

## Psychology 309 - Learning Summer 2014

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### **Required Reading:**

Pierce, D.W., & Cheney, C. D. (2008). Behavior Analysis and Learning (4th Edition). Psychology Press.

Pryor, K. (1985). *Don't Shoot the Dog!: The New Art of Teaching and Training*. New York: Bantam

Check Desire to Learn for other materials.

**Course Description:** This course provides an introduction to the basic concepts and principles of learning and behavior analysis. Behavior analysis is an area of psychology concerned with the study of the interaction between an organism's behavior and the environment in which it exists. Behavior analysts describe behavioral phenomenon using a precise, technical vernacular that has been derived from empirically based principles of behavior. At the beginning of the course, you will be taught this vernacular. Once you have mastered the basics and have acquired the necessary additions to your vocabulary, you will be taught to use those basic concepts to understand and interpret more complex behavior, such as self-control, choice and decision making, concept formation, verbal behavior, and thinking.

**Course Structure:** The content of this course is cumulative. That is, mastery of the material presented early in the course is a prerequisite for successful acquisition and understanding of material presented later in the course. Thus, if you do not learn the basics early on, learning the more complicated material later in the semester is very unlikely. For most of the quizzes, a remedial quiz will cover the same material. In typical courses, you only have one shot to demonstrate that you have learned and understood the material. In those classes, there is often little you can do to overcome a poor performance and, once the test is behind you, there is often little motivation to revisit the troublesome material. Because it is of the utmost importance that you master each step in the curriculum of this course before progressing to the next, you are given the opportunity to improve upon your initial performance at each step. If you do not

perform to your satisfaction on a quiz you may take the remedial quiz. The higher of the scores from the two quizzes will count toward your final grade. You are not, however, required to take the remedial quizzes. If you perform to your satisfaction on the initial quiz, you may leave class after the lecture on the day of the remedial.

**Quizzes and Grading:** The course is divided into four units. You will receive a grade for each unit based upon your quiz performances. Each quiz will consist of 35 questions and each question will count one point toward your final grade. Lectures will be abbreviated on quiz days and you will have approximately 45 minutes to complete the quiz. There will be three bonus questions on each quiz. Correctly answering a bonus question will increase your score on that quiz by one point. For example, if you answered all questions correctly (35 + 3 bonus questions), then your score would be 38 for that quiz. For the first three units, remedial quizzes are scheduled. Your unit grade will be based on the highest grade that you achieve on the first take or remedial quiz.

**The Final Quiz:** **The Final quiz is given at the end of the fourth unit. It is cumulative and there will not be a remedial quiz. If your score on the Final exceeds the lowest of your previous three unit scores, then we will also replace that low score with your Final score when computing your final grade. That is, you can improve one of your unit scores by doing very well on the Final.**

**Your Grade:** Your final grade will be based upon four unit performances. The following scale will determine your final grade:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Point Total</u>
A	140-126
B	125-112
C	111-98
D	97- 84
F	83 or Less

**Academic Honesty:** I expect your performance to be your own. Cheating is strictly prohibited. Acts of academic dishonesty include talking to another student, looking at notes or the text, looking at another student's paper, and etc. Earphones and radio transmitters (e.g., cell phones) are not permitted. **If you are caught cheating you will receive a zero for the quiz and will not be permitted to take the remedial quiz. Moreover, the appropriate university officials will be notified.**

**Makeup Tests:** Given that you have two testing opportunities for each unit, I am reluctant to schedule makeup exams. Makeup quizzes will be given only if you miss both the initial quiz and the remedial quiz for a unit due to illness or family emergency. You will have to document the illness (i.e., provide a letter from M.D.) or family emergency (i.e., provide a letter from your dean or department chair).

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>Pierce &amp; Cheney</b>	<b>Pryor</b>
1	5/12	Overview, Assumptions, & History			
	5/13	The Experimental Analysis of Behavior		Chapters 1&2	
	5/14	Respondent Behavior		Chapter 3	Forward & Chapter 1
	5/15	Reinforcement & Extinction of Operant Behavior		Chapter 4	
	5/16		Quiz 1	Chapter 5	
2	5/19	Schedules of Reinforcement		Chapter 6	
	5/20	Aversive Control			Chapter 2
	5/21		Remedial Quiz 1		Chapter 3
	5/22	Operant & Respondent Interactions		Chapter 7	
	5/23		Quiz 2	Chapter 8	
3	5/26	No Class!!!		Chapter 9	
	5/27	Stimulus Control			Chapter 4
	5/28	Choice & Preference	Remedial Quiz 2	Chapter 10	
	5/29				Chapter 5
	5/30	Conditioned Reinforcement	Quiz 3	Chapter 11	
4	6/2				Chapter 6
	6/3			Chapter 12	
	6/4	Verbal Behavior	Remedial Quiz 3	Chapter 13	
	6/5	Applied Behavior Analysis		Chapter 14	
	6/6		Final Quiz		

