



Psychology of Learning, Fall 2012

Psy 3620, MWF @Noon

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).

This course begins with a brief historical overview of important figures who 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 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.

Instructor:	Jeffrey R. Stowell
Office Room:	1055 Physical Sciences
Office Phone:	581-2279 (Office)
Home Phone:	348-6286 (Home)
E-mail:	jrstowell@eiu.edu
Office Hours:	M,W 1:00-2:30 pm; T 9-10 am
Course web site:	https://online.eiu.edu/

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.](#)

Course 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.
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

- [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](#)"



Requirements and Grading

Requirement	Points
Chapter quizzes	250
Midterm exam	50
Journal article critiques or Sniffy	120
Final Exam	50
TurningPoint participation	30
Total	500

Final Grade	Points
A (90%)	450-500
B (80%)	400-449
C (70%)	350-399
D (60%)	300-349
F (<60%)	<300

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

- Quizzes are designed to assess your fulfillment of the course objectives. Questions on the chapter quizzes are multiple choice and short answer from material covered in class and the textbook. The questions are conceptually based on the application of the information you have learned and will test your critical thinking and analysis skills.
- Chapter quizzes will be administered online through Desire2Learn. They will be available for up to 3 days after we complete the associated chapter in class. 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 very similar.
- The quizzes are timed (1 hour). The timer begins once you open the quiz. If you would rather take your quizzes in a classroom, please tell me before the first quiz. If you choose this option, you will take all of your quizzes in a classroom.
- 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 don't worry, it will still save your answers. Then, send me an e-mail explaining why your time went over. Desire2Learn records all the quiz times.
- **You may use your textbook and notes while taking the quizzes, but not other people.**
- Make up quizzes will be given for University-approved absences that extend beyond the 3 day window to take the quiz.
- View EIU Student Success Center's test taking tips at <http://www.eiu.edu/~success/testtaking.php>
- After the quiz has been graded, you can view your results. [See how to do this in D2L.](#)

Midterm and Final Exams (Course Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6)

The midterm and final exam are comprehensive online exams. The midterm covers material from chapters 1-5 and the final exam covers material from chapters 6-10. Both exams will contain questions randomly selected from prior quizzes. Thus, you should study the results from your chapter quizzes to prepare. The midterm exam will be available for up to one week, while the final exam will only be available during the designated 2-hour final examination period.

Journal Article Critiques (Course Objectives 2, 4)

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.

[View the complete instructions.](#) You will be required to write 3 journal article critiques or complete the Sniffy lab exercise. If you do not complete the first journal critique by the scheduled deadline, I will assume that you are doing Sniffy. You can do both if you wish and I'll take the higher grade of the two.

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.

Sniffy the Virtual Rat (Course Objectives 2, 4)

"Sniffy", a computerized simulation of a live rat, will be used by students to enhance their understanding of Pavlovian and operant principles discussed in class. It will take you 6-8 hours to complete the Sniffy exercises. Access to the Sniffy program and lab exercises is described in detail from the "Sniffy" link on the course home page in Desire2Learn.

- Part 1 (classical conditioning) will be due at the end of chapter 5.
- Part 2 (operant conditioning) will be due at the end of chapter 10.



TurningPoint (Course Objectives 1-7)

TurningPoint is the EIU campus standard for classroom response systems. I use TurningPoint technology combined with peer instruction to create an active learning environment that promotes participation and engagement in class. The benefits of using TurningPoint are that

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. I am more aware of how much students are learning and can immediately adjust my teaching strategy based on student feedback (This is sometimes called "agile teaching").
4. It works well with peer instruction, which has also been shown to increase student learning.

A portion of your grade will depend on TurningPoint participation. As part of this class, you are required to purchase and register a TurningPoint keypad (aka "clicker"). At the MLK Union Bookstore, the cost for a new keypad is \$35 + tax, or \$25 for a used one. You may also be able to find a used keypad from another student who is not using it this semester. If you buy the keypad from the bookstore, the bookstore will register the keypad at the time of purchase. If not, you can register the keypad yourself at: <http://www.eiu.edu/~cats/clickerRegistration/survey.php>. You only need to register your keypad once. If you already have a keypad from a previous course, you don't need to register it again.

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 only done for the purposes of grading 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. Please note this schedule is subject to change.



Week	Date	Chapter. Topic
History and Methods		
1	20-Aug	1. 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, to cumulative recorder
	31-Aug	2. Measuring learning
3	3-Sep	Labor Day
	5-Sep	2. Measuring learning, research methods
	7-Sep	2. Research Methods
Classical Conditioning		
4	10-Sep	3. Intro to Classical Conditioning
	12-Sep	3. Classical Conditioning
	14-Sep	3. Classical Conditioning
5	17-Sep	4. Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena
	19-Sep	4. Extensions to Classical Conditioning (Journal Critique #1 Due)
	21-Sep	4. Specificity in Classical Conditioning
6	24-Sep	4. Specificity in Classical Conditioning



	26-Sep	5. Underlying Processes in Classical Conditioning
	28-Sep	5. Underlying Processes in Classical Conditioning
7	1-Oct	5. Practical Applications of Classical Conditioning
	3-Oct	Review for midterm (Sniffy Part 1 Due)
	5-Oct	Fall Break
Operant Conditioning		
8	8-Oct	6. Historical Background, Operant Conditioning
	10-Oct	6. Four Types of Contingencies
	12-Oct	6. Four Types of Contingencies
9	15-Oct	6. Positive Reinforcement: Further Distinctions
	17-Oct	6. Positive Reinforcement: Further Distinctions (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
	9-Nov	9. Punishment
13	12-Nov	9. Effects of Noncontingent Punishment
	14-Nov	10. Choice and Matching (Journal Critique #3 Due), (Sniffy Part 2 Due)
	16-Nov	10. Choice and Matching
14	19-Nov	Thanksgiving break
	21-Nov	Thanksgiving break
	23-Nov	Thanksgiving break
15	26-Nov	10. Self Control
Observational Learning & Biological Limitations		
	28-Nov	11. Observational Learning
	30-Nov	11. Observational Learning
16	3-Dec	11. Observational Learning
	5-Dec	12. Preparedness, Operant-Respondent Interactions
	7-Dec	Final review, last lecture
	12-Dec	Final Exam, 12:30-2:30 pm

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

Individuals with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Fall 2012

Academic Misconduct

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct will result in zero points for the assignment, and appropriate disciplinary action according to university guidelines.