

PSY 3620, Psychology of Learning, 3 Credits

MWF 1:00-1:50



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 as well as 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 of operant conditioning to topics of self-control, parenting, and treatment for psychological disorders. 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.

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Office Hours:	MW 9-10:30 am, T 11:00-Noon Schedule an appointment

Teaching Philosophy

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

Email

Generally, I do not check my work email account over the weekend or on holidays. Questions or issues that arise during these times will be handled the next regular workday. During the week, you can expect a reply within 24 hours.

Course Materials

Introduction to Learning and Behavior 6/e, by Powell, Honey, & Symbaluk (2023).

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.



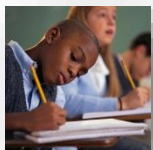
Requirements and Grading

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

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

Chapter Quizzes (Learning Objectives 1-5)

- You **may** use your book, notes, and most Internet sources on the quizzes.
- You **may not**:
 - Utilize websites that have posted previous or current quiz questions or that offer artificial intelligence responses.
 - Offer help to others or receive help from others on the quiz.
 - Download, take photos, screen capture, or share quiz questions with others.
- 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 lecture 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.
- 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. Across all the quizzes, the average difficulty for everyone in the class will be very similar.
- As part of a cumulative testing strategy, each quiz contains two additional questions from each of the prior chapters. As such, each subsequent quiz will have more questions (and more time to complete them).
- You will have two attempts at each quiz. If you take the quiz twice, I take the higher score of your two attempts (of the multiple-choice questions).
 - The short answer questions are the same for each attempt so I will only accept your answers for the first attempt on the short answer questions. You do not need to answer them on your second attempt--I'll just award the same number of points from your first attempt.
 - If you are happy with your 1st attempt score, it is not necessary to take it a second time. It is likely that you will 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 taking your first attempt after you have read the chapter and feel like you have a pretty good grasp of the information. Then, after you find out which questions you missed, study those topics until you have mastered them and then retake the quiz. It is 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.

- After the quiz has been submitted, you can immediately view only the questions that you missed. Because the short answer questions cannot be graded automatically, they show up as "missed" points until I grade them.
- I usually grade the chapter quizzes within 1-2 business days after the due date. You can complete quizzes early, but they will not be graded until after the due date.
- The quizzes are timed and the timer begins once you open the quiz. Please save each answer as you go in case something happens to your internet connection. You have 2 minutes for every point on the test. Although you can use your notes and books on the quizzes, you won't have time to look up every question. If you find yourself running out of time at the end on the short-answer question, just take a little more time to finish it up. It will still save your answers. Keep in mind that there may be some students who would use all the time no matter how much is granted and it's merciful for them to have an end to the quiz.
- If you have problems while taking a quiz, please complete the quiz at the next possible time. You may have a warning that your time has expired, but your answers will be saved. Then, send me an e-mail explaining why your time went over. D2L records all the quiz times.
- Quiz deadlines may be adjusted for students with university-approved absences.

Journal Article Critiques (Learning Objectives 2, 6)

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. View the complete instructions in D2L under the content folder "Journal Critiques."

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 4-6 hours total to complete the Sniffy exercises. Access to the Sniffy program and lab exercises is described in detail from the "Sniffy" content module in D2L.

Final Exam (Learning Objectives 1-5)

The online final exam is comprehensive and will be available only during the designated 2-hour final examination period.

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. If you participate in at least 70% of the class periods that I record participation, you will receive the full participation points. In other words, you can miss 30% of the class periods and still receive full participation credit. If you participate in less than 70% of the class periods, your participation points will be reduced accordingly (e.g., 60% participation = 60% of the points). 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 to enhance understanding of demonstrations, examples, and group discussions. This schedule is subject to change.

Week	Date	Chapter. Topic
History and Methods		
1	8-Jan	Introduction
	10-Jan	1. Historical Figures
	12-Jan	1. Five Schools of Behaviorism
2	15-Jan	MLK Birthday Observed
	17-Jan	1. Five Schools of Behaviorism
	19-Jan	2. Basic terms of learning
3	22-Jan	2. Measuring learning
	24-Jan	2. Measuring learning
	26-Jan	2. Research methods
Classical Conditioning		
4	29-Jan	3. Reflexes, Fixed action patterns
	31-Jan	3. Classical Conditioning (Journal Critique #1 Due)
	2-Feb	3. Classical Conditioning
5	5-Feb	4. Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena
	7-Feb	4. Extensions to Classical Conditioning
	9-Feb	4. Specificity in Classical Conditioning
6	12-Feb	4. Specificity in Classical Conditioning
	14-Feb	5. Underlying Processes in Classical Conditioning
	16-Feb	Lincoln's Birthday Observed
7	19-Feb	5. Underlying Processes in Classical Conditioning
	21-Feb	5. Practical Applications of Classical Conditioning (Sniffy Part 1 Due)
	23-Feb	Midterm Review
Operant Conditioning		
8	26-Feb	6. Historical Background, Operant Conditioning
	28-Feb	6. Four Types of Contingencies
	1-Mar	6. Four Types of Contingencies

9	4-Mar	6. Positive Reinforcement: Further Distinctions
	6-Mar	6. Positive Reinforcement: Further Distinctions (Journal Critique #2 Due)
	8-Mar	7. Schedules of Reinforcement
	11-Mar	7. Schedules of Reinforcement
	13-Mar	7. Schedules of Reinforcement
	15-Mar	7. Theories of Reinforcement
10	18-Mar	Spring Break
	20-Mar	Spring Break
	22-Mar	Spring Break
11	25-Mar	8. Extinction
	27-Mar	8. Stimulus Control
	29-Mar	8. Stimulus Control
12	1-Apr	9. Escape and Avoidance
	3-Apr	9. Punishment (Sniffy Part 2 Due)
	5-Apr	9. Punishment
13	8-Apr	9. Effects of Noncontingent Punishment
	10-Apr	10. Choice and Matching
	12-Apr	10. Choice and Matching
14	15-Apr	10. Self-Control
	17-Apr	10. Self-Control
Observational Learning & Biological Limitations		
	19-Apr	11. Observational Learning (pp. 416-435)
15	22-Apr	11. Observational Learning
	24-Apr	12. Preparedness, Operant-Respondent Interactions (pp. 453-466) (Self-Control Project Due)
	26-Apr	Final review, last lecture (Extra credit due)
16	1-May	Final Exam 12:30-2:30pm

View the [university's academic calendar](#) for add, drop, and withdrawal deadlines.

Late Work Policy

Late work submitted after the deadline may be penalized by up to 20% of the points for the assignment. Requests for extensions of deadlines may be made for university excused absences or for extenuating circumstances.

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 Accessibility and Accommodations (OAA). All accommodations must be approved through OAA. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1210, 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>). All assignments and quizzes must be your own work. Use of AI-generating software is not permitted. Written assignments and quiz answers may be checked for AI-generated content. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Diversity Statement

Each of us comes from a unique cultural background influenced in many ways by the people with whom we interact and the surrounding structures of society. Diversity provides the opportunity to learn from one another and deepen our understanding and empathy for one another. Differing viewpoints in this course are acceptable, but we should be inclusive by respecting, supporting, and valuing people who possess ideas different from our own. Students in this course should feel comfortable sharing their personal views without fear of reprisal. Discriminatory behaviors based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, marital status, political affiliation or other personal characteristics are not acceptable and may be referred to the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity.

Academic Support Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the [Academic Support Center](#) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Academic Support Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 1301.

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.