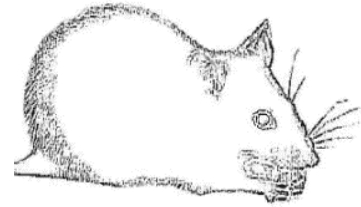


PSYCHOLOGY 472

Psychology of Learning

Spring 2008

- Instructor: Larry Z. Daily, Ph.D.
- Office: White Hall, Room 216
- Phone: 876-5297
- E-mail: ldaily@shepherd.edu
- Office Hours: MWF 10:10 to 11:00
TR 2:00 to 3:30
and by appointment
- Web Page: <http://webpages.shepherd.edu/ldaily>



Course Description:

This course is a survey of the methods, empirical findings, and theoretical interpretations in human and animal learning, including such topics as classical and operant conditioning, and observational learning. The course will also cover discrimination, generalization, and the role of reward, punishment, and other motivational variables in learning. At the end of the semester, you should be able to identify the contribution of the key studies in the field of learning and understand how they help to form a coherent view of how humans and animals acquire new behavior. As you will see, learning requires the active participation of the learner. Feel free to ask questions; we're all here to learn and explore. **Please note:** You must have completed PSYC 203 Introduction to Psychology, PSYC 251 Research Methods, and ENGL 102, 103, or 104 (or my permission) to take this course.



Required text and software:

Required Texts:

Mazur, J. E. (2006). *Learning and behavior* (6th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Required Software:

Alloway, T., Wilson, G., & Graham, J. (2005). *Sniffy: The Virtual Rat Lite, Version 2.0*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.



Tentative Schedule and Due Dates:

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
	01/10	Syllabus		
1	01/15	In class worksheet	Chapters 1 and 2	
	01/17	Introduction, associationism	Chapters 1 and 2	
2	01/22	Innate behaviors	Chapter 3	
	01/24	Innate behaviors	Chapter 3	
3	01/29	Classical conditioning	Chapters 4 and 5	
	01/31	Classical conditioning	Chapters 4 and 5	
4	02/05	Classical conditioning	Chapters 4 and 5	
	02/07	Classical conditioning	Chapters 4 and 5	
5	02/12	Classical conditioning	Chapters 4 and 5	
	02/14	CER Lab and APA format		
6	02/19	Review	Chapters 1 - 5	APA quiz
	02/21	EXAM I	Chapters 1 - 5	
7	02/26	Operant conditioning	Chapter 6	CER lab due
	02/28	Operant conditioning	Chapter 6	
8	03/04	Reinforcement	Chapter 7	
	03/06	Reinforcement	Chapter 7	
9	03/11	Shaping lab		
	03/13	No class meeting this day		
Spring Break – Have Fun				
10	03/25	Punishment	Chapter 8	
	03/27	Punishment	Chapter 8	Shaping lab due
11	04/01	Theories of operant cond.	Chapter 9	
	04/03	Theories of operant cond.	Chapter 9	Reinforcement lab data due
12	04/08	Reinforcement lab		
	04/10	Review	Chapters 6 - 9	
13	04/15	EXAM II	Chapters 6 - 9	
	04/17	Stimulus control	Chapter 10	Reinforcement lab due
14	04/22	Stimulus control	Chapter 10	
	04/24	Spring weekend recess		
15	04/29	Observational learning	Chapter 12	
	05/01	Observational learning	Chapter 12	
Final exam is Tuesday, May 6, 12:00 to 2:00				



Examinations:

One of my goals for this course is that you learn how and what experimentation has taught us about learning. This will be assessed by three in-class examinations. The exams will consist of a mixture of matching, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions. The essay questions will either focus on a single study or will be broad and integrative in nature. Study questions will be provided to assist in your preparation for the exams. The examinations will consist of a subset of the questions in the study guides. Please note that we may begin covering new material between the time we finish the topics scheduled for an exam and the exam date. This is a consequence of the course scheduling and cannot be avoided so please plan for it.

You are required to turn off all mobile phones before an exam to avoid disturbing other students. Answering a mobile phone during an examination is inappropriate and is not allowed.



Lab Projects:

The Psychology of Learning is most often taught as a lab course. During this course you will conduct three empirical studies on learning phenomena and describe your results in APA-style research papers. These research projects will be conducted using the Sniffy software in lieu of live rats, though for the purposes of these projects we will act as if real rats were used. The topic of the first report will be the acquisition and extinction of a conditioned emotional response, the second will involve shaping your rat's behavior, and in the last you will compare the effectiveness of various reinforcement schedules.

Your papers should be written in APA format. I will provide the specifics of APA format relevant to your papers in class. One of the main goals of this format, however, is the clear, concise communication of your ideas. As a result, not only will you need to focus on the specifics of the format (margins, headings, etc.), you will also need to pay attention to grammar, spelling, and style. Your papers should be the best writing you can produce. They should be thoroughly proof-read and spellchecked prior to submission. For these papers I will be using a "three strikes, you're out" policy. I understand that mistakes happen, but the purpose of proof-reading is to catch and eliminate them. Therefore, I will not accept more than three spelling and/or grammar errors. If I find more than three errors I will stop reading your paper and assign it a grade of 30% of the total points for that paper.

Your papers should be printed in black ink using Times New Roman (or an equivalent serif font) sized at 11 or 12 points. It should be printed on plain white paper with no printing on the reverse side. Use 1 inch margins on all sides as specified by APA format. Use a paper clip or small binder clip to hold together the pages of each report. Do not staple the copies or use folders or plastic report covers. Please note that I am willing and happy to discuss ideas and drafts with you at any point, so feel free to stop by my office.

I have set up a course WebCT site where information on the lab exercises will be located. Additional information on the lab projects will be provided there as we prepare for each exercise.



APA Format:

There is an APA format tutorial on the course WEbCT site. You should review that information prior to February 14 when we will be reviewing APA format. There will be a short multiple choice quiz on APA format on February 19.

Course grade:

There are a total of 100 points that can be earned in this course. Each exam will count for 20 points. You will write 3 APA style papers. The first will be worth 5 points, the second worth 10 points and the third 15 points. The inclass worksheet from the second class period is worth 5 points. Turning in the data for the third lab is worth 5 points. Your final grade for the course will be based on the total number of points you earn. Specifically, the values are 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, below 60 = F.

Late Work Policy:

Please note: I expect, perhaps as a result of my management background, your best performance on exams and things turned in when they're due. I'll help you prepare for tests and papers as much as possible before they're due, but when the time comes, I expect you to be prepared. All assignments have a due date and I **will not** accept late work without prior arrangements. If you know in advance about *any* situation that would interfere with your ability to meet a deadline (e.g., excused sporting or other campus events, scheduled business travel), see me as soon as possible **before** the deadline. I will be willing to move paper deadlines slightly to accommodate legitimate needs. If your conflict is with an exam date, you may take the test early, provided you meet the conditions outlined in the previous sentence. If something unforeseeable comes up on the day an assignment is due (e.g., a medical emergency, death in the family), please contact me as soon as possible after the incident to discuss rescheduling options. Be aware that I may require you to document the cause of any rescheduling of exams or papers.

Attendance:

This class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:25 to 1:40. Because material from my lectures and any in-class demonstrations will be included on the exams, regular attendance is extremely important for this class. While there are no specific penalties for not attending class, **you** are responsible for information missed during an absence from class and you are responsible for arranging to make up missed material (see page 50 of the University Catalog and the Late Work Policy above).

Academic Integrity Policy:

From the 2007-2009 University Catalog, page 54:

Cheating in all its forms, including plagiarism and cheating on visual work, is considered an academic matter to be controlled and acted upon by the individual faculty member.

Students guilty of academic dishonesty on examinations in any course shall receive, as minimum penalty, a grade of F in that course. Such action shall be taken by the instructor, with written notification to the appropriate University administrators. Repeated offenses shall subject the student to suspension or dismissal from the University. Students involved in facilitating the academic dishonesty among others, such as the unauthorized dissemination of examination materials, will be subject to disciplinary action beyond that called for by their own cheating in the course.

In this class, you must work as an individual on papers and examinations. You may (and actually are encouraged to) form study groups and share notes, books, etc. when preparing for an exam, but you must work alone and without any of these resources when taking an exam. When writing papers, avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as “the act of stealing and using, as one’s own, the ideas, or the expression of the ideas of another.” This includes not only direct copying of the exact words another author used, but paraphrases of the ideas of another author without properly crediting the original. If you plagiarise on any of the papers for this course, you will receive a grade of F for the course.



Communication:

My intent is to be as accessible to you as possible. Please feel free to stop by my office any time. I’m available by phone whenever I’m in my office and you can leave voice mail if I’m not. If you need quicker response times (especially on weekends), use email. I usually check my email several times everyday, even on weekends. Finally, check the course WebCT site as copies of most course materials will be made available there.

NOTICE **Email policy**

I do not discuss official business (e.g., coursework, course grades, academic advising, etc.) via email unless you use your Shepherd email address. This is mostly for the protection of your privacy. If, for instance, I get an email signed Mary Smith requesting sensitive information about her progress in my class, but it comes from hotgurl46@aol.com, I have no way of knowing whether it really is from Mary Smith or someone else.



Teaching philosophy:

Listed here are some things that I feel you should know about how I teach and what my goals for the course are. I’ll also try to provide some tips for improving your performance in the course.

- 1) As stated previously, one of my goals for this course is not only to introduce you to the field of learning, but also to show you how questions about learning can be answered using the experimental method. We’re going to cover the material on two levels: the specifics of individual studies and a broad view of how the studies relate to one another.
 - You can’t achieve the second level by dealing with the material only in bits and pieces. You need step back from the individual studies and build a framework to tie the pieces together. Look for how the studies relate to one another, similarities in procedure, etc. Very often in this course the common theme will be the search for general principles of learning.
 - Utilize my office hours if you have questions that I cannot answer in class. In general, I’ll answer as many questions as possible during class time, but we have a great deal of material to cover and questions specific to a single student are better answered outside of class. If my office hours conflict with another commitment, I will schedule appointments for other times.

- Answer the questions on the study guides. When I create an exam, I simply cut and paste questions from the study guides. If you can answer the study questions, you should do fine on the exams.
- 2) The ability to read and write are fundamental to our ability to think and reason. As a result, I do pay attention to grammar and spelling in written work. I will relax the standards somewhat on exams due to the time pressure, but exam questions should still be answered in complete, well-formed sentences. Your papers should be typed, spell-checked, and proofread before they are turned in.
 - 3) I do expect you to know the names and dates associated with the key studies we discuss. This is *not* just an exercise in cruelty on my part. Hirsch (1987) presented the notion of cultural literacy, the notion that it is possible to be fluent in a language and still not be able to read and understand a newspaper or magazine article in that language without knowing something of the culture. For instance, if I mention “Juliette on the balcony” to someone versed in Western culture, certain ideas are conveyed that someone not familiar with Shakespeare would miss entirely. Similarly, if I say Tinklepaugh (1928) to an experimental psychologist, meaning is conveyed that would take me pages to spell out.
 - 4) Finally, I do not curve grades. The fundamental assumption of curving is that each class is a representative sample of the population. If you think about this issue using what you learned about sampling in statistics, you’ll realize that this assumption is false.

Study Tips

- 1) Rote memorization is not effective. Don’t simply try to memorize the book or your lecture notes.
- 2) Organization is a powerful aid to memory. For individual studies, keep the purpose of the study in mind. Look for how individual studies relate to one another. This brings me to the next point...
- 3) Active processing on the part of the learner is essential. Take notes, rearrange the notes later, answer the study questions, quiz a classmate (and get quizzed in turn).
- 4) Generating and answering your own questions has been shown to improve exam performance.
- 5) Multiple small study sessions spaced out over a period of time are more effective than a single, massive study session.