**PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING**

**SPRING 2021**

**Psyc304 Section DL1**

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Office hours online by appointment.

The “Ask Dr. Davis” discussion board on Blackboard is a forum for general questions about the course. If you have a question specific to you – for example, about a grade – please email me privately at dbitler@gmu.edu.

**Course description:** This course will introduce you to the experimental analysis of learning and behavior. Although much of the focus will be on animal learning in the laboratory, the importance of basic learning mechanisms in understanding animal and human behavior, as well as the application of learning theory to real-world examples, will be emphasized.

This section of Psyc304 will be taught entirely online and is asynchronous. Content modules will begin on Mondays and run through Sundays. New modules will become available each week.

Psyc304 is a 4-credit course with the final grade comprised of both the lecture (75%) and lab (25%) grades. Psyc300, Statistics in Psychology, is a recommended prerequisite.

**Course objectives:**

By the end of the semester students will able to

* Recognize and understand the basic terms and concepts psychologists use to describe principles of simple and associative learning
* Apply these terms and concepts to real-world examples
* Create personally relevant examples of important concepts

**Required materials:** Powell, R.A., Honey, P.L., & Symbaluk, D.G. (2016). *Introduction to Learning and Behavior, Fifth Edition*. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

MindTap: Introduction to Learning and Behavior digital platform (this includes an e-text)

See options available at <https://www.cengage.com/c/introduction-to-learning-and-behavior-5e-powell/9781305652941PF/>

You will need to purchase the Powell text as part of the MindTap package, which you **must** access through the course Blackboard site. This is the only way to ensure your mastery training grades show up in Blackboard and will count toward your final grade.

There is a “MindTap Instructions and Help” link on the Blackboard sidebar.

Our Cengage Account Executive, Maddie Hunt, will be holding virtual office hours on Zoom if you need help with MindTap or have any questions regarding the course materials. The link to join the meeting is <https://cengage.zoom.us/j/2760734941>

From January 11th to February 11th Mondays 10:30 am - 11:30 am; 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Wednesdays 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

**Modules:** In order to provide students with the maximum amount of flexibility within each module, assignments are available all week. To best prepare for the weekly knowledge checks you’re encouraged to complete assignments in the order they appear on Blackboard. Please allow yourself sufficient time each week to deal with unexpected things like wifi outages and other disruptions (i.e., don’t wait until the last minute to complete graded work).

**Reading:** Reading should be completed by the dates indicated on the schedule. Reading the material in advance will help you to get the most out of the assignments and activities.

You will see that each week’s reading has a due date on MindTap. While you’re encouraged to complete the reading early in the week so you can move on to the graded assignments, the due date is just a reminder so the reading will show up on your calendar.

**Chapter slides:** The chapter slides provide a summary of important concepts, but they are not exhaustive and are not a substitute for reading the text.

**Chapter lectures:** Optional lectures are available for each chapter and have been graciously provided by Professor Brianna Artz. These lectures include practice questions that will help you prepare for graded assignments.

**Mastery training:** Each week you will complete Mastery training in MindTap, receiving full credit for completion. MindTap follows best practices and includes mandatory breaks, so please begin the training well in advance of the due date.

To understand how Mastery training works, see the “MindTap Mastery Training Video” on the Blackboard sidebar.

**Real-world examples:** One of the best ways to ensure that you understand important terms and concepts used to describe learning is to create your own, personally relevant examples of learning in the real world.

Throughout the semester you will be working in small groups of 5-6 students to develop your own examples and provide feedback to your peers on their examples. Two terms or concepts associated with the current chapter in the text will be assigned each week, along with specific instructions. You will be expected to contribute to each discussion at least 3 times, submitting 1) your draft examples, 2) substantive feedback to at least one peer on their examples, and 3) your final submission after considering feedback from your peers, as appropriate.

Each group will need to work together to ensure that everyone in the group succeeds. This includes posting your draft examples early in the week so others in your group can comment. This benefits you because it increases the chance that you’ll receive helpful feedback and have time to make corrections, and it benefits your peers by allowing them to complete the assignment before the last minute.

Your grade for these assignments will consist of:

2 pts draft submission

2 pts feedback to a peer

6 pts the correctness of your final submission (3 pts for each term/concept assigned)

**Practice quizzes:** Each week there is a practice quiz available to you on MindTap. These quizzes aren’t graded but may be used to help you prepare for the graded Week Exams on Blackboard.

**Knowledge checks:** Each chapter will conclude with a 30-question, multiple-choice knowledge check that you’ll take on Blackboard with the Respondus Lockdown Browser (cameras will not be required). You’ll have one attempt to take each knowledge check, which must be completed in 45 minutes. You will be able to see the correct answers about a day after the knowledge check due date.

Each knowledge check will be available on Blackboard at 12:01 am on the Monday before it is due, and close at 11:59 pm on the Sunday due date. You may take the knowledge check any time during that period but be sure you are finished before it closes.

You are expected to do your own work on knowledge checks. You may use outside resources (e.g., your text, notes, etc.) during the knowledge checks as time allows.

**Extra credit:** Four optional extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester. Each will potentially count as 10 points added on to your total for the lecture portion of the course.

**Late work and make-ups:** Late work will not be accepted and there are no make-ups for real-world examples, extra credit, and mastery training assignments.

The last week of the semester will be devoted to making up missed weekly knowledge checks or replacing knowledge checks that earned low grades. Each student will be allowed to choose up to two weekly knowledge checks to make up or replace.

* Students who are happy with all their weekly knowledge check grades do not need to take any make-up knowledge checks.
* If a student takes more than the two allowed make-up knowledge checks, only the two earliest chapters will be used to replace previous grades and count towards the final grade. For example, if Student A takes four make-up knowledge checks for Chapters 3, 7, 10, and 12, only the earlier grades for Chapters 3 and 7 will be replaced. The Chapter 10 and 12 grades will not be replaced.

**Grading:** A total of 845 required points are available for the lecture, broken down as follows:

Weekly Knowledge checks (13) 40 points each 520 points total

Mastery (13) 15 points each 195 points total

Examples (13) 10 points each 130 points total

In addition, you can earn up to 40 points of extra credit (10 points each for 4 optional extra-credit assignments).

You can calculate your grade in the lecture portion of this course by dividing your total points earned, including extra credit, by 845 (or the number of points that were available on the date of your calculation).

Your final grade for PSYC304 will be based on the combined grades you earn in the lecture (75%) and the lab (25%).

**Final grades:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A+ 97% and higher | B+ 87%-89% | C+ 77-79% |
| A 93-96% | B 83-86% | C 74-76% |
| A- 90-92% | B- 80-82% | C- 70-73% |
|  |  | D 60-69% |
|  |  | F 59% and lower |

**Student responsibilities**

**Due dates:** As an online course, the content of Psyc304 will be delivered in weekly modules. For our purposes each week will begin on Monday and end the following Sunday night at midnight. Information about specific due dates will be noted in assignment instructions.

I realize that some of you could be in different time zones. All dates and times listed on the course schedule and Blackboard are based on the time at the Mason campus in Fairfax, Virginia (Eastern Time). Note that Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00 am on Sunday, March 14, 2021.

**Technology expectations:** You must have reliable access to the internet. Internet service failure is not an acceptable excuse for late work. With possible service disruptions in mind, please don’t wait until the last minute to begin submit work. If you are uncertain about your home service, consider using the wifi at one of the Mason campuses or find another reliable source of wifi near you.

You will need to be able to access your Masonlive email account [(http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/view-service.cfm?customel\_dataPageID\_4609=11028](http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/view-service.cfm?customel_dataPageID_4609=11028)), Blackboard [(https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu](https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/)), Mason’s web-based Learning Management System and the Cengage MindTap site for this course <https://www.cengage.com/dashboard/#/course-confirmation/MTPPM6KQNQS8/initial-course-confirmation>

Information about a variety of course tools, including Blackboard Mobile, can be found at <http://doit.gmu.edu/students/course-tools/>

**Official communications via GMU e-mail:** Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. If you are having your Mason mail forwarded to another account, please ensure that your Mason account doesn’t exceed the assigned limit, causing mail to bounce back to the sender.

**Time commitment:** At the university level, in addition to time spent in class, students are expected to put in 2 to 3 times as much time outside of class. For a 3-credit-hour, online class taught over 14 weeks, you can expect 3 hours per week of “class time,” plus an additional 6-9 hours of reading and other work outside of class, for an approximate total commitment of 9-12 hours per week.

**Response time:** In general, you can expect responses from me within 48 hours. I expect that you will respond to my emails within a similar time frame.

**Writing Intensive:** Psyc304 has been approved as a writing intensive course. To meet this requirement, students will complete several writing assignments, including a complete research paper, in the lab. All papers will conform to APA style guidelines. Successful completion of these papers, and completion of Psyc304 with a grade of C or better, meets the writing intensive requirement of the psychology major. Students who fail to turn in one or more paper assignments will receive a grade of F for the course even if they have earned passing grades in the lecture and lab on other assignments.

**Disability accommodations:**  If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me early in the semester. If you have not already done so, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474.  All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please keep in mind that it might not be possible to grant last-minute requests for accommodations, so it is important to make all arrangements well before the date when the accommodation is needed.

**Honor code:** All students are expected to be familiar with, and abide by, the University Honor Code. As required by the Honor Code, all suspected violations will be reported.

**Important dates:** Last day to add a class – February 1

Last day to drop a class – February 16

Unrestricted withdrawal period – February 17 to March 1

Selective withdrawal period – March 2 to April 1

More information about the University’s drop/withdrawal deadlines can be found at <https://registrar.gmu.edu/drop-withdrawal-deadlines-faqs/>

**Enrollment:** Every student is responsible for verifying correct enrollment in both the course at Mason (which provides required access to Blackboard) and the associated Cengage MindTap section. Graded work will not be returned to students who are not officially enrolled.

**Principles of Learning**

**Spring 2021**

**Semester Schedule**

All readings for the lecture portion of this course will be in Powell, Honey & Symbaluk *Introduction to Learning and Behavior.*

**Week 1** **(opens January 25, assignments due by 11:59 pm January 31)**

Read: Preface and Chapter 1 - Introduction

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 1 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 2 (opens February 1, assignments due by 11:59 pm February 7)**

Read: Chapter 2 – Research Methods

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Optional: Extra credit

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 2 Weekly Knowledge check

**Week 3 (opens February 8, assignments due by 11:59 pm February 14)**

Read: Chapter 3 – Elicited Behaviors and Classical Conditioning

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 3 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 4** **(opens February 15, assignments due by 11:59 pm February 21)**

Read: Chapter 4 - Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena and Various Complexities

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 4 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 5 (opens February 22, assignments due by 11:59 pm February 28)**

Read: Chapter 5 – Classical Conditioning: Underlying Processes and Various Complexities

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 5 Weekly Knowledge check

**Week 6 (opens March 1, assignments due by 11:59 pm March 7)**

Read: Chapter 6 - Operant Conditioning: Introduction

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Optional: Extra credit

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 6 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 7 (opens March 8, assignments due by 11:59 pm March 14)**

Read: Chapter 7 - Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 7 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 8** **(opens March 15, assignments due by 11:59 pm March 21)**

Read: Chapter 8 - Extinction and Stimulus Control

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 8 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 9 (opens March 22, assignments due by 11:59 pm March 28)**

Read: Chapter 9 – Escape, Avoidance, and Punishment

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Optional: Extra credit

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 9 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 10 (opens March 29, assignments due by 11:59 pm April 4)**

Read: Chapter 10 – Choice, Matching, and Self-Control

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 10 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 11 (opens April 5, assignments due by 11:59 pm April 11)**

Read: Chapter 11 – Observational Learning and Rule-Governed Behavior

View: Chapter summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 11 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 12 (opens April 12, assignments due by 11:59 pm April 18)**

Read: Chapter 12 – Biological Dispositions in Learning

View: Chapter 12 summary on Blackboard

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 12 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 13 (opens April 19, assignments due by 11:59 pm April 25)**

Read: Chapter 13 – Comparative Cognition

View: Chapter 13 summary on Blackboard

Optional: Extra credit

Complete: Mastery Training

Contribute: Examples Discussion Board

Take: Chapter 13 Weekly Knowledge Check

**Week 14 (opens April 26, assignments due by 11:59 pm April 30)**

Knowledge check make-up/replacement week (more information is available on the syllabus and detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard)