



PSY 3620, Psychology of Learning, 3 Credits Fall 2018, MWF 12:00-12:50

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).

Course 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 methods that are relatively unique to the study of learning. Our in-depth analysis of classical conditioning will have you salivating in class, and you will appreciate the complexity of this simple associative learning. The next major section of the course deals with operant conditioning, which is focused on how the consequences of our behavior (e.g., reinforcement and punishment) produce a change in the future probability of a behavior. After evaluating how schedules of reinforcement alter patterns of behavior, we move to the direct applications to self-control, parenting, and treatment for OCD and depression. The third major section of the course analyzes the power of observational learning. Finally, you will come to appreciate the relationships among these three types of learning and the limits imposed by biological constraints.

Instructor:	Jeffrey R. Stowell
Office Room:	1055 Physical Sciences
Office Phone:	217-581-2279
E-mail:	jrstowell@eiu.edu
Office Hours:	MW 9-10:30 am, T 10-11

Teaching Philosophy

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

Course Materials

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

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the important historical contributions in the study of learning
2. Compare the different research approaches to learning and ways of measuring learning.
3. Evaluate theoretical explanations of Classical, Operant, and Observational learning.
4. Comprehend the biological dispositions that influence learning.
5. Apply principles of learning to everyday life to become better teachers and learners.
6. Critically examine and write about current research on learning.
7. Enjoy learning about learning.



Guidelines for Studying and Test Taking

- [Please read these guidelines](#) to improve your chances for success in this course and others.
- I also strongly recommend viewing Dr. Stephen Chew's video series on "[How to get the most out of studying](#)"
- View EIU Student Success Center's test taking tips at <http://www.eiu.edu/~success/testtaking.php>



Requirements and Grading

Requirement	Points	%
Chapter quizzes	250	50%
Self-Change Project	40	8%
Journal article critiques (2 x 40)	80	16%
Sniffy the Virtual Rat	50	10%
Final Exam	50	10%
Electronic class participation	30	6%
Total	500	100%

Final Grade	Points
A (89%)	445-500
B (79%)	395-444
C (69%)	345-394
D (59%)	295-344
F (<59%)	<295

Chapter Quizzes (Learning Objectives 1-5)

- Quizzes are designed to assess your progress in meeting the course learning objectives. Questions on the chapter quizzes are multiple choice and short answer from material covered in class and the textbook. The questions are based on the application of the information you have learned and will test your critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Chapter quizzes will be administered online through Brightspace D2L. They will be available for several days after we complete the associated chapter in class. Make up quizzes will be given for University-approved absences that extend beyond the window to take the quiz.
- Quiz questions are randomly selected from a larger 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 very similar.
- 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 (i.e., 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.
- The quizzes are timed. The timer begins once you open the quiz. If you have technical 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 don't worry, it will still save your answers. Then, send me an e-mail explaining why your time went over. D2L records all the quiz times.
- After the quiz has been automatically graded, you can view the questions you missed.
- **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!**

Journal Article Critiques (Learning Objectives 2, 6)

Specific Learning Objectives:

1. Integrate material learned in the course with current research published in professional journals.
2. Summarize, analyze, and evaluate research methods used by the authors of the article.
3. Practice using the electronic library resources to find information so that you can more easily do so for other writing assignments.
4. Earn course credit through critical writing as a complement to taking tests or other assignments.

See complete instructions in D2L.

Sniffy the Virtual Rat (Learning Objectives 2, 3)

"Sniffy the Virtual Rat," a computerized simulation of a live rat, will be used by students to enhance their understanding of classical and operant principles discussed in class. It will take you 6-8 hours total to complete the Sniffy exercises. Access to the Sniffy program and lab exercises is described in detail from the "Sniffy" link in D2L.

Final Exam (Learning Objectives 1-5)

The final exam is comprehensive and will be available only during the designated 2-hour final examination period. Similar to the quizzes, it is taken online.

Electronic Class Participation (Learning Objectives 1-7)

Using mobile devices for classroom polling can promote student participation and engagement. The benefits of using classroom polling include:

1. All students can respond to questions posed in class.
2. Students give more honest answers of what they are thinking and learning because their responses are anonymous to other students.
3. Students and instructors get immediate feedback about learning.
4. It works well with peer instruction, which has also been shown to increase student learning.

A portion of your grade will depend on audience participation. As long as you participate in at least 70% of the class periods that I record participation, you will receive the full participation points. If you participate less, your participation points will be reduced accordingly. Tracking individual participant responses is done for the purposes of grading, instructional research, and course development.

Technology Policy

- Cell phones should not be used during class, except with the instructor's permission. Texting or talking on cell phones disrupts the learning environment, especially for the person doing it :)
- Laptops may be used in class only for taking notes.

Reading Schedule, Important Dates

Please read the chapters in the textbook before class in order to enhance understanding of demonstrations, examples, and group discussions. This schedule is subject to change.

Week	Date	Chapter. Topic
History and Methods		
1	20-Aug	Introduction
	22-Aug	1. Historical Figures
	24-Aug	1. Five Schools of Behaviorism
2	27-Aug	1. Five Schools of Behaviorism
	29-Aug	2. Definition of learning
	31-Aug	2. Measuring learning
3	3-Sep	Labor Day
	5-Sep	2. Measuring learning, research methods
	7-Sep	3. Reflexes, Fixed action patterns
Classical Conditioning		
4	10-Sep	3. Intro to Classical Conditioning
	12-Sep	3. Classical Conditioning
	14-Sep	4. Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena
5	17-Sep	4. Extensions to Classical Conditioning
	19-Sep	4. Specificity in Classical Conditioning (Journal Critique #1 Due)
	21-Sep	4. Specificity in Classical Conditioning
6	24-Sep	5. Underlying Processes in Classical Conditioning
	26-Sep	5. Underlying Processes in Classical Conditioning
	28-Sep	5. Practical Applications of Classical Conditioning
7	1-Oct	Midterm Review
Operant Conditioning		
	3-Oct	6. Historical Background, Operant Conditioning (Sniffy Part 1 Due)
	5-Oct	6. Four Types of Contingencies
8	8-Oct	6. Four Types of Contingencies
	10-Oct	6. Positive Reinforcement: Further Distinctions
	12-Oct	Fall Break
9	15-Oct	6, 7. Positive Reinforcement: Further Distinctions



	17-Oct	7. Schedules of Reinforcement (Journal Critique #2 Due)
	19-Oct	7. Schedules of Reinforcement
10	22-Oct	7. Schedules of Reinforcement
	24-Oct	7. Schedules of Reinforcement
	26-Oct	7. Theories of Reinforcement
11	29-Oct	8. Extinction
	31-Oct	8. Stimulus Control
	2-Nov	8. Stimulus Control
12	5-Nov	9. Escape and Avoidance
	7-Nov	9. Punishment (Sniffy Part 2 Due)
	9-Nov	Conference (Guest Speaker)
13	12-Nov	9. Punishment
	14-Nov	9. Effects of Noncontingent Punishment
	16-Nov	10. Choice and Matching
	19-Nov	Thanksgiving Break
	21-Nov	Thanksgiving Break
	23-Nov	Thanksgiving Break
14	26-Nov	10. Choice and Matching
	28-Nov	10. Self-Control
Observational Learning & Biological Limitations		
	30-Nov	11. Observational Learning
15	3-Dec	11. Observational Learning
		12. Preparedness, Operant-Respondent Interactions
	5-Dec	(Self-Change Project Due)
	7-Dec	Final review, last lecture (Extra credit due)
16	12-Dec	Final Exam 12:30-2:30pm

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

Individuals 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.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test 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.

Booth Library

Located in the center of campus, Booth Library is the best place to do research, find expert help, or study in a calm, distraction-free environment. In addition to the many print resources, Booth provides access to high quality e-books, journals and scholarship not freely available on the Web. Stop by the Reference Desk or go to <http://library.eiu.edu> to explore library resources. Get expert help with your research by contacting the Booth Library reference librarians. Visit, call 581-6072, or go to <http://booth.eiu.edu/ask> to connect with a librarian.