

# Spring 2014

## 01:830:311:01 – Conditioning and Learning

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:20 – 3:20 AM, TIL 232

Instructor

Teaching Assistant

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and by appointment.

### Textbook:

Domjan, M. (2010). *The Principles of Learning and Behavior*. (7th Edition). Cengage Learning. ISBN 9781285088563.

To be available at New Jersey Books, 37 Easton Avenue, New Brunswick. Copies may also be available at Barnes & Noble.

A copy of the book will be on reserve at the Kilmer Area Library.

### About Conditioning and Learning – Course Goals:

In this course we will discuss the basic principles of how we influence behavior. We will cover the major paradigms, but will also spend time looking at some "niche" research showing how the classic methods can be refined to create more "real world" situations. This should help you see how you can apply the information discussed in the course to situations outside the classroom. You should also improve your critical thinking skills as a result of taking this course.

### Exams and Grading:

You are expected to comply with Rutgers' [Academic Integrity Policy](#). Early in the semester there will be an

online quiz in which you indicate that you have read the Syllabus and agree to its terms, including compliance with the Academic Integrity Policy. This quiz does not count toward your grade, however you must agree to these terms in order to receive your scores.

There will be three non-cumulative exams based on the text and other materials presented in class.

The first two exams will consist of two parts: 40 multiple choice questions, worth 80% of the grade for that exam, and an essay question worth 20% of your grade for that exam. One week prior to each exam, four essay questions will be posted online. Two of those questions will be selected for the exam; you will be required to answer either one of them in class. A sample essay question and answer will be posted before the first exam to give you some guidance as to what is expected. The third exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions.

You are responsible for bringing pencils with erasers to each exam. You may bring a pen for the essay questions if you wish. You must also bring your Rutgers ID Card to the exam.

Exam scores will be posted on the PostEm tab on sakai. Whenever scores are posted, the grade scale will be updated so that the letter grade you see corresponds to your current grade based on the total number of points (including extra credit) you have earned.

If you have questions about your score on a Multiple Choice exam, you can discuss them with Dr. Ackroff. If you have a question about your essay questions, you must discuss it with your Teaching Assistant. In either case, you should do this before the next exam.

If you have a schedule conflict with an exam, you may be allowed to take a makeup exam at the discretion of the instructor. You must notify the instructor of your absence **before** the exam is given in order to be allowed to take a makeup. If you miss an exam, you will be allowed to take a makeup exam only if you provide documentation for a valid reason for missing the exam. For absences due to colds, etc., a note from your Health Center or doctor will be acceptable. For more serious issues such as a death in the family or serious health or personal issues, you may present a note from your Dean's office verifying that you missed the exam due to an excused absence. This note should also indicate a reasonable time frame in which you will be able to make up the exam. You should give this note to the instructor within 1 week of your return to class. If you do not have a valid reason for missing an exam, you **may** be allowed to take a makeup exam, but your score will be reduced by 15%.

If an exam is cancelled or postponed on the day of the exam, there will be a member of the Psychology Department in the room at the scheduled time to make the announcement. Notices posted on doors or the blackboard are likely to be hoaxes.

Grading in this course works differently from most other courses. Final grades will be determined by the total number of points you score on the Multiple Choice exams and essay questions.

At the end of the semester, the point total for all exams is computed for each student, and an absolute frequency distribution is made. The top 2 or 3% of the students scores are not used to compute grades. The highest remaining point total is used as the base for computing students' grades.

- Students whose point total is 85.00% or more of the base receive A grades.
- Students whose point total is 83.00 to 84.99% of the base receive B+ grades.

- Students whose point total is 75.00 to 82.99% of the base receive B grades.
- Students whose point total is 73.00 to 74.99% of the base receive C+ grades.
- Students whose point total is 60.00 to 72.99% of the base receive C grades.
- Students whose point total is 50.00 to 59.99% of the base receive D grades.

Extra credit points (see below) are added to the total number of points you score after the cutoffs have been determined.

## Practice Exams

Practice Exams will be made available on sakai. There is a Long Form and Short Form for each exam. The Long Practice Exam is involved in Extra Credit (see below). It will be available for several days before the exam, after all the material has been covered in class. After that, the Short Practice Exam will be available until shortly before the actual exam. The content-related questions are the same on both exams. You may take the Long Practice Exam only once; you may take the Short Practice Exam as often as you wish.

## Extra Credit:

You can earn 2 extra credit points for each exam. In order to do this, you must take the Long Practice Exam and score at least 70%, **and** answer two extra questions on the actual exam. (Half of the questions on the Long Practice Exam ask you how confident you are in your answers; you automatically get them right just for answering them. This means you only have to answer 40% of the content-related questions correctly to get a total of 70% on the exam.) The two questions on the actual exam ask you how well you think you did, and how confident you are in your estimate. You don't have to predict your score correctly, but you must answer these questions in order to receive extra credit.

Note that these are the only opportunities available for extra credit.

## Attendance and Correspondence Policies:

- **Attendance:** You should attend all meetings of all of your classes. My lectures are based on the material in the assigned readings, but may also cover material not discussed in the readings. You are responsible for all of this material.

If you arrive late or must leave before class is over, please sit near a door and try to be as inconspicuous as possible. It is distracting to everyone to have people walking in and out of the classroom during class.

Classes are held according to the schedule below as long as the University is open. If the weather appears to be threatening, you can check the [Campus Operating Status](#) here.

If a class is cancelled, postponed, or moved on the day of class, there will be a member of the Psychology Department in the room at the scheduled time to make the announcement. Notices posted on doors or the blackboard are likely to be hoaxes.

- **Classroom Etiquette:** Please turn off all cell phones, etc., before class begins.

Please note that you may not make any type of recording without my written consent.

If you wish to use a laptop computer to take notes, that is fine. If you wish to use a laptop computer to surf the web, play games, IM your friends, etc., I would suggest you go to the nearest Student Center. This advice also applies to having side discussions with your classmates, reading newspapers, doing puzzles, etc.

- **Online Etiquette:** The Chat Room on sakai is provided for you to exchange course-related information.
  - Arranging study groups, asking (and answering) questions about the course material, asking for help with notes you may have missed are all legitimate uses of the Chat Room.
  - Making comments about others or their posts is not. See the [University Policy](#) if you are unsure of what's acceptable.
  - You may not discuss the Multiple Choice exam questions and/or answers in the Chat Room.
  - You may discuss questions and answers from the **Short** Practice Exams, but not the Long Practice Exams.

Any violation of this policy will result in your loss of access to **ALL** sakai resources.

- **Questions:** I encourage you to ask questions during class. If something is unclear, or if you have a question related to the material being discussed, please ask your question then. Chances are that some of your classmates would also like some additional discussion of the topic.
- **Email:** I try to answer email promptly. Having said that,
  - Please use a Subject that gives me some idea what you are writing about. This is especially important if you send mail from an account other than eden. Mail from sexgoddess@aol.com with a subject of "hello" is likely to be considered spam and deleted unread.
  - If you ask me a question whose answer is on the course web page or Syllabus, my reply is likely to say that.
  - If you ask me a question about your standing in the course, please include your name and which course and section you are enrolled in.
  - Please re-read the section on "Questions" above. I realize that there are times when you are reviewing notes after class and/or before an exam when you will discover that you have a question. But it is in everyone's best interest for you to ask your questions in class, rather than after the fact, if you have a question while class is in session.
  - You are responsible for any announcements, etc., I send to the class via email.

# Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Monday, January 20	(No Class)	
Wednesday, January 22	Course Introduction	
Monday, January 27	Background and Rationale for Studying Conditioning and Learning	Chapter 1
Wednesday, January 29	Elicited Behavior, Habituation, and Sensitization	Chapter 2
Monday, February 3	Classical Conditioning: Foundations	Chapter 3
Wednesday, February 5	Chapter 3 cont'd; Autonomic Conditioning	
Monday, February 10	Classical Conditioning: Mechanisms	Chapter 4
Wednesday, February 12	Theories of Learning	
Monday, February 17	Motor Learning	
Wednesday, February 19	Review	
Monday, February 24	<b>EXAM I</b>	Chapters 1 - 4 and supplementary material
Wednesday, February 26	Instrumental Conditioning: Foundations	Chapter 5
Monday, March 3	Applications of Instrumental Conditioning	
Wednesday, March 5	Schedules of Reinforcement and Choice Behavior; Decision Making	Chapter 6
	New Yorker article on Instrumental Conditioning: Motivational Mechanisms	Chapter 7
Wednesday, March 12	Stimulus Control of Behavior	Chapter 8
Monday, March 17	No Class -- Spring Break	
Wednesday, March 19		
Monday, March 24	Extinction of Conditioned Behavior	Chapter 9
Wednesday, March 26	Reminding and Forgetting	
Monday, March 31	Optimal Foraging Theory	
Wednesday, April 2	Dietary Selection	
Monday, April 7	Review	
Wednesday, April 9	<b>EXAM II</b>	Chapters 5 - 9 and supplementary material

Monday, April 14	(No Class)	
Wednesday, April 16	Aversive Control: Avoidance and Punishment	Chapter 10
Monday, April 21	Comparative Cognition I: Memory Mechanisms	Chapter 11
Wednesday, April 23	Comparative Cognition II: Special Topics	Chapter 12
Monday, April 28	Infant Learning	
Wednesday, April 30	Human Memory and Language	
Monday, May 5	Review	
Tuesday, May 13	<b>EXAM III</b> , 12:00 - 1:20 PM	Chapters 10 - 12 and supplementary material

[Rules for Final Exam Conflicts](#)

I consider the course materials used for lecture content and the course web page to be my personal intellectual property or the intellectual property of other parties, as identified. I view the sale or purchase of these materials as a violation of copyright laws. You may not post these materials or derivative materials such as study guides to any web site. Violation of this policy will result in loss of access to the course on sakai. You may not record lectures and/or classroom discussion without my express written consent.

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