 160-end of chapter)	13-Feb
Chapter 5: Classical conditioning: Underlying processes and practical applications (Excluding "Rescorla-Wagner theory" pp. 185-189)	20-Feb
Chapter 6: Operant conditioning: Introduction	5-Mar
Spring Break	
Chapter 7: Schedules and theories of reinforcement	20-Mar
Journal Critique #2	27-Mar
Chapter 8: Extinction and stimulus control (Excluding "Multiple Schedules and Behavioral Contrast" pp. 328-332)	3-Apr
Chapter 9: Escape, avoidance, and punishment	10-Apr
Chapter 10: Choice, matching, and self-control	17-Apr
Self-Change Project	24-Apr



Chapter 11: Observational learning (pp. 434-453)	28-Apr
Chapter 12: Biological dispositions in learning (pp. 472-486) Note: the key terms for this unit are extra credit. The quiz on this material is part of the final exam.	
Final Exam: 30 questions from previous quizzes (chapters 1-10), 20 questions from the assigned pages from chapters 11 and 12	2-May

***Quizzes and Chapter Key Term Applications are due at 11:59 pm on the dates listed above. However, discussion replies may be posted up to one week afterwards.**

View the [university's academic calendar](#) for academic registration deadlines.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in [EIU's Code of Conduct](#). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. As a student, you have a personal responsibility to maintain high standards of academic conduct to preserve academic integrity. Academic misconduct will result in zero points for the assignment and appropriate disciplinary action, according to university guidelines.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS). All accommodations must be approved through ODS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the [Student Success Center](#) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Early Alert System

Eastern maintains an Early Alert System (EAS) to help students know when they are not performing up to academic standards. Alerts may be given for poor attendance, not turning work in on time, or doing poorly on an assignment or test. EAS staff will contact you to help you find resources to help you be a successful student. Resources may include time management, study skills, test-taking, finding tutors, or other resources related to academic issues. I will use the EAS if I believe you could benefit from talking to a success coach about these issues.