

Principles of Learning PSYC304

Lab Section

This is a rough draft of the lab schedule. Please watch your emails for an updated version in the week prior to the beginning of class

2A1- MW 2:30-5:20p, Innovation 205

2A2- TR 2:30-5:20p, Innovation 320

Instructor: Melissa Scheldrup

Email: mscheldr@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Monday 12-2p and by appt. David King Hall room 2052

Required Texts: Alloway, T, Wilson, G. & Graham, J (2012). *Sniffy the Virtual Rat. (pro version 3.0).* Thompson Wadsworth.

*****Students are expected to bring textbooks and CD every class**

Objectives: The purpose of this lab is to give you hands-on experience dealing with basic learning principles. Instead of working with actual rats, the Sniffy program will give you the opportunity to work with virtual lab animals to design research experiments and collect data examining basic behavior modification. We will work towards understanding, interpreting, and writing about our findings. In addition, students will strengthen their understanding and interpretation of data analysis. Students will gain a proficiency in APA format through in-class assignments, as well as homework requiring students to read and interpret journal articles and work to enhance their writing skills.

Lab Structure: Lab time will be divided between lecture review and lab course work. We will start each meeting with a review of key lecture topics and concepts. This is a time for students to ask specific questions pertaining to the lecture material. Depending on the lecture topic there may be a Powerpoint presentation or other aids utilized. The remainder of the lab time will be devoted to the objectives listed above.

Grading: The lab will count as 25% of your final grade in this course. Points will be broken down into the following categories:

(40%) Class Participation: Every class, there will be an opportunity to earn participations points. Often, this will include some sort of small assignment, such as a worksheet, handout, or Sniffy experiment. Occasionally, points will be given purely for attendance. If missed, in-class activities cannot be made up.

(10%) Quizzes: Sometimes, you will be asked to read sections of the Sniffy text before coming to class. Sometimes, quizzes will be administered to make sure that you completed the reading (both lab and lecture readings) These quizzes will be designed to simply assess whether or not you read the material. They will be straightforward and simple and should not be a cause for stress. However, I reserve the right to administer quizzes for other purposes. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped and quizzes cannot be made up.

(50%) Writing Assignments: There will be two writing assignments throughout the class to meet course requirements. These assignments will be discussed in detail at a later date.

Late Work: Quizzes and in-class assignments cannot be made up. If you are absent it is your responsibility to cover the material you missed. Late papers will be accepted up to one week late for an automatic grade reduction. Papers that are overdue by more than one week will **NOT** be accepted. Work will NOT be accepted by e-mail. Hard copies must be turned in at the beginning of class.

Honor Code: The honor code will be strictly enforced and students will be expected to comply by not cheating, stealing, plagiarizing, or being dishonest in any way in their academic work. Information regarding the Honor Code and what constitutes academic dishonesty can be found in the University catalog or online at the following website: <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/>.

Writing Intensive: Psyc 304 has been approved as a writing intensive course. The laboratory portion of the course requires students to complete 2-3 papers in APA style. Successful completion of these papers, and completion of Psyc 304 with a grade of C or better, meets the writing intensive requirement of the psychology major.

Technology Usage: Communications regarding classes and important announcements will be disseminated through GMU e-mail accounts. Students are expected to regularly check their e-mail accounts.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Important Dates

Last Day to Add/Drop: May 24th

Last Day to Drop with penalty: May 31st

MW Date	TR Date	Lab activities	Assignment Due
5/20	5/21	Intro, APA style, Sniffy Ch.1&2	
5/22	5/23	Lecture review Sniffy Ch. 3	
5/27	5/28	5/27- No Class 5/28- Sniffy Ch. 4	TBA
5/29	5/30	Lecture Review Sniffy Ch. 5	TBA
6/3	6/4	Paper #1 due Sniffy Ch. 6	TBA
6/5	6/6	Lecture Review Sniffy Ch. 7	
6/10	6/11	Lecture Review	TBA
6/12	6/13	TBA	TBA
6/17	6/18	Paper 2 due Sniffy TBA	TBA
6/19	6/20	6/19- Reading Day 6/20- Final Exam	

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NOTE: **I reserve the right to make edits to this schedule based on several factors, including the progression of lecture. Any changes will be announced in class.**

This is a brief description of the two writing assignments. More details will be handed out closer to the due dates.

Paper 1:

Find a published research article that uses classical conditioning protocols. Identify key terms from the lecture/book. Explain why the researchers used that method, any critiques or improvements you'd make and suggestions on further /future studies.

Paper 2: Provide two examples of Operant Conditioning being applied to your life. First, explain a time in your life when Operant Conditioning was used on either you or someone you knew. A second example must analyze an ongoing problem you are having with another person's behavior (e.g., something your roommate/friend does that you find annoying), along with a 'behavior plan' (i.e., training regime) for how you would modify the person's behavior.

** I will distribute a grading rubric for all written assignments to make grading as objective as possible.

Writing Resources

Writing Intensive course requirements - information on what is required of writing intensive courses can be found at http://wac.gmu.edu/program/wi_requirement/

The Writing Center - Mason <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

Online Writing Center (OWL) at Purdue - this site has detailed APA Style information that is updated regularly <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

APA style information - direct from APA <http://www.apastyle.org/>