Learning and Conditioning

PSYC 3361-501
Fall 2021 - Session 1
Online

Professor: Dr. James Schaeffer
Email: schaeffejd@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: I'll be holding in-person and virtual office hours this semester. Office hours can also be scheduled by appointment (send me an email). They are:

Monday: 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. (virtual via zoom)
Monday: 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (in person)
Tuesday: 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (in person)
Wednesday: 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (in person)

Zoom Meeting ID: 956 4365 4726
Meeting Password: 869457
Zoom Link: https://sfasu.zoom.us/j/95643654726?pwd=bkhOYjF0M11KTGTzeDBTRUJxVVVnUT09

Note: although this is an online course, you are welcome to attend in-person office hours as well.

Course Description

Examination of the principles of learning and cognition from the perspective of experimental psychology, with an emphasis on learning theories and neuroscience. The approaches of Pavlov and Skinner are predominant throughout the course, although the concepts of other learning theorists are also presented.

Course Structure

This is a condensed online course, which will move at about twice the speed of a long-semester course and will be completed in about half of the time as a long-semester course. This means that you will likely need to put in much more time and effort in this course compared to a long-semester course. Content and assessments are designed so that they may be completed at a time of your own choosing each week (i.e., asynchronously). However, you must keep pace with the course on a weekly basis. For the majority of the course, content modules will open on Monday
morning and assessments (e.g., quizzes, discussions, assignments) will be due by the end of the week, Sunday night.

**Readings/Materials**

All reading material for this course will be posted on D2L and it is all freely available. You do not need to purchase a textbook for this course.

**D2L**

All course material will be posted here on D2L. This includes all graded material (quizzes, exam, assignments, discussions). Grades will also be posted here as they occur throughout the course.

**Course Requirements**

The course will include 14 short quizzes, 4 short writing assignments, 5 discussion posts, and a Final Exam. Extra credit may be offered throughout the semester. However, if extra credit is offered, the opportunity will be made available to all students (i.e., there will be no special cases).

**Quizzes**

You will have a quiz following each content module in this course. These quizzes may be cumulative, to a degree. There will be 15 quizzes total (a few per week), and your lowest graded quiz will be dropped (14 will count toward your final grade). These will be worth 5 points each (for 70 points total).

**Assignments**

4 short writing assignments will be given during the semester (1 per week for the first 4 weeks). Instructions for each will be posted on D2L. These will all follow the same basic format: 2 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font (or similar). These must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document (.docx) or PDF. These will be worth 10 points each (for 40 points total).

**Discussions**

5 discussion posts will be assigned during the semester. Instructions for each will be posted on D2L. These will all follow the same basic format: 2 posts per discussion topic, with a 2 sentence minimum for each post (but you can write much more if you’d like). One post should be from you on the designated topic and the other should be a reply to another student’s post. These will be worth 2 points each (for 10 points total).
**Final Exam**

The final exam will open during the last week of class. This will be worth 70 points.

**Make-Up/Late Work Policy**

If there are circumstances beyond your control that prevent you from completing course material, make-up opportunities may be offered at the discretion of the professor. Make-up requests must be made no later than 24 hours passed the due date.

**Grading Policy**

Grades will be determined by your performance on quizzes, assignments, discussion posts, and a final exam. Your final grade will be calculated as a percentage of points earned out of 190. Grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (14 total, at 5 points each)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments (4 total, at 10 points each)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts (5 total, at 2 points each)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 190

- **A** >89.4%
- **B** 79.5% - 89.4%
- **C** 69.5% - 79.4%
- **D** 59.5% - 69.4%
- **F** <59.5%

*Your Grade (%) = Points Earned / 190*

Grades will be posted on D2L as they occur throughout the course.

**Credit Hour Justification (3 Credits)**

PSYC 3361 “Learning and Conditioning” (3 credits) is designed to introduce students to the study of learning and conditioning by covering principles of learning and conditioning from the perspective of experimental psychology with an emphasis on learning theory including the approaches of Pavlov and Skinner and the concepts of other learning theorists. Over long semesters, this covers the equivalent of 2.5 contact hours per week for 16 weeks, and also
includes a 2.5 hour final examination period. Accelerated sections of this course (i.e., 8-week courses) cover the same amount of material and equivalent contact hours. Students typically have significant weekly reading assignments, writing assignments, are expected to take regular tests, and a final examination. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week, during long-semesters, to prepare outside of classroom hours. Accelerated sections of this course require the equivalent amount of work relative to its length (i.e., 8-week courses average a minimum of 12 hours of work each week). Online course sections contain extensive written content that includes the same information students in a face-to-face lecture sections receive, requiring students to engage the online modules for at least three hours per week during long semesters. For every hour a student spends engaging with the online content, he/she spends at least two hours completing associated activities and assessments.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to do the following things at a basic level:

- Understand the basic workings of the nervous system and describe how learning occurs at a cellular level
- Understand the basics of associative learning (classical and operant conditioning)
- Distinguish various memory systems throughout the brain
- Appreciate the influence of learning on psychological disorders
- Apply learning strategies to improve your own learning and to teach others (both humans and pets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Program Learning Outcomes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Level</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a science</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Policies

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Additional Helpful Information
SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources**

SFASU Counseling Services  
[www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)  
3rd Floor Rusk Buildin  
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic  
[www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)  
Human Services Room 202  
936-468-1041

**Crisis Resources**

Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343  
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)  
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

### Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
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</table>
| 8/23 & 8/30 | Cells and Neural Communication  
Neuroanatomy  
Learning at a Cellular Level | Quizzes 1, 2, and 3  
Discussion 1  
Writing Assignment 1 |
| 9/6 | Classical Conditioning Introduction  
Classical Conditioning Phenomena  
Classical Conditioning Neuroscience | Quizzes 4, 5, and 6  
Discussion 2  
Writing Assignment 2 |
| 9/13 | Operant Conditioning Introduction  
Operant Conditioning Phenomena  
Operant Conditioning Neuroscience | Quizzes 7, 8, and 9  
Discussion 3  
Writing Assignment 3 |
| 9/20 | Mental Health: Addiction  
Mental Health: Stress and Anxiety  
Mental Health: Depression | Quizzes 10, 11, and 12  
Discussion 4  
Writing Assignment 4 |
| 9/27 | Special Topics: Training a Dog  
Special Topics: Education  
Special Topics: Sleep | Quizzes 13, 14, and 15  
Discussion 5 |
| 10/4 | Final Exam (Due Friday, 10/8) | Final Exam |

_The professor reserves the right to change this schedule to best meet the needs of the class_