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## PSYX 270S.02: Fundamentals of Learning and Behavior

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## **PSXY 270: FUNDAMENTALS OF LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR FALL 2013**

**Instructor:** Erin Yosai

**Room:** FOR 301

**Time:** Monday and Wednesdays: 6:10-7:30 p.m.

**Email:** erin.yosai@umontana.edu

**Office:** Skaggs Building 044

**Office Phone:** TBA

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 3:00-4:00; Wednesday 4:00-6:00 PM or by email appointment

### **Course Description:**

There are three main goals for this course: 1) to familiarize students with current theories of learning processes, both elementary and complex, 2) to teach students how knowledge of learning theories guide applied techniques in a number of applied settings and 3) to expose students to the types of research methods used to investigate learning phenomena.

"Fundamentals of Learning" reviews the processes and behavior in human and nonhuman animals. Learning can occur at a fairly basic level, such as a dog salivating in response to a bell tone or biochemical changes in a fish resulting from environmental experiences. Learning can also occur at a more complex level, such as a human that experiences certain memories sparked by simply hearing a familiar song. Further, learning can lead to pigeons playing "ping pong," a dog that cowers at the hand of a punishing human, or a child who avoids her own punishment by observing another child's consequences after an undesired behavior. This course serves as an introduction to the multifaceted processes involved in learning at all levels of complexity.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate proficiency with major Learning concepts, theoretical perspectives and empirical findings.
2. Gain familiarity with some of the ways in which basic genetics and biological evolution relate to learning theories.
3. Understand basic research methods used to test learning theories
4. Compare and contrast classical and operant learning theories
5. Investigate observational learning principles as well as understand of principles associated with memory and attention as they relate to learning theory
6. Develop an understanding of the limits of learning
7. Apply information gained in this class to improve personal learning, thinking and behavior

**Required Texts:** Powell, Honey, & Symbaluk's (2013) Introduction to Learning and Behavior. Cengage Learning

*\*\*\* This text is available in the University Bookstore, but sites such as Amazon.com may sell it cheaper. There is also a copy of the course textbook available for checkout in the library*

**NOTES:**

**A. Academic misconduct.** 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. Please be aware of this while compiling your final project.**

**B. Disabilities And Special Learning Needs:**

It is your responsibility to inform your Instructor, at the outset of this course, of any disability and the ways that you and the DSS have determined are necessary to accommodate your needs.

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/>).

**C. Announcements:**

Students are responsible for any announcements made in class. These may include changes in policy, due dates, or assignment requirements.

## **D. 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

### **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 its silent alarm mode and quietly exit the classroom to respond.

### **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&)

### Course Grade:

Your final grade for the course will consist of a total of all points earned over the semester. This includes two quizzes, two exams, article participation points, and a final project.

	400 Points possible	
Quizzes (X2):		60 points possible
Exams (X2):		150 points possible
Final Exam:		75 points possible
Participation Points:		40 points possible
Final Project:		75 points possible
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>400 points possible</b>

Your final grade is based on the percentage of the total possible points that you earn. Because we do not curve grades, every student has the opportunity to earn an A in this course. Alternatively, every student can fail this course if they fail to meet criteria.

**Grading Scale:** The average of your points earned will determine the final course grade based on the scale below:

<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
360-400	A (90-100%)
320-359	B (80-89%)
280-319	C (70-79%)
240-279	D (60-69%)
0-239	F (below 60%)

**Missed Exams:** If you must miss an exam for some valid reason, you must ask to take that exam early. **It is imperative that you make your request BEFORE the scheduled exam occurs.** However, only valid excuses with documentation will be accepted for this privilege. If you miss an exam due to a medical emergency (e.g. breaking a limb), you may ask to reschedule the exam for a later time with valid documentation.

### 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.

**Participation Points:** Throughout the semester, I have selected 10 days at random to take attendance and give participation points for being present in class, participating in lectures or discussion, etc. Although I will not announce "Participation Days" before class, I will make sure to let you know that you will be receiving points for being in attendance that day. Each one of the 10 days is worth 4 points, and participation and attendance is worth 40 (easy) points throughout the semester.

**Quizzes:** There will be two quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will be worth 30 points. These quizzes are designed to cut down on the amount of material needed to be memorized for each exam, as well as to break up the chapters in a meaningful sequence. Both quizzes will consist of 20 multiple-choice questions and 5 short answer questions worth 2 points each.

**Exams:** The exams are designed to test your knowledge of the two major learning frameworks taught in this class: Classical and Operant conditioning. Each exam will be worth 75 points each, and will be a mixture of multiple choice and short response questions. There is also a final exam in this course, and the final will be a comprehensive survey of the entire course.

**Final Project:** Most classes assign a final paper for the course. However, in Fundamentals of Learning and Behavior, it is essential that students understand the technical terms of learning frameworks AND also understand how these technical terms relate to learning in our every day environment. This "Pet Project" is designed to enhance practical understanding of learning frameworks as well as provide hands-on experience. The instructor will discuss details about this project at length at a later date.

*\*\*A Tentative reading and assignment schedule is attached on the following page. Please note: These dates are subject to change and revision.*

## Tentative Reading and Assignment Schedule

<b>AUGUST</b>	26	Syllabus and Chapter 1: Introduction
	28	Chapter 1: Introduction
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	2	<i>No Class - Labor Day</i>
	4	Chapter 2: Research Methods
	9	Chapter 2: Research Methods
	11	<b>QUIZ: Chapters 1 and 2</b>
		Chapter 3: Elicited Behaviors and Classical Conditioning
	16	Chapter 3: Classical Conditioning
	18	Chapter 3: Classical Conditioning
		Chapter 4: Classical Conditioning – Basic Phenomena
	23	Chapter 4: Classical Conditioning – Basic Phenomena
		Chapter 5: Classical Conditioning: Underlying Processes
	25	Chapter 5: Classical Conditioning: Underlying Processes
	30	Classical Wrap-up and Review
<b>OCTOBER</b>	2	<b>EXAM 1: Chapters 3-5</b>
	7	Chapter 6: Operant Conditioning
	9	Chapter 7: Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement
	14	Chapter 7: Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement
	16	Chapter 8: Extinction and Stimulus Control
		<b>***Pet Project Draft Due***</b>
	21	Chapter 8: Extinction and Stimulus Control
	23	Chapter 9: Escape, Avoidance, and Punishment
	28	Chapter 9: Escape, Avoidance, and Punishment
	30	Operant Wrap-up & Review
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	4	<b>EXAM 2: Chapters 6-9</b>
	6	Chapter 10: Choice, Matching, & Self Control
	11	<i>No Class- President's Day</i>
	13	Chapter 10: Choice, Matching, & Self Control
		Chapter 11: Observational Learning and Rule-Governed Behavior
	18	Chapter 11: Observational Learning and Rule-Governed Behavior
	20	<b>QUIZ: Chapters 10 &amp; 11</b>
	25	<i>No Class - Thanksgiving</i>
<b>DECEMBER</b>	2	Chapter 12: Biological Disposition in Learning
		<b>****PET PROJECT DUE****</b>
	4	Chapter 13: Comparative Cognition
		Class Wrap-Up

**Finals Week** 9-  
13

*Final Exam Time - TBA*  
*Cumulative Final: Chapters 1-13*