

Learning Processes [830:311]



What controls (human!) behavior?

Spring 2019

William Levine Hall – Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy Building, Room 111
(Lecture Hall PH111, Bldg. #3750 on rumaps.rutgers.edu)
Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:40pm-3:00pm

Instructor: Dr. Kasia Bieszczad
Office: Psychology Building Room 327
Direct email: kasia.bie@rutgers.edu ←for individual grade-related questions, or scheduling office hours

Office Hours: Mondays or Wednesdays by appointment

TA: Michelle Rosenthal
Office hour: Mondays from 12pm-1pm in the Psychology Building Room 319
Direct email: michelle.c.rosenthal@rutgers.edu

Grading: You will receive a letter grade (worth your 3 credits) based upon in-class participation (this includes mandatory attendance!) and evaluations (e.g., pop-quizzes, 3 Midterm Exams & peer-evaluations), blog entries (~2/month), and team projects (built from your TeamWork Assignments) leading to a talk presented to class in a 12-15 minute Powerpoint-type presentation. *There will be no Final Exam.*

I. Rationale:

This course is designed to introduce you to the science of behavior. How can we study behavior? How can we understand the causes of behavior? Over a century of research in behavioral psychology has established tools and techniques that have revealed essential “rules” of behavior that relate to innate processes, learning processes, and motivational processes.

II. Course Aims and Outcomes:

You already have a fundamental understanding of how the brain works by taking your pre-requisite psychology and neuroscience courses. This course takes your existing knowledge about the brain to understand how it connects what we *experience* with how we *behave*. Along the way, you will discover the scientific field of *behavioral psychology* and its importance in understanding modern-day and real-world scenarios in education, sports, music, depression, addiction, violence, anxiety, PTSD and stress, Alzheimer’s and memory, language, intelligent machines, marketing, robotics and more. You will also discover how *behavioral psychology* can be a gateway for understanding how individuals of the same species can behave so differently and identifying the tools that we may use to alter the course of behaviors now and over a lifetime.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, you will:

- Develop independent learning strategies and study habits
- Review concepts and current understanding of brain organization and neural function
- Develop an understanding of how the physical features of the natural environment shape our behavior
- Develop an appreciation of the origins and lawfulness of behavior and the factors that contribute to *changes* in behavior
- Develop the ability to think logically and analytically about behavior and why it *changes*
- Develop an appreciation for research using animals that helps us better understand the biological basis of behavior and its relationship to human behavior
- Trace citations from assigned readings to their primary sources at the library or online resources (e.g., PubMed.gov)
- Develop skills for teamwork
- Learn how to evaluate and argue your peers using constructive criticism and logic
- Construct and write creative highlights from each week's class meetings in a prompted blog
- Develop an appreciation of the history of science, classic techniques and their application to modern day problems
- Apply the content discussed in class and in blogs to real situations outside the classroom including therapeutics, study habits, and an empathy for those with behavioral disorders

III. Format and Procedures:

*You can earn up to **1000 points** (i.e., 100%) by activities completed in this course, as follows:*

Participation (100 points): Attendance, quizzes, and your overall effortfulness in class discussions.

Bi-Monthly Blog (100 points): Each week, you will be given a prompt by me. Use this prompt to fuel a blog entry (think of this as a diary for this course, and a way to practice answering questions in writing) to reflect on topics and interpretations of what you learned in class and in your readings.

Mid-Term Exam I, II, III. (200 points each; for a total of 600 points): These will test your critical thinking skills – not just the retention of facts, ideas, and controversies discussed in class between the dates of each test. Focus will be to test how you think, more than how much information you can regurgitate on an exam. However, you will be expected to support statements with evidence from literature and your research. The format will be several multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and/or short-answer essay questions. Midterms will be *non-cumulative*.

TeamWork Assignments & Presentation (200 points): Throughout the course, you will be working in Teams (of approx. 6 members) to prepare to present (in 15 min.) a real-world example of a learning process and/or rule to the class in the final weeks of our class meetings. *Details to follow.*

Final Exam (0 points): There will be no final exam, but you will have many interim tests (Midterms).

Some other important things to know:

Late assignments: Assignments *not* handed in before the beginning of lecture at 6:05 pm are considered LATE – no exceptions! Submitting your work any time after this on the same day will result in a 10% penalty. Each day after will result in a further 20% penalty. Late work is to be submitted to office with your name and the date.

Class Absences: Attendance is mandatory, so any extenuating circumstances for absences must be recorded in <http://sims.rutgers.edu> to determine whether course credit can be received.

Academic Dishonesty: Please don't even try it. You are welcome to discuss ideas and concepts with your peers but each report must be written individually. If there is reason to believe that any part of your work is not your own, you will receive a ZERO for that report. Any cheating and plagiarism will not be taken lightly and could even result in automatic failure of the course. All writing assignments WILL be rigorously checked for plagiarism (e.g., TurnItIn.com). Please consult with me directly concerning any questions or concerns.

Class Format ...

- 1:40 pm Class begins. Hand in any and all assignments – add your name, date and Student ID# please!
- 1:45 pm Door closes and lecture begins. If I decide that there is a pop-quiz that day, or if there is a scheduled Midterm Exam, then it will begin at 1:45 pm.
- 2:40 pm-ish Wrap-up classroom discussion, sharing ideas, recent research discoveries, “hot news” items, and time for TeamWork.

Be sure to check the online mailing list archive and Sakai regularly. Any relevant classmate emails to learn@sakai.rutgers.edu will be archived–so no excuses for not getting my emails due to inbox errors or whatever. Sakai is also where your Prompted Blog Entries should be submitted every week, so make a habit to keep up to date on Sakai. Its Easy!

IV. My Assumptions:

You are encouraged to ask questions and discuss experiments, ideas and your papers openly among your peers, classmates, and professor. We are all here for you and for each other – so be inquisitive! It will only make the class that much better. I have essentially one general assumption: that the most important thing we need to do as researchers is IDENTIFY ASSUMPTIONS. We all have deeply engrained ideas about how the world, including the brain and how our behavior works. Why?

The point of this class is to **ASK “HOW?” & THEN, “WHY?”** I will also mention that this class centers on a behavioral basis of psychology, which assumes a biological basis. So, a core idea of the class is that the processes of the mind that control behavior are based in the biology of the body and brain.

Please do come and see me if you want to chat about the topics covered in class, or if something didn't make sense in lecture and/or discussion. One route for this kind of communication is via your weekly Blog. The next best way to contact me is by email: kasia.bie@rutgers.edu to set up an Office Hours appointment. When coming to office hours, have questions ready and if at all possible, email me your questions before hand so I can be better prepared to help out. The more you ask and we discuss, the more the benefit for everyone!

V. Course Requirements:

The tasks and assignments are aligned with the learning outcomes in skills, knowledge, attitudes and values I hope you will leave the course with.

1. Class attendance and participation: Please don't be late to class and be in attendance every time. Our time is short and swift in this face-paced format. If you miss a class meeting, you will still be responsible for material covered in class, but you will miss that day's participation points and any points awarded for assignments, quizzes and/or midterms. This is truly a discussion-based class,

which means that it will be most enjoyable and rewarding if we are all there to chat about the topics and issues covered over the course of the semester. *Ask questions. Talk to each other.*

2. Course readings:

(a) Required text: *The Principles of Learning and Behavior, 7th Edition (or later)*. By Michael Domjan (Cengage Learning, 2010; 2015)

*****You may buy this text as an eBook online at: www.cengagebrain.com for ~\$30, which gives you immediate access to the text for the semester.*****

(b) Any additional background readings, links to more (text)books of interest, and classic papers in behavioral psychology, which will be made available on the Sakai website.

VI. Grading Procedures:

Grades will be based on:

(a) In-class participation (which requires attendance!)	[10% or 100 points]
(b) Prompted Blog (FIVE in total count towards grade)	[10% or 100 points]
(c) Mid-terms I, II, & III.	[60% or 600 points]
(d) TeamWork presentation	[20% or 200 points]
TOTAL:	100% or 1000 points

VII. Academic Integrity:

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For this course, collaboration is allowed in the following instances: *research strategies, peer-review of drafts of teamwork projects, peer-review of presentations or other instances based upon special requests and my approval.*

Of course, you are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students, even to give ideas of which historical figures to select for your term paper. You can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, online forums, a diskette, or a hard paper copy.

Please ask me if you would like assistance in appropriate ways to cite previously published work. That's one great reason to schedule an office hour appointment with me!

And visit <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students> for info and useful links.

Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied could both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of the University Code of Student Conduct can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. The risk really isn't worth it.

During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during the examinations, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any collaborative behavior during the examination will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

VIII. Accommodations for students with disabilities:

In compliance with the Rutgers University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first two weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with the RU Office of Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations and provide me with appropriate documentation. We will be able to make arrangements for you, no problem!

IX. Extra Credit

There will be one opportunity for extra credit per month, called “*Hot News*” in Learning Processes, which we will discuss during our first class meeting. Each instance of participation in this extra credit activity will be for a total of 10 extra points added to your final total accumulated points out of 1000pts (as described in **VI. Grading Procedures**).

X. Inclusivity Statement:

We understand that our members represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The Psychology Department is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value each other’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the Rutgers U. community

Note: This syllabus is our contract, student-to-teacher and teacher-to-student, that you and I will commit to this course with integrity, honesty, enthusiasm and an open mind to new ideas and various points of view. We will treat each other and our classmates with respect and patience and remember to listen as much as we speak.

Signed, KMB 1/15/2019

Signed, _____

XI. Course Schedule

[Note that you will be keeping a blog; approx. two per month, due by Sunday; for a total of 6 blogs.]

Topics	Weekly Readings	Learning Goals	TeamWork
Tues. Jan 22 Welcome to Learning Processes Thurs. Jan 24	Our class syllabus & <i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior</i> - Preface & Chapter 1.	To understand <i>why</i> we study learning & behavior. General overview of course, expectations, and an intro to our Sakai Website. And also... a general meet-n-greet!	1. Pick your "team" for your TeamWork Class Presentation held on the last four days of classes. 2. Assignment instructions and initial brainstorming.
Tues. Jan 29 <u>Blog entries #1.</u> Weekly entries will be due at the end of the week to Sakai by Sunday but feel free to submit your blog any time earlier during the week. Thurs. Jan 31	<i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior</i> - Chapter 2.	To begin to understand the relationship between a "stimulus" and a "response".	Assignment: "Preview" Chapters 11 & 12 to see how complex behaviors might be reduced to simple models. Start thinking about a presentation topic.
Tues. Feb 5 Thurs. Feb 7	<i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior</i> - Chapter 3.	To begin to understand the relationship between a "stimulus" and the <i>change</i> in a "response".	Assignment: Decide on topic & Research time (A). <i>Overview</i>
Tues. Feb 12 Thurs. Feb 14 <u>Blog entries #2.</u>	<i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior</i> - Chapter 4.	To begin to understand the <i>rules</i> that change the "response" to a "stimulus".	Assignment: Research time (B). <i>Journal Article 1.</i>
Tues. Feb 19 Midterm Exam I. Thurs. Feb 21	<i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior</i> - Chapter 5.	To identify why we use "instruments" to understand the rules that change a "response" to a "stimulus".	Assignment: Research time (C). <i>Journal Article 2.</i>
Tues. Feb 26 <u>Blog entries #3.</u> Thurs. Feb 28	<i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior</i> - Chapter 6.	To understand what "instruments" have revealed about behavioral control.	Assignment: Create outline of presentation in bullet point format.
Tues. Mar 5 Thurs. Mar 7	<i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior</i> - Chapter 7.	To begin to see the how the same behavior can be interpreted in different ways; and how theories can be useful for science.	Assignment: Design in-classroom activity for peers to demo your presentation topic.
Tues. Mar 12 <u>Blog entries #4.</u> Thurs. Mar 14	<i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior</i> - Chapter 8.	To begin to understand how different "stimuli" interact in the control of a "response".	Assignment: Decide on & plan your presentation platform from outline; start choosing images, graphs, etc., to include in the presentation.

SPRING BREAK is Sat. Mar 16 th to Sun. Mar 24 th			
<p>Tues. Mar 26</p> <p><i>Midterm Exam II.</i></p> <p>Thurs. Mar 28</p>	<p><i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior - Chapter 9.</i></p>	<p>To understand how some acquired behaviors can seem to “disappear”.</p>	<p>Assignment: Plan out the presentation, assign roles for speaking, and the classroom activity.</p>
<p>Tues. April 2 <u>Blog entries #5.</u></p> <p>Thurs. April 4</p>	<p><i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior - Chapter 10.</i></p>	<p>To understand the differences between “approach” behaviors and “avoidance” behaviors.</p>	<p>Assignment: Finish your ~12-15 presentation slides (e.g., in PPT, Keynote, Prezi).</p>
<p>Tues. April 9</p> <p>Thurs. April 11</p>	<p><i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior - Chapter 11.</i></p>	<p>To continue to identify how animal behaviors, including conditioned behaviors, can help us understand all brains and behaviors—even in humans.</p>	<p>Assignment: Polish up your ~12-15 presentation slides and finish planning out the speaking/speaker/class activity plan.</p>
<p>Tues. April 16 <u>Blog entries #6.</u></p> <p>Thurs. April 18</p> <p><i>Midterm Exam III.</i></p>	<p><i>The Principles of Learning and Behavior - Chapter 12.</i></p>	<p>Your turn! Real-life examples of conditioning, learning, and rules on behavioral control.</p>	<p>Assignment: Practice speaking in preparation for giving your presentation.</p> <p><i>Anticipate questions that you may be asked by your peers after your talk!</i></p>
<p>Tues. April 23</p> <p>Thurs. April 25</p>	<p>Events TBA</p>		<p>TeamWork Presentations Day #1, #2</p>
<p>Tues. April 30</p> <p>Thurs. May 2</p>	<p>Events TBA</p>		<p>TeamWork Presentations Day #3, #4</p>
READING DAYS are Tues. May 7 th and Wed. May 8 th			
<p>Thurs. May 9 - Wed. May 15</p> <p><i>Final Exam Week.</i></p>			<p>No Final Exam</p> <p>Ask about an “extra” Extra Credit Assignment: Dr. B. will announce this opportunity during the last week of class. It will be due on Tues. May 14th.</p>
<p>Fri. May 17th ~Final Grade Due to Rutgers~</p>		<p>Points earned for each assignment/test/etc. will be posted to Sakai <i>a.s.a.p.</i> after test dates and deadlines throughout the session. Your final grade will be calculated using a regular undergraduate Rutgers letter-grade scale (no minuses) from the 1000pts total that you earn from your work and classroom efforts.</p>	

XII. Additional Resources

SAFETY: If you feel an individual might be a threat to him/herself or others, contact the number for Public Safety (732-932-7211) immediately and alert the Professor. Campus Police can be reached at (732-445-7111).

CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR MISSED CLASSES: In the event of a student absence, the student is required to report his/her absence on <https://sims.rutgers.edu>. In the case of multiple missed classes beyond reason, a makeup assignment will be agreed upon between the Student and Professor to account for missed classroom time. For more information on our course Contingency Plan in particular circumstances, please see the Sakai Class website.

Just In Case Web App <http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884

17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 <http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu>

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181

3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 <http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu>

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848---932---1181.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555

<http://www.scarletlisteners.com>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

**For further information or to discuss specific questions, please post to your blog,
or check our class Sakai website.**

**Email kasia.bie@rutgers.edu to schedule
an Office Hours appointment on a Monday.**