SYLLABUS - BEHV3200

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

- Instructor Name: Bryan S. Lovelace MS BCBA LBA
- Phone: 940-536-3211 (texting is best)
- Office Hours: By Appointment Only
- Email Address: bryan.lovelace@unt.edu
- **PLEASE DO NOT USE CANVAS TO EMAIL ME**. Your message might not get to me and my replies might not get to you. Always email me directly at bryan.lovelace@unt.edu.

REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

The Department of Behavior Analysis in cooperation with the Office of Disability Accommodation gladly complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodation for qualified students with disabilities. You are required to present your written request for accommodation within 1 week of the first class period.

PURPOSE

This course will teach you how to utilize scientific critical thinking to examine various strange phenomena, including alleged paranormal events, magic, superstition, bogus therapies, pseudoscience, and psychics. One goal is to teach you how to think about weird things when you encounter them. Another goal is to teach you how to have an open mind, but not so open that your brain falls out.

COURSE MATERIALS

This course uses the Top Hat platform to host course materials.

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- Top Hat is also used to take attendance and to provide grades for assignments.
- The least expensive way to purchase access to Top Hat is to buy access directly through their website.
- You must receive an invite from me to purchase Top Hat.
- You must use your UNT email address to sign up for Top Hat.
- Top Hat is required for this course.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Define Paradigm Shift and describe why these are unique to science.
- Describe a comet, where they come from, and what they are made of.
- Describe the role that Stardust, Deep Impact, and Rosetta missions played in the study of comets.
- Describe the ancient view of comets.
- Describe how Isaac Newton discovered gravity.
- Describe the power of natural explanations.
- Define anomaly and describe what makes science different.
- Define two types of thinking errors.
- Define god of the gaps and how this relates to Xerxes, ancient Greeks, and Epilepsy.
- Describe the Ptolemaic revolution including the zodiac, the Ptolemaic paradigm & retrograde motion.

- Describe the Copernican revolution including the role of Galileo's observations and how these justified the Copernican paradigm.
- Define Synthesis and how this relates to paradigm shifts and science.
- Describe the anomalies of Classical Physics
- Describe the discovery of electromagnetism and why this was important.
- Describe why Einstein's theory of relativity was superior to Newton's universal gravitation.
- Describe Einstein's four great insights: equivalency of space & time, the equivalency of mass & energy, universal speed limit, the new concept of gravity.
- Describe how Einstein's ideas were tested including gravitational lensing, & spacetime dilation
- Describe Einstein's legacy including cosmic background radiation, Einstein's biggest blunder.
- Define superstition, weird beliefs, and weird experiences.
- Describe Malinowski's principle and how this motivates people to believe weird things
- Describe the Peter Popoff Affair and how Malinowski's principle explains why people fell for it.
- Define contiguity and describe two types of contiguity: Spatial and Temporal
- Describe the work of E.L. Thorndike and the law of effect
- Describe the work of Edwin Guthrie and his work with contiguity
- Describe the work of B.F. Skinner and his work on superstition in the pigeon
- Describe the work of Wagner and Morris and their work on superstition in humans
- Define personal experience and describe why it is not reliable as a sole form of evidence.
- Describe how personal experience relates to perception.
- Describe errors in perception such as the shadow illusion, size constancy.
- Describe expectancy effects
- Describe the effects of vague situations on perceptions such as visual and auditory pareidolia.
- Describe common errors in judgment such as the confirmation bias and availability error.
- Define filter bubbles.
- Describe the rules for avoiding confirmation bias, availability error, and filter bubbles.
- Describe how beliefs relate to actions.
- Define beliefs, facts, and knowledge.
- Describe how reasons relate to the probability of a claim.
- Describe how to use the belief scale.
- Define commonsense skepticism and describe how to use it to evaluate claims.
- Describe how to evaluate expert opinions.
- Describe how to apply Hume's Maxim.
- Describe the ethics of proportioning belief to the evidence.
- Define subjective relativism, cultural relativism, conceptual relativism, and realism.
- Describe the difference between relativism & realism.
- Be able to apply reductio ad absurdum to relativistic arguments.
- Describe why conceptual relativism is self-refuting.
- Describe three rules for avoiding the trap of relativism.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Class Attendance is Mandatory

- Classes will be held via Tophat on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 am to 9:20 am.
- Class attendance will be recorded using Top Hat.
- Do not attempt to register attendance for another student, if you are caught attempting to record attendance for another student you, and the other student will be sanctioned by the Dean of Students.
- Lecture questions are graded and can only be completed during a lecture. If you miss the lecture, you can't make up those lecture question points.

Each class you attend will earn you 1 point of extra credit!

- Each time you attend a TopHat lecture, you will earn 1 point of extra credit.
- There is no penalty for missing class except that you will not earn your 1 point of extra credit for attending and you will not earn points for answering the lecture questions.
- Lecture recordings along with lecture notes will be made available after each lecture for later review if you miss a class.

POINT STRUCTURE

Activities

- Paranormal Profiles (50 points total)
- Assigned Readings (70 points total)
- Lecture Questions (60 points total)
- Unit Quizzes (300 points total)
    - Bonus Questions on Quizzes (30 points total)
    - Extra Credit for Attendance (1 point per class, up to 25 points possible)
- **Course Activities Only (480 points)**
- **Course Activities with bonus/extra credit added (535 points)**

Grading

- A: 432 - 535 points
- B: 384 - 431 points
- C: 336 - 383 points
- D: 288 - 335 points
- F: 287 points or less

GRADE-RELATED POLICIES

Late Work

I will not accept late work in this course. All work turned in after the deadline will receive a grade of zero unless the student has a university-excused absence and provides documentation with 48 hours of the missed deadline.

Turnaround Time

I aim to return graded work to you within one week of the due date. When this is not possible, I will send an announcement to the class.

Grade Disputes

You are required to wait 24 hours before contacting me to dispute a grade. Within that time, I expect that you will review the assignment details and reflect on the quality of the work you turned in. If you would still like to meet, email me to set up a meeting (I cannot discuss grades over email). You should come to our scheduled meeting with specific examples that demonstrate that you earned a higher grade than you received. If you miss your scheduled meeting, you forfeit your right to a grade dispute. If you do not contact me to schedule a meeting within seven days of receiving your grade, you also forfeit your right to a grade dispute.

Extra Credit

The only opportunities for extra credit are the extra credit questions on each unit quiz and for attending TopHat lectures.

- There are three extra credit questions available. one for each unit quiz, worth 10 points each.
- You can earn 1 point of extra credit for each TopHat lecture you attend.

ASSIGNMENT TYPES

There are four types of assignments that you will encounter during this course: Unit Quizzes, Paranormal Profiles, Reading Assignments, & Lecture Questions.

UNIT QUIZZES

- There are 3 unit quizzes worth a total of 300 Points (330 points total with bonus questions added).
- Once assigned, unit quizzes will be available for 7 consecutive days.
- If you fail to take a unit quiz within that 7-day period, you will be given another opportunity to take the quiz at the end of the semester.
- Unit quizzes are open-book
- There is no final or midterm exam.

PARANORMAL PROFILES

- There are 2 Paranormal Profile assignments in this course: Paranormal Profile Baseline & Paranormal Profile Followup.
- Each Paranormal Profile is worth 25 points each for a total of 50 Graded Points. One is given at the beginning of the semester, the other is given as the last assignment at the end of the semester.
- Paranormal Profile assignments are in a questionnaire format, there are no correct answers for each question; therefore you should select the answer that best reflects your attitude toward each question.
- Answer each question honestly, don't be tempted to answer these questions like you think I would answer them.
- The purpose of the Paranormal Profiles is to measure how much your exposure to the material of this course changes your position toward these questions.
- The Paranormal Profile Baseline will be issued as your very first assignment for this course.
- The Paranormal Profile Followup will be issued as the very last assignment for this course.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- There are 7 chapters (Reading Assignments) that you will be assigned during this course.
- Reading Assignments will be assigned progressively throughout the semester as we work through the course material.
- Once assigned you will have until the end of the semester to complete Reading Assignments.
- Each Reading Assignment is worth 10 points for a total of 70 points.
- Points are earned by answering the questions interspersed throughout each chapter.

LECTURE QUESTIONS

- There are 12 sets of lecture notes that will be made available to you as the semester progresses.
- Lectures question points can only be earned by answering the questions during the live lectures.

- Each set of lecture notes provides an opportunity to earn up to 5 points with 60 total points possible by the end of the semester.

OTHER GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

- All students are required to read and agree to the following documents: Social Contract, Attendance Policy, & the Grading Policy (this document).
- Each of these assignments has a single question located at the bottom of the document, you must answer this question with either, "I AGREE" or "I DISAGREE".
- If you answer, "I AGREE" you will earn 5 points for the social contract, 5 points for the attendance policy, and 10 points for the grading policy.
- If you answer, "I DISAGREE" or you fail to answer these questions, you will be dropped from the course.