

EAB 4930: Advanced Seminar in Behavior Analysis

Advanced Topics on Behavioral Processes

////////// **Spring 2026** \\\\\\\\\\\

Instructor: Chris Podlesnik, PhD, BCBA-D

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Office: 320 Psychology Building

Office hours: TBD

Course Time/Location: Florida Gym, FLG 0220

Tuesday 1:55-2:45pm

Thursday 1:55-3:50pm

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UG Teaching Assistants: TBD

Course Description: Behavior results from fundamental processes that translate experience into action. This course will cover a range of experimental and theoretical approaches to understanding behavioral processes relevant to major concepts in behavior analysis, including reinforcement, punishment, conditioning, stimulus control, etc. Understanding the processes potentially underlying behavioral phenomena equips researchers and clinicians with frameworks and principled approaches to asking research questions and implementing interventions. The goal of this course is to provide students of behavior analysis with additional tools for understanding and explaining behavior.

Course Objectives: After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the simple and more complex forms of behavior and learning
- Describe how fundamental research on reflexes and classical conditioning provide insight into the relation between learning and biological processes
- Describe different theoretical approaches to understanding classical conditioning
- Describe how fundamental research on stimulus control provides insight into complex discriminations and concept formation
- Identify how economic approaches to understanding operant behavior conceptualize reinforcers and their effectiveness
- Describe the different types of aversive control, its importance for survival, and the variables influencing its effectiveness
- Evaluate how extinction affects both operant behavior and induces other patterns of behavior
- Explain how reinforcement contingencies directly and indirectly contribute to the variability in behavior
- Describe how choice is fundamental to understanding operant behavior generally and ways of conceptualizing how consequences affect choice
- Identify different interpretations of how events described as conditioned reinforcers influence operant behavior
- Explain how concepts of induction, allocation, and contingency can explain concepts such as stimulus control, misbehavior, and extinction
- Identify how a contextual account of relapse conceptualizes how environmental events influence the elimination and return of behavior
- Describe how narrative and quantitative theories differ in accounting for the influence of environmental variables on behavior

Course Materials

1. **Google Chrome Web Browser**
2. **Canvas**
3. **Lockdown Browser**
4. **Bringnotebook paper and pen/pencil to every class**

There is no textbook. Instead, all readings are available within Files through Canvas. Reading Guides are available for all required readings within Files through Canvas. Completing these guides while reading will assist you in applying and evaluating concepts from the readings more effectively than would a passive read. As with any course material, engaging actively with the material in as many ways as possible (e.g., flash cards) leads to better learning.

Assignments and Course Policies

Course Format: Classes generally will involve a guided discussion with formal and informal opportunities to ask and answer questions throughout my lecture. It is important to complete readings and guides on time before class begins and be prepared to participate in class activities and discussions. In-class materials are structured assuming some familiarity with the material through readings and guides. In-class activities will be completed for credit but only for those in attendance.

Course Schedule: Please note there is some chance I might modify the schedule and/or readings but I will let you know ahead of time. Any changes will be announced via Canvas or the course listserv. If a class is canceled (e.g., due to inclement weather), be prepared to cover the material or take the exam during the next scheduled class meeting.

Date		Topic or Exam	Readings
13-Jan	Tue	Introduction	Syllabus & Course Overview
15-Jan	Th	01 Evolution and Learning	Powell et al. (2017, Ch 3)
20-Jan	Tue	continue	
22-Jan	Th	02 Classical Conditioning Phenomena	Lattal (2013)
27-Jan	Tue	continue	
29-Jan	Th	03 Classical Conditioning Processes	Domjan (2005)
3-Feb	Tue	continue	
5-Feb	Th	04 Stimulus Control	Pierce & Cheney (2016, Ch 8)
10-Feb	Tue	continue	
12-Feb	Th	05 Classical and Operant Interactions	Baum (2012)
17-Feb	Tue	Exam 01-04	
19-Feb	Th	continue	
24-Feb	Tue	continue	
26-Feb	Th	06 Choice	Powell et al. (2017, Ch 10)
3-Mar	Tue	continue	
5-Mar	Th	07 Behavioral Economics	Hursh et al. (2013)
10-Mar	Tue	continue	
12-Mar	Th	08 Variability	Neuringer & Jensen (2013)
17-Mar	Tue	No Class - Spring Break	
19-Mar	Th	No Class - Spring Break	
24-Mar	Tue	continue	
26-Mar	Th	09 Extinction	Nevin (2009)
31-Mar	Tue	Exam 05-08	
2-Apr	Th	continue	
7-Apr	Tue	10 Conditioned Reinforcement and Signaling	Shahan (2010)
9-Apr	Th	continue	
14-Apr	Tue	11 Context and Relapse	Bouton (2019)
16-Apr	Th	continue	
21-Apr	Tue	Exam 09-11	
23-Apr	Th	No Class - Prepare for Finals	
1-May	Fri	Final Exam, 10:00-12:00	

Attendance Policies: Attendance is a strong predictor of course performance. You should arrive on time, be prepared with appropriate materials, and remain on task throughout the course. Turn off any unnecessary devices, including phones. If you are unable to attend class or submit an assignment on time, be sure to make appropriate arrangements and plan to collect notes for any missed classes from a peer. Students must take all exams and submit assignments at scheduled times except for University approved reasons. Any absences or requests for an extension must be based on University approved reasons and must include proper documentation per University guidelines from the Dean of Students. Please check your calendars against the course schedule.

Requests for extensions must be made before the assignment deadline, if possible, or within 24 hours of the deadline for unexpected emergencies. **Late assignments without approved extensions will not be accepted.** If requesting an extension or missing an assignment or exam, contact me, the graduate TA, and your assigned undergraduate TA as early and as soon as possible. I will make final decisions about extensions or exclusions. Please send us formal documentation and arrange with your TA to take the exam early or a makeup as close to the scheduled time as possible. If you have a conflict due to a religious observance, please contact me and your TA at the beginning of the semester so we can make any necessary arrangements. For all attendance rules, we will follow the university attendance policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Completing assignments well before the deadline is a good idea. Extensions will not be given for unverifiable student-based technical difficulties. If UF Canvas experiences technical difficulties (and we know when this happens), deadlines will be adjusted.

Reading Guides: 25% of grade. Guides with specific questions will accompany all assigned readings and are in the Files section of Canvas. These guides are assigned to keep you up with course content and provide you with questions to assist you in applying and evaluating concepts more effectively than would a passive read. Questions on the guides will bring out the main themes of the readings and allow you to familiarize yourself with the topics before class. As with any course material, engaging actively with the material in as many ways as possible (e.g., flash cards) leads to better learning.

Reading guides will be checked for completion, relevance, and thoroughness of your answer. Your answers should not be identical other students', online resources, or the textbook. Identical or incomplete answers will not be counted. If reading guides require you make graphs or you think a graph would be helpful for answering a question, either draw these by hand and take a picture or use graphing software – embed any graphs within the text of the Reading Guide. Please submit your completed guides to Canvas as a Microsoft Word file by the specified date/time on the Course Schedule before class begins. Ideally, only number your answers and do not include the question before your answers. Late submissions also should be submitted via Canvas but will be penalized 10% per day but complete submissions after 5 days can earn up to 50% until the last day of classes for the semester. It is **your responsibility** to ensure the file(s) you upload to Canvas are correct and saved properly (e.g., by refreshing the screen, opening uploaded file(s)) to be counted as on time. Your score will reflect the assignment submitted by the deadline.

In-Class Activities: 20% of grade. Classes will include activities to be submitted to me at the end of the class period. Please ensure you bring paper and a pen/pencil to every class for these activities. Your lowest two scores will be dropped, excluding unexcused absences.

Exams: 55% of grade. Exams will comprise the largest evaluation for this course. The format for each exam could be mixed, including fill in the blank, multiple choice, and true/false, and written answers. Exam content will come from both the lectures and material covered in the readings. The three regular exams will cover 3-4 topics per exam and are not cumulative. I will provide a Study Guide to accompany each exam, which will be available within Files through Canvas. After each exam, you will have the opportunity to see and ask questions about your exam by making an appointment with a teaching assistant.

The final exam is both cumulative and optional. If your score on the final exam is greater than your lowest score, your final-exam score will replace your lowest exam grade. If your score on the final exam is lowest, it will not count against you. I will provide a separate study guide for the cumulative final, generally consisting of a selection of study objectives from the previous exams.

Please bring a laptop or tablet so you can take exams through Canvas. You will not be permitted to have any window open on your laptop/tablet other than the exam. You will need to install and use [Lockdown Browser](#) when taking exams (see introductory video [here](#)).

Grades: This course follows standard university grading policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>):

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%

D	60-69%
E	<60%

Communication:

- If you have a general question about the course, post it on the general Discussion board in Canvas. If it is something you would raise your hand to ask in class, it belongs on this board. Feel free to use this board to communicate with each other, set up study groups, etc. Please do not post material that is inappropriate and/or not relevant to the course.
- You have been assigned an undergraduate TA based on the first letter of your last name (see above). This will be the person to contact first if you have any issues or questions too personal or not appropriate for the General Discussion board.
- If you have a question about your grade, **message both your TA and me**. DO NOT post information about your grade on the General Discussion board.
- Only use your **UFL email address** when communicating about this course via email.
- All interactions with instructors and among class members are expected to be professional and appropriate.

Academic Policies and Resources: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

This link accesses a webpage providing information on:

- Attendance and make-up policies
- DRC information
- Assigning grade points
- Gator Evals
- Honesty policy
- In-class recording
- Academic and wellness resources

Course Policy on Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI): In addition to the University's Honesty Policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc., use of AI to complete all or portions of your work is considered unauthorized aid in this course and will be considered academic dishonesty. Submitting assignments implies you agree to the following statement: *I certify the submitted work is my own, with all sources correctly attributed and that I did not use artificial intelligence (AI) in its development or completion.*

Harassment: Sexual Harassment (and any other type of harassment) is not tolerated in this class, in the Department of Psychology, or at the University of Florida. Sexual harassment includes: the inappropriate introduction of sexual activities or comments in a situation where sex would otherwise be irrelevant. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and a violation of state and federal laws as well as of the policies and regulations of the university. All UF employees and students must adhere to UF's sexual harassment policy which can be found here:

<https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/>

Please review this policy and contact a university official if you have any questions about the policy. As mandatory reporters, university employees (e.g., administrators, managers, supervisors, faculty, teaching assistants, staff) are required to report knowledge of sexual harassment to UF's Title IX coordinator. For more information about UF's Title IX office see: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/>

You can also complete a Sexual Harassment Report online (Title IX) at: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/title-ix-reporting-form/>