

9-2013

## PSYX 270S.01: Fundamentals of Learning

Allen Szalda-Petree

University of Montana - Missoula, allen.szalda-petree@umontana.edu

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### Recommended Citation

Szalda-Petree, Allen, "PSYX 270S.01: Fundamentals of Learning" (2013). *Syllabi*. 53.  
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# Syllabus

## Psychology 270 Fundamentals of Learning Fall 2013

<b>Dr. Allen Szalda-Petree</b>  Office: Skaggs 201 Phone: 2091 Email: allen.szalda-petree@umontana.edu  Office Hours: MWF 11-12 and by appt	<b>Required Text:</b>  Introduction to Learning & Behavior (4 <sup>th</sup> ed) – Powell, Honey, & Symbaluk  Department URL - <a href="http://www.umt.edu/psych">www.umt.edu/psych</a>
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### Course Objectives

There are three primary goals of this course: 1) familiarize students with current knowledge and theory regarding learning processes, both elementary and complex, 2) provide simulations of classic learning processes, and 3) expose students to the types of research methods used to investigate learning phenomena.

The major topics to be covered include habituation, sensitization, classical conditioning, instrumental & operant conditioning, vicarious learning, stimulus control, schedules of reinforcement, limits of learning, and basic animal cognition.

The course emphasizes current theoretical and experimental investigations of learning processes as well as some exposure to current theories in animal cognition. While much of the research presented is based on non-human animals, this is not to suggest the application of these processes will not extend to humans. In fact, many of the basic learning processes extend throughout the animal kingdom, with differences being due to the interaction of the animal's evolutionary history, nervous system architecture, and ecology.

### Exams:

- There will be 3 midterm exams and a comprehensive final. Each exam, including the final, will be worth 50 points and will consist of 30 multiple choice items (1 pt each) and 1 short answer essay question (20 pts). You will be allowed to drop the lowest exam score of the four exams (including the final) and use the three highest exam scores for the calculation of your final grade. See the tentative reading schedule for exam dates.
- Both lecture and book material will be covered on each exam in approximately equal proportions. As a general rule the multiple choice items will be drawn primarily from the text while the essay questions will be taken mostly from the lecture materials.
- Requests for reevaluation/re-scoring of test items (essays in particular) will be accepted until the date of the next exam.
- Makeup exams will NOT be given except under unusual circumstances. This issue always becomes particularly sticky regarding the time and date for the final exam. Please note that we will adhere to the date published in the course schedule for the final. I will not give early finals except for **very** unusual circumstances.

### Attendance:

While attendance is not required it is **HIGHLY** recommended. Note that any changes in the reading or exam schedule will be announced in class and all students, attending or otherwise, will be required to conform to any modifications in the schedule.

### Classroom Behavior:

#### General

As a university student, certain behavior is expected of you. Most importantly, it is your responsibility to meet the requirements of this course. You may expect me to be in the classroom on time, prepared & organized, and open to discussion/questions pertaining to the day's subject material.

I will expect you to be in the classroom on time, to be awake and attentive, to participate in demonstrations/discussions, and to be respectful toward the instructor and other students.

I understand there will be circumstances beyond your control that, on occasion, will require you to leave class early. Please plan accordingly by notifying me at the beginning of class and choose seating that will result in minimal disruption.

You should feel free to ask any questions in class. Also, please feel free to see the instructor about any classroom issue during office hours.

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator (contact UM's DSS for more information - <http://life.umt.edu/dss/>).

### **Wireless communications (cell phones/tablets/computers)**

For what should be blatantly obvious reasons, the use of wireless communications devices during class is prohibited. This specifically includes such activities as 1) placing or receiving phone calls, 2) sending or receiving text messages, and 3) internet searching, game playing, watching movies, etc.

If you are an emergency professional (physician/nurse, counselor/therapist, EMT, etc) or you are expecting an **EMERGENCY** communication please set your wireless device to silent alarm mode and quietly exit the classroom to respond.

### **Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php).

The Student Conduct Code discusses plagiarism. However, it is a serious offense worth re-mentioning. This course requires students to adhere to APA format when citing, paraphrasing, or referencing sources. If you have plagiarized, either intentionally or accidentally, you will receive a zero on the entire assignment. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course.

### **Dropping/Adding/Changing grade option**

Please refer to the Registrar's website on policies and dates for dropping/adding/changing grade options - [http://events.umt.edu/?calendar\\_id=27&upcoming=upcoming&](http://events.umt.edu/?calendar_id=27&upcoming=upcoming&)

### **Grading**

Grades will be assigned using the adjacent performance criteria for all exams and final course grade. **I will NOT be using the "+/-" grading system.**

Incompletes will adhere to university policy (see page 21 of the catalog).

<u>Percent Correct</u>	<u>Grade</u>
90 - 100 %	A
80 - 89 %	B
70 - 79 %	C
60 - 69 %	D
0 - 59 %	F

<b>Tentative Reading &amp; Exam Schedule</b>	
Aug 26, 28, & 30	Chapter 1: Introduction
<b>Sept 2</b>	<b>Labor Day Holiday (No class)</b>
Sept 4 & 6	Chapter 2: Research Methods
Sept 9, 11, & 13	Chapter 3: Elicited Behaviors and Classical Conditioning
Sept 16, 18, & 20	Chapter 4: Classical Conditioning – Basic phenomena
Sept 23, 25, & 27	Chapter 5: Classical Conditioning – Underlying processes
<b>Sept 30</b>	<b>Exam 1 - Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5</b>
Oct 2 & 4	Chapter 6: Operant Conditioning - Introduction
Oct 7, 9, & 11	Chapter 7: Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement
Oct 14, 16, & 18	Chapter 8: Extinction and Stimulus Control
Oct 21, 23, 25, & 28	Chapter 9: Escape, Avoidance, and Punishment
<b>Oct 30</b>	<b>Exam 2 - Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9</b>
Nov 1, 4, 6, & 8	Chapter 10: Choice, Matching, and Self-control
<b>Nov 11</b>	<b>Veterans Day Holiday (No class)</b>
Nov 13	Chapter 11: Observational Learning and Rule-governed Behavior
Nov 15, 18, & 20	Chapter 12: Biological Dispositions in Learning
Nov 22 & 25	Chapter 13: Comparative Cognition
<b>Nov 27 &amp; 29</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday (No class)</b>
Dec 2 & 4	Chapter 13 continued
<b>Dec 6</b>	<b>Exam 3 - Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13</b>
<b>Thursday, Dec 12 8:00 – 10:00</b>	<b>Final - Chapters 1-13</b>