San José State University
Department of Psychology
Psychology 155, Human Learning, Section 80, Spring 2024

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Greg Savage, M.A.
Office Location:	Online (Zoom)
Telephone:	408-924-5648
Email:	Gregory.Savage@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM
Class Days/Time:	Monday and Wednesday from 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM
Classroom:	Online (Zoom)
Prerequisites:	None

Course Description

Through learning, humans and animals share a capacity to adapt to ever changing demands in the environment. Attempts to understand these processes form a cornerstone of experimental psychology. Theories from this basic research have contributed to applications and further theory development in many other areas of psychology (e.g. clinical, social and education).

PSYC 155 is an introduction to the study of learning and behavior and focuses on the Behavioral Perspective as a way of improving our understanding of human behavior and how it is shaped. The course will focus on two types of learning: Classical and Operant conditioning. The material is intellectually challenging at times, but well worth the effort required to learn to think like a Behaviorist!

Course Format

This course follows an online synchronous format with lectures, discussions, and activities taking place during scheduled Zoom meetings. Please see the course schedule for specific due dates.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize the historical influences in the field that led to contemporary theories of learning

2. Demonstrate knowledge of research methods used to investigate learning processes in human and nonhuman animals

3. Explain behavioral procedures and assays used for studying learning processes in human and nonhuman animals

4. Understand and appreciate the ethical use of animals in behavioral research

5. Demonstrate knowledge of and provide examples of the basic and complex processes involved in classical conditioning

6. Demonstrate knowledge of and provide examples of the basic and complex processes involved in operant conditioning

7. Demonstrate knowledge of and provide examples of the basic and complex processes involved in observational (social) learning

8. Demonstrate knowledge of and provide examples of practical applications of learning and memory concepts to human and nonhuman behaviors.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements…

PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2 – Research Methods in Psychology – Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology – Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

PLO4 – Application of Psychology – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Recommended Texts/Readings

Textbook

Myers, A., & Hansen, C. H. (2017). Introduction to Learning and Behavior (5th ed.). Belmont, CA:
      Wadsworth Cengage.
ISBN number: 978-1-305-65294-1

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

Students will need to have reliable internet access outside of class.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Exams:

One midterm exam and one non-cumulative final exam will take place during the semester.

Each exam will include multiple choice questions and short essay questions.

Each exam will be open notes and open book.

Each exam will be a Word file posted under Files that students will have one week to complete.

Exams need to be completed individually and uploaded to Canvas by the due date.

Each exam will lose 10% of credit for each hour that it is late.

Cheating on exams will not be tolerated. Please refer to the section on Academic Dishonesty for information on the consequences of cheating.

Activities:

On certain Wednesdays during the semester, students will complete an in-class activity. Each in-class activity will have a set of directions that will be posted on Canvas at least one full day before the day of the activity. On each day in which we complete an in-class activity, I will begin class with an explanation of the activity. We will then spend the remaining class time working on the activity. Depending on the day, we might work on the activity as an entire class working together, we might work on the activity with students assigned to small groups, and we might work on the activity with students working individually.

Each in-class activity will provide you with an opportunity to observe human learning in action. During an activity, you might conduct an experiment, participate in an experiment, perform a controlled observation, or perform a digital simulation of a learning process.

On each activity day, the activity will be due at midnight (by Canvas upload). Late activities will lose 10% of credit for each hour that they are late (until they are worth 50% credit).

Quizzes:

Each week, students will complete an online quiz on Canvas.

Each week on Wednesday, the quiz will be activated after class and will be open until Sunday at midnight.

Each quiz will be open-notes and open-book.

Each quiz will include multiple choice questions.

Each quiz will include questions on the current week's material and possibly review questions.

Each quiz will lose 10% of credit for each hour that it is late, and all quizzes that are submitted more than 5 hours late will have a 50% penalty.

Discussion Board Responses:

During the semester, each student will respond to 7 sets of discussion questions. Each discussion set will be posted on the Canvas discussion board and will include 3 questions.

In each discussion set, the first 2 questions will focus on material we have covered in lecture. These questions might include (but are not necessarily limited to) questions that ask you to describe your understanding of a certain topic, questions that ask you to analyze a real or hypothetical scenario presented in the question, and questions that ask you to provide examples of concepts.

The third question will ask you to pose a question about the current week's material or to attempt to answer another student's question.

Each week, you won't be able to see other students' answers to the first two questions before submitting your own answer. However, you will be able to see other students' answers to the third question.

Although you can talk about the questions with each other or look up information online to include in your answers, your answers need to show effort at putting information into your own words. Students won't receive credit for answers that are copied from another student or from the internet. If you have any questions about paraphrasing information, please send me an email or come to my office hours.

During each week that a discussion question set is due, your responses are due on Wednesday at 10:30 AM and will lose 10% of credit for each day that they are submitted late. Any discussion response that is more than 5 days late will receive a 50% penalty.

After submitting an answer to a discussion question, you will have until Sunday at midnight to earn partial credit by posting corrections to your original answer. If you make a correction, you will earn 50% credit for each piece of information that you successfully correct.

Please don't post a blank or incomplete response to gain access to other students' answers on the discussion board. If you do this, you will lose 50% of credit for each piece of information that you post after having access to other students' answers (because it will be considered a correction to your original answer).

Note: "Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

Final Examination or Evaluation

The final exam will be a take home exam and will be similar in format to the midterm. The final exam will include multiple choice questions and short essay questions.

Grading Information

Exams:

Students' answers to multiple choice questions will be graded based on accuracy (i.e., whether they are answered correctly or incorrectly).

Students' answers to short answer questions will be graded using content rubrics.

Activities:

Each activity will be graded based on how thoroughly it is completed, effort, and accuracy (when appropriate).

If you ever experience difficulty while completing a certain activity, it is highly recommended that you ask for assistance. I will be able to assist students and check students' answers during class on activity days.

Quizzes:

Each student will have one attempt at each quiz.

On each quiz, you will receive 50% credit for each question that you answer incorrectly and a small amount of extra credit for each question that you answer correctly.

Each quiz is worth 2 points of credit. Therefore, you can calculate the number of points that each individual question is worth on a certain quiz by dividing 2 by the number of questions asked on that quiz.

Each quiz is worth 0.2 points of extra credit. Therefore, you can find the number of extra credit points that each question is worth on a certain quiz by dividing 0.2 by the number of questions asked on that quiz.

Discussion Board Responses:

Your answer to each discussion board question will be graded based on a rubric that is provided along with the question. These rubrics will provide information about required (or recommended) length and required content.

Determination of Grades

Your final grade will be based on the number of points that you earn during the semester. The following table provides a breakdown of the 84 points that you can earn during the semester.

Quizzes (13 total)- 26 points
Activities (5 total)- 10 points
Discussion Board Responses (7 total) – 14 points
Exam 1 – 17 points
Exam 2 - 17 points

Grading Scale:

A- 90 – 100%
B – 80 – 89%
C – 70 – 79%
D – 60 – 69%
F – 59% and below

Late Work:

Each student will be allowed to submit up to two of each type of assignment late with only 20% of the typical late penalty. All late work must be submitted by the deadline of the final exam.

Classroom Protocol

Class Sessions: Class sessions will include (but might not be limited to) lectures, activities, and time spent working on discussion questions.

Attendance: Attending class on a lecture day is important so that you can receive explanations and examples of concepts while having the opportunity to ask questions. Attending class on an activity day is important so that you receive guidance and support during the activity.

Arrival times: Please come to class on time if it is at all possible. Arriving late to class is distracting to other students and will cause you to miss information discussed in class.

Behavior: Please be respectful toward the other students in the class and me. Please be cooperative and non-disruptive during Zoom sessions. Please don't allow your microphone to produce distracting background noise.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/"

San Jose State University
Psychology 155: Human Learning, Section 80,
Spring Semester 2024,
Course Schedule

Course Schedule: This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. I will inform students of any changes made to the schedule through a Canvas announcement.

Week	Date	Topics	Deadlines
1	Wednesday Jan 24	Introduction to Course	None
2	Monday Jan 29 Wednesday Jan 31	Introduction (Ch. 1) Research Methods (Ch. 2)	None
3	Monday Feb 5 Wednesday Feb 7	Elicited Behaviors and Classical Conditioning (Ch. 3) Elicited Behaviors and Classical Conditioning (Ch. 3)	Sunday Feb 4 Quiz 1 due at midnight Wednesday Feb 7 Discussion Set 1 due at 10:30 AM
4	Monday Feb 12 Wednesday Feb 14	Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena and Various Complexities (Ch. 4) Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena and Various Complexities (Ch. 4)	Sunday Feb 11 Quiz 2 due at midnight Wednesday Feb 14 Discussion Set 2 due at 10:30 AM

5	Monday Feb 19	Classical Conditioning: Underlying Processes and Practical Applications (Ch. 5)	Sunday Feb 18 Quiz 3 due at midnight
	Wednesday Feb 21	Activity 1	Wednesday Feb 21 Activity 1 due at midnight
6	Monday Feb 26	Classical Conditioning: Underlying Processes and Practical Applications (Ch. 5)	Sunday Feb 25 Quiz 4 due at midnight
	Wednesday Feb 28	Operant Conditioning: Introduction (Ch. 6)	Wednesday Feb 28 Discussion Set 3 due at 10:30 AM
7	Monday March 4	Operant Conditioning: Introduction (Ch. 6)	Sunday March 3 Quiz 5 due at midnight
	Wednesday March 6	Activity 2	Wednesday March 6 Activity 2 due at midnight
8	Monday March 11	Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement (Ch. 7)	Sunday March 10 Quiz 6 due at midnight
	Wednesday March 13	No Class	Wednesday March 13 **Exam 1 due at midnight**
9	Monday March 18	Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement (Ch. 7)	Sunday March 17 Quiz 7 due at midnight
	Wednesday March 20	Extinction and Stimulus Control (Ch. 8)	Wednesday March 20 Discussion Set 4 due at 10:30 AM
10	Monday March 25	Extinction and Stimulus Control (Ch. 8)	Sunday March 24 Quiz 8 due at midnight
	Wednesday March 27	Activity 3	Wednesday March 27 Activity 3 due at midnight

11	Monday April 1	No Class (Spring Break)	None
	Wednesday April 3	No Class (Spring Break)	
12	Monday April 8	Escape, Avoidance, and Punishment (Ch. 9)	Sunday April 7 Quiz 9 due at midnight
	Wednesday April 10	Escape, Avoidance, and Punishment (Ch. 9)	Wednesday April 10 Discussion Set 5 due at 10:30 AM
13	Monday April 15	Choice, Matching, and Self-Control (Ch. 10)	Sunday April 14 Quiz 10 due at midnight
	Wednesday April 17	Choice, Matching, and Self-Control (Ch. 10)	Wednesday April 17 Discussion Set 6 due at 10:30 AM
14	Monday April 22	Biological Dispositions in Learning (Ch. 11)	Sunday April 21 Quiz 11 due at midnight
	Wednesday April 24	Activity 4	Wednesday April 24 Activity 4 due at midnight
15	Monday April 29	Biological Dispositions in Learning (Ch. 11)	Sunday April 28 Quiz 12 due at midnight
	Wednesday May 1	Observational Learning, Language,and Rule-Governed Behavior (Ch. 12)	Wednesday May 1 Discussion Set 7 due at 10:30 AM

16	Monday May 6	Observational Learning, Language,and Rule-Governed Behavior (Ch. 12)	Sunday May 5 Quiz 13 due at midnight
	Wednesday May 8	Activity 5	Wednesday May 8 Activity 5 due at midnight
17	Monday May 13	No Class	Thursday May 16 **Final Exam is due at midnight**