

BEHV 3770
BUILDING SKILLS with BEHAVIORAL TECHNOLOGY
Spring 2026

Instructor:

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Office Hours: By appointment

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Time and Place:

Monday and Wednesday 12:00 - 1:50 pm. WH 117

Course Description:

In this course you will learn a behavior analytic approach to building skills. We will review the paradigms, concepts and techniques derived from the principles of behavior as applied to building skills. We will contrast the learning paradigms of programmed instruction, errorless learning and trial-and-error learning. Particular emphasis will be given to the techniques used to program response topographies and their stimulus control. You will also learn the basic composition of behavior intervention programs.

Students may enroll in this class only after they have taken BEHV 2300/3150, 2700, and 3440.

Course Objectives:

1. Describe behavioral approaches to the teaching of social, communicative, leisure, independent living, academic/conceptual, and other skills.
2. Describe techniques to establish behaviors.
3. Describe the basic components of behavioral programming.
4. Design and implement shaping programs to teach skills to both animals and people.

Class Materials:

Pryor, K. (1999). Don't shoot the dog: The new art of teaching and training. Waltham, MA: Sunshine Books.

Skinner, B. F. (1968). The technology of teaching. East Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Ebook available for purchase from the B.F. Skinner Foundation

<https://www.bfskinner.org/product/the-technology-of-teaching-pdf/>

Rosales-Ruiz, J. & Hunter, M. (2019). PORTL: Portable Operant Research and Teaching Lab. Sanger, TX: Behavior Explorer.

Students will also need to purchase a PORTL kit (or make their own). PORTL kits can be purchased from the university bookstore or from <https://behaviorexplorer.com/store/portl-kit/>

Sidman (1995). Errorless learning and its significance for teaching the mentally handicapped. (pp. 1- 14).

Originally published in Brazil, in Portuguese, as: Aprendizagem-Sem-Erros e Sua Importância para o Ensino do Deficiente Mental (1985). Psicologia, 11(3), 1-15.

Article available on Canvas

Student Activities

Reading Summaries

Students should summarize the main points and concepts of the assigned readings. Students should also include any reflections, questions, generalizations, and opinions prompted by the readings. The reading summaries should demonstrate a familiarity with the concepts discussed in the readings. Some of the concepts presented in the readings are advanced and can be difficult to understand at first. Therefore, students should discuss specifically what they find confusing or difficult in their summaries.

Class lectures will be used to clarify concepts from the readings, and students may reference material from the lectures in their submissions, but lectures should not be used as the main inspiration for summaries.

Submissions should use proper grammar, spelling, formatting, etc. and students should attempt to cite any sources in APA format.

For full credit, reading summaries must be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on the day the reading is assigned. However, summaries can be turned in after the due date for half credit, with the exception of Reading 14 which must be submitted by April 27.

Video Reports

Students will write about particular issues, procedures, behaviors, etc. discussed in each of the videos with the assistance of the video guide. Reports should address all questions presented in the video guides. Students may critique the usefulness of the facts, concepts, and analyses presented in the videos. Students may also relate the videos to other issues and topics relevant to this course.

Submissions should use proper grammar, spelling, formatting, etc. and students should attempt to cite any sources in APA format.

For full credit, video reports must be uploaded on Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on the Sunday following the class the video is assigned. However, reports can be turned in after the due date for half credit.

PORTL Class Activities

Students will participate in PORTL activities during class on Wednesdays. Students should come to class prepared with their PORTL manual and PORTL kit.

Students' grades will be based on attendance and completion of exercises. If a student misses any PORTL days, students may make up the points by attending either of the PORTL make-up days at the end of the semester. Additional details will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class.

Animal Training Project

Students will teach several behaviors to a dog, cat, hamster, fish, etc. Students in previous classes have said this is one of their favorite parts of the class. Students will find this project challenging, but also as a great way to improve their teaching skills. If a student does not have a pet, they will find a friend, neighbor, relative, etc. who has a pet that they can use. Students will need to have access to the animal at least once a week.

The project is divided into five parts. Students and their pet will learn new skills in each part to teach the behaviors required in the following parts. Detailed instructions will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class.

Project Parts:

Part 1: Building a Reinforcement System Due 02/04

Part 2: Assessing Current Repertoires and Introducing Targeting Due 02/25

Part 3: Set a Goal & Extend Your Targeting	<u>Due 03/25</u>
Part 4: Begin teaching your final behavior	<u>Due 04/08</u>
Part 5: Finish teaching your final behavior	<u>Due 04/22</u>

Project grading:

Each part of the project will be worth (4) points towards the student's total grade. Detailed rubrics are attached at the end of each project worksheet and can also be found on Canvas under the individual assignments.

To receive full credit, students should meet all of the criteria listed on the rubric and submit their projects to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Students may submit projects up to three weeks after the due date with the exception of Part 5, which must be submitted by Dec. 3 at the latest. Late submissions can earn a maximum of 3 points. Projects turned in more than three weeks late will not be accepted.

** If a student receives a score of a (1) or (2), they MUST resubmit that assignment before they can receive a grade for the next part of the assignment.

** Resubmissions and late submissions can earn a maximum of 3 points.

Human Shaping Project

Students will pick a behavior, analyze existing shaping plans, write their own shaping plan, and then teach the behavior to several other people. Further instructions will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class.

Project Parts

Part 1: Planning - Write your objective, a test, and evaluate learners	<u>Due 02/11</u>
Part 2: Analysis - Analyze two shaping plans and write a task analysis	<u>Due 03/04</u>
Part 3: Shaping - Write a shaping plan, and try it out with one learner	<u>Due 04/01</u>
Part 4: Shaping revised - Try out your new plan with two more learners	<u>Due 04/15</u>

Project grading:

Each part will be worth (4) points towards student's total grade. Detailed rubrics are attached at the end of each project worksheet and can also be found on Canvas under the individual assignments.

To receive full credit, students should meet all of the criteria listed on the rubric and submit their projects to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Students may submit projects up to three weeks after the due date with the exception of Part 4, which must be submitted by April 29 at the latest. Late submissions can earn a maximum of 3 points. Projects turned in more than three weeks late will not be accepted.

**Similar to the animal training project, if a student receive a score of a (1) or (2), they MUST resubmit that assignment before they can receive a grade for the next part. Resubmissions and late submissions can earn a maximum of 3 points.

Reflection Paper

Students will write a five-page, double-spaced paper describing what they learned about building skills with behavioral technology. Some of the topics that must be included are the inter-relations between programmed instruction, errorless learning, the constructional approach, and shaping. Students can also discuss what they learned from their projects and from PORTL. The paper should demonstrate a familiarity with the concepts discussed in assigned readings videos and class lectures.

Students should use proper grammar, spelling, formatting, etc. and they should attempt to cite any sources in APA format.

Papers must be submitted to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on April 29.

The final deadline to turn in all assignments is 11:59 p.m. on April 28.

Final Exam

Students will be tested at the end of the semester on the key definitions and procedures learned during the course. A study guide will be posted on Canvas prior to the final exam. **Please note: The final exam for this course will be on Wednesday, May 6 at 10:00 a.m-12:00 p.m.** There will be no opportunity to make up the final exam. Any changes will be announced in class and on Canvas.

Grades

Student Activity	% of Grade
1. Reading summaries	14%
2. Video reports	12%
3. PORTL exercises	12%
4. Animal training project	20%
5. Human shaping project	16%
6. Reflection paper	11%
7. Final exam	15%

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

For the maximum benefit of this course, attendance is highly encouraged. Although students will not be penalized for absences, students will get behind your projects and PORTL assignments, and must schedule additional meeting times with instructors to complete the projects.

COVID-19 Impact on Attendance

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that students communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so student, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because of illness, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If a student is experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires students to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

Academic Integrity Policy

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Based on the Student Academic Integrity Policy (UNT Policy 6.003), any form of "unauthorized assistance" constitutes cheating. If the use of artificial intelligence is not authorized for the assignment in question, the violation is "cheating". The instructor uses the Turnitin platform which detects AI-generated writing.

ADA Statement:

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to

avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website (<https://disability.unt.edu/>).

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.