BEHV 3770

BUILDING SKILLS with BEHAVIORAL TECHNOLOGY

Fall 2023

Instructor:

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Teaching Assistants:

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Time and Place:

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 1-1:50 pm.   BLB   245

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 should 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.

      You will also need to purchase a PORTL kit (or make your own).

      Sidman (1995). Errorless learning and its significance for teaching the mentally handicapped. (pp. 1- 14).
Originally published in Brazil, in Portuguese, as: Apprendizagem-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 questions, generalizations, and opinions prompted by the readings. The summary is due on Canvas before class on the day the reading is assigned, but can be turned in up to a month after the due date for full credit. Readings turned in more than a month after the due date will be awarded half the points. The absolute last day to turn in readings is Dec 8. The reading report should include an outline of the reading, a question (if a concept is unclear), and a generalization, argument or opinion you may want to discuss. The summary will be used as a guide for discussion during class.

Video Reports

Students will write about particular issues, procedures, behaviors, etc. discussed in each of the videos with the assistance of the video guide. You may challenge or praise the usefulness of the facts, concepts, and analyses presented in the videos. You may also relate the videos to other issues and

topics relevant to this course. Video reports are due on the class day following the class the video is assigned.

PORTL Class Activities

You will participate in PORTL activities during class on Mondays. Your grade will be based on attendance and completion of exercises.

Animal Training Project

You will teach several behaviors to a dog, cat, rat, fish, etc. If you do not have a pet, find a friend, neighbor, relative, etc. who has a pet that you can teach. Instructions will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class.

Human Shaping Project

You will write a shaping plan and then teach a motor behavior to several classmates and/or friends. Instructions will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class.

Reflection Paper

A five page paper describing what you learned about building skills with behavioral technology. Some of the topics that you should include are the interrelations between programmed instruction, errorless learning, the constructional approach, and shaping. You can also discuss what you learned from your projects and from PORTL.

Final Exam

Students will be tested at the end of the semester on the key definitions and procedures learned during the course.

Grades

Student Activity		% of Grade
1.	Readings summaries & video reports	28%
2.	PORTL exercises	10%
3.	Animal training project	20%
4.	Human shaping project	16%
5.	Reflection paper	11%
6.	Final exam	15%

Animal Training Project (ATP) Introduction

You 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. You will find this project challenging, but also enjoyable and a great way to improve your teaching skills. If you do not have a pet, find a friend, neighbor, relative, etc. who has a pet that you can use. You will want to have access to the animal at least once a week.

The project is divided into five parts. You and your pet will learn new skills in each part that will help you teach the behaviors required in the next parts. Instructions will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class.

Project Parts:
Part 1: Find a reinforcer and teach a conditioned reinforcer   Due Sep 13
Part 2: Teach targeting   Due Oct 04
Part 3: Extend your targeting (go to a target or follow a target)   Due Oct 18
Part 4: Plan out and start teaching your final behavior   Due Nov 08
Part 5: Finish teaching you final behavior   Due Dec 06

Project grading:
Each part of the project will be graded on a four-point scale as follows:
4 points: Video meets criteria, all questions answered
3 points: Video meets grading criteria, but some questions not fully answered
2 points: Video doesn't meet criteria and/or many questions need improvement
1 point: No video submitted (or other large parts of the assignment are missing)

** If you receive a score of a 1 or 2, you MUST resubmit that assignment before you 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 (HSP) Introduction

You will pick a behavior, analyze existing shaping plans, write your own shaping plan, and then teach the behavior to several other people. Further instructions will be discussed in class.

Each part will be graded on a four-point scale. Similar to the animal training project, if you receive a score of a 1 or 2, you MUST resubmit that assignment before you can receive a grade for the next part. Resubmissions / late submissions can earn a maximum of three points.

Project Parts
Part 1: Planning - Write your objective, a test, and evaluate your learner   Due Sep 20
Part 2: Analysis - Analyze two shaping plans and write a task analysis   Due Oct 11
Part 3: Shaping - Write a shaping plan, and try it out with one learner   Due Nov 01
Part 4: Shaping revised - Try out your new plan with two more learners   Due Nov 29

The final due date for turning in all parts of the projects in Friday, Dec 8.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy
For the maximum benefit of this course, attendance is highly encouraged. Although you will not be penalized for absences, you 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 you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, 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 you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If you are 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 you 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.

Class Materials for Remote Instruction

Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a webcam and microphone to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at https://online.unt.edu/learn.

Class Recordings

Synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be recorded for students enrolled in this class section to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university or instructor and are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Statement on Face Covering

UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

ADA Statement:

The Department for Behavior Analysis, in cooperation with The Office of Disability Accommodation, complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please present your written accommodation request to me before the 4th class meeting.