

BEHV 3770
BUILDING SKILLS with BEHAVIORAL TECHNOLOGY
Spring 2021

Instructor:

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Office Hours:

By appointment

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Time and Place:

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 1-1:50 P.M.

BLB 180

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 Structure:

The format of this course is hybrid. Mondays will include PORTL exercises. The first part of the semester will begin remotely, and then class will meet in the assigned room on Mondays by mid-semester. Wednesdays will include lectures and discussions that will take place remotely during the class time. Fridays will include watching videos on your own beginning Week 2.

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

** Article available in 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 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 April 19. 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 a page about a particular issue, procedure, behavior, etc. discussed in each of the videos. 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.

PORTL Class Activities

You will participate in PORTL activities during class on Mondays. If you do not have a partner during class time, you can complete exercises outside of class and submit a video to CANVAS. 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 use. 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 inter-relations 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 Feb 3
Part 2: Teach targeting	Due Feb 24
Part 3: Extend your targeting (go to a target or follow a target)	Due Mar 10
Part 4: Plan out and start teaching your final behavior	Due Apr 7
Part 5: Finish teaching you final behavior	Due Apr 21

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 Jan 27
Part 2: Analysis - Analyze two shaping plans and write a task analysis	Feb 17
Part 3: Shaping - Write a shaping plan, and try it out with one learner	Mar 17
Part 4: Shaping revised - Try out your new plan with two more learners	Apr 14

The final due date for turning in all parts of the projects in Friday, April 23.

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

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) 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 Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class,

your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

Class Materials for Remote Instruction

The UNT fall schedule requires this course to have fully remote instruction beginning November 28th. Additional 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 computer with 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>.

Statement on Face Covering

Face coverings are required in all UNT facilities. Students are expected to wear face coverings during this class. If you are unable to wear a face covering due to a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Access to request an accommodation. UNT face covering requirements are subject to change due to community health guidelines. Any changes will be communicated via the instructor.

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.