

PSYC302: Learning & Behavior

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Meet with me! Thus 12–1 pm
Office: BPS 1107B

Web: [course webpage](#)
Class Hours: T/TH 2:00–3:15
Classroom: HBK 0115

Contents

1	Course Description	2
2	Required Materials	2
3	Prerequisites	2
4	Course Objectives	2
5	Assessments & Activities	3
6	Grading Policy	5
7	Campus & Course Policies	6
8	Resilience, Academic Success, Basic Needs & Security	8
9	Commitment to Open Inquiry & Diversity	9
10	Course Outline	11

1 Course Description

'Learning' is typically conceptualized as the product of special training or formal instruction. However, the behavior of human and nonhuman animals is constantly modified through interactions with the environment, often in ways that are necessary for survival. These changes in behavior are caused by 'learning' as well. This course will focus on fundamental types of learning that occur without formal instruction. We will begin by covering the fundamentals of classical and instrumental conditioning as studied in a variety of species and then turn to more modern theories of learning. We will then explore how these principles influence diverse processes such as memory, attention, extinction, habituation, delayed gratification, punishment, avoidance, and in some cases, how they are implemented in the brain. In doing so we will consider how well different theories of learning apply to real life and inform our understanding of normal and sometimes, abnormal behavior. Throughout, we will focus on behavioral paradigms used in contemporary research on learning.

A note to students: I am open to being flexible should life events arise that make it hard for you to keep up with the class. Such events might include things happening to you personally or things happening to family members. Please know that I want to support you. To do this, though, I need to know about a problem when it starts, not after it has already derailed your ability to keep up with class. Letting your teaching team know sooner rather than later, is key. I am in a much better position to help you and make accommodations if you tell me when the problem arises. It is MUCH harder to do this if you wait until the end of the term. You can email us or visit office hours. I also encourage all of you to make your mental and physical health a priority. Please reach out to the [Counseling Center](#) and the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#) if you would like some support.

2 Required Materials

Michael P. Domjan The Principles of Learning and Behavior Sixth or seventh Edition. Wadsworth Cenage Learning Publishing. In addition, peer-reviewed scientific research papers may be discussed during the course. All information necessary to locate the articles will be made available.

Additionally, we will be using Turning Point clickers for course polling and feedback. You will first need to register an account with Turning Point. The subscription is already paid for by your tuition and fees. [Click here for information on how to register.](#) You can use a physical clicker or your phones. Note, cell phones must be put away when not in use for class polls as stated in the course policies.

3 Prerequisites

Prerequisites: PSYC100 or BSCI 105

4 Course Objectives

After taking this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. **Explain** types of learning, including classical and conditional, in a variety of species and identify behavioral paradigms in research used to assess and measure learning
2. **Apply** knowledge of learning principles to processes such as memory, attention, extinction, habituation, delayed gratification, punishment and avoidance.
3. **Evaluate** theories of learning and relate these theories to everyday life and society.
4. **Describe** at a basic level, how learning processes may be implemented in the nervous system

Psychology Program Learning Objectives

In addition to the specific course content learning goals, this course includes assessments and activities designed to help meet the learning objective's of the psychology major.

1. **Describe** key concepts, principles and themes in human and animal cognition.
2. **Use** scientific reasoning to interpret psychological phenomena
3. **Engage** in innovative and integrative thinking and problem solving

Course Assessments have been designed to meet the above learning objectives.

5 Assessments & Activities

Lecture structure

Lecture power points and recordings will be posted to ELMS. The course structure is based on research that in-class activities used during classroom time promotes learning and that small amounts of studying and review over time is more beneficial to learning than cramming (Dempster, 1988; Novak, 1990; Sisti, Glass & Shors, 2007). Lectures will include periods of traditional presentation of content material based on the assigned text as well as gathered from a variety of other textbooks and internet sources. Periods of class time will also be devoted to quizzes, worksheets, and discussions or clicker questions.

Active learning assignments

Once a week there will be several more difficult questions to solve based on the information from the chapter material covered that week. The purpose of these assessments is to give you a formative assessment to be sure you deeply understand the material and are prepared for more summative assessments (exams). They are to demonstrate what you have learned and what still needs to be developed. You then have an opportunity to build any knowledge or skills before an exam.

Mid-semester Haiku project

We spend several weeks discussing aspects of instrumental or operant conditioning. In this assignment, students will submit a topic discussed in class (topic must be approved by professor). They will then write a haiku (a short Japanese poem with three lines, the first line has 5 syllables, the second line 7 syllables and the third has 5 again) on their topic. The haiku will be accompanied by a 1/2 page to 1 page justification for the poem. The student should justify why they emphasized what they did and how their poem related to what we have learned. In class, students will share their haikus with the class and we will compare and contrast different aspects of instrumental conditioning.

Final project

Students will choose their topic for this project and receive approval from their professor. You are to create a resource explaining a complex concept discussed in the class to a general audience. This can be a video, an infographic, a cartoon or other visual medium (be sure to make your work [accessible](#)).

Exams

The intention of the exams are to assess your understanding of the material (reading and in-class) as well as your critical thinking. The exams will be directly tied to the course objectives and the specific learning objectives of the course. Exams will include a mixture of objective questions, including multiple choice, true or false, fill in the blank, as well as free response. Knowledge of both the lecture material and the book material is essential for successfully answering the exam questions, however I will not ask you anything that is not covered in lecture. Exams will be closed book, but you will only have 1 hour and 15 min (class time) to complete, so you must know the material. Questions are concept based and are not simple regurgitation of the material.

What I expect from you:

- Complete all activities in the modules keeping up with course content
- Communicate early and often if you find you are struggling in any way
- Check ELMS announcements and email at minimum every 24 hours
- Participate in class - lectures and discussions

What you can expect from me:

- Provide and post content in pages in the respective modules section
- Communicate course announcements, deadline reminders and pertinent information through ELMS announcements or email
- Check ELMS announcements and email between the hours of 8am and 9pm M-F
- Respond to email and discussion board questions within 24 hours, likely sooner

6 Grading Policy

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet in my office.

I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake I will immediately correct it. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and **within one week** of receiving the grade.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently. It is unethical to make exceptions for some and not others. **Grades will not be rounded up.** If you earn a 97.9%, you have earned an A in the course. Incomplete grades, which are awarded at the end of the semester, will not be given based on unsatisfactory performance. Students who are performing poorly should be mindful of the deadline to drop a course. You are encouraged to consult with me well in advance.

The following grading scheme will apply:

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	Letter Grade	Percentage Range	Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A ⁺	98.0 – 100%	C ⁺	77.0 – 79.9%	F	0 – 59.9%
A	94.0 – 97.9%	C	73.0 – 76.9%		
A ⁻	90.0 – 92.9%	C ⁻	70.0 – 72.9%		
B ⁺	87.0 – 89.9%	D ⁺	67.0 – 69.9%		
B	83.0 – 86.9%	D	63.0 – 66.9%		
B ⁻	80.0 – 82.9%	D ⁻	60.0 – 62.9%		

- **30%** of your grade will be determined by weekly learning assignments (3% each)
- **45%** of your grade will be determined by 3 in-class midterm exams (15% each)
- **15%** of your grade will be determined by mid semester project (15% each)
- **10%** of your grade will be determined by a final semester project (10% each)

Marking System

The University's marking system is as follows:

- A+, A, A- denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship
- B+, B, B- denotes good mastery of the subject and good scholarship

- C+, C, C- denotes acceptable mastery of the subject
- D+, D, D- denotes borderline understanding of the subject, marginal performance, and it does not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree
- F denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance

Make up and late assignments

Late assignments will be deducted 10% off per day late, starting immediately after the deadline and make up assessments will be given only for University approved reason. A self signed excused note maybe used once during the semester. Please refer to the most recent UMCP catalog for more details ([Course catalog](#)).

7 Campus & Course Policies

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Academic Integrity

The University is one of a small number of universities with a student- administered Code of Academic Integrity and an Honor Pledge. The Code prohibits students from cheating on exams and assignments. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing, copying another student's answers, bringing cheat notes in for the exam, etc. You will be asked to write the following signed statement on each examination or assignment: *I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received*

any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to abide by the University's Code of Academic Integrity which is printed in the Undergraduate Catalog (also see [Student Honor Council](#)). Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism) will not be tolerated. The definitions for these offenses are printed in the Code of Academic Integrity, and I urge you to familiarize yourselves with them. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and will be dealt with according to University policy. The Code of Academic Integrity is reprinted in full in the Undergraduate catalog for further information, to report Academic Dishonesty, or to inquire about serving on the Honor Council call 301-314-8204. Note that ignorance of the student conduct policy is not an accepted excuse for committing academic dishonesty. Issues relating to academic dishonesty will be sent to the Office of Student Conduct.

Masking Requirement

Additionally, for this semester, President Pines provided clear expectations to the University about the wearing of masks. Face coverings over the nose and mouth are required while you are indoors at all times. There are no exceptions. Students not wearing a mask will be given a warning and asked to wear one, or will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. Students who have additional issues with the mask expectation after a first warning will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for failure to comply with a directive of University officials. Note that CDC and University guidelines may change throughout the semester. Students should stay up to date on University and campus policies.

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Professional Conduct

Professional conduct is expected in this course, as we want you to learn and practice this conduct for your future careers. Additionally, in being professional you will be showing respect to the teachers as well as to your fellow students. You are expected to be respectful and courteous with your instructor and TAs both in and out of class. This entails: 1) Arriving to class on time, 2) Not using class time to check social networking websites, comics, instant messaging services, or other off-task, on-line behavior, 3) Not using class time to read or send text messages on your phone, and 4) Professional conduct when writing emails. Think of this last point as an opportunity to practice the kind of writing you will use when inquiring about job opportunities, communicating with your supervisor, and so forth.

Use of electronics in lectures

There is evidence that taking notes by hand improves recall and academic performance (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014) (see [here for summary](#)) but I also realize that some students have their preference. We will allow a trial run on using laptops in the course. If you are planning to take notes on a laptop, I will ask you to sit towards the back of class so that you do not potentially distract other students. If we find you are disrespecting course policy, you will receive one warning before being barred from using your electronic devices for the rest of the semester.

Additionally, we will be using clickers for the course. Students are permitted to use their cell phones to respond to course surveys and polls. However, these devices must be placed on silent and put away when not in use in the class.

We reserve the right to revoke electronic use (both the use of cell phone clickers and laptop use for the entire course if professional conduct cannot be maintained (see above).

Students with Disabilities

The course staff is committed to providing appropriate accommodation for students with recognized disabilities. If you have been evaluated by Disability Support Services (DSS) and qualify for specific services, **please inform me at the beginning of the semester**. If you think that you may qualify for some accommodation but have not yet been evaluated, please contact DSS at 301-314-7682 to arrange a consultation.

Religious Observances

The University System of Maryland policy “Assignments and Attendance on Dates of Religious Observance” provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. **It is the student’s responsibility to inform me in advance of any intended absences and late assignments for religious observances as soon as possible**. Please note that travel time is not an excused absence.

8 Resilience, Academic Success, Basic Needs & Security

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I will do whatever I can to help remove barriers to your success and encourage you to visit the following campus resources for additional help:

- Tutoring, general: tutoring.umd.edu
- Writing Center, for help with written assignments ter.ps/writing
- Student Resources go.umd.edu/assistance).
- Counseling Center - Includes DSS, learning assistance, & traditional counseling services counseling.umd.edu. (Note: I am a Responsible University Employee and any and all disclosures of different types of sexual misconduct disclosed to me I am obligated to report to the Title IX Office.)
- Academic Achievement Program - <http://www.aap.umd.edu> AAP provides academic and counseling services to promote the access and success of low income, first generation immigrant college students at the University of Maryland.
- Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct (Title IX Office)- <https://www.ocrsm.umd.edu/>

Most services free because you have already paid for it, and everyone needs help. I encourage all students to ask for help both in and outside of the classroom! Also see the following article encouraging students to visit office hours or make a one-on-one appointment with your professors: [Office hours](#)

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live and believe this may affect your performance in this course, please visit go.umd.edu/basic-needs for information

9 Commitment to Open Inquiry & Diversity

Positive class community and climate is important for everyone's personal and academic success in the course.

Students will be invited to share their thoughts in class and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one's statements with research findings is highly encouraged. In accordance with free speech statutes, speech that contains threats of violence is prohibited.

As a human, behavior-centered discipline, we value a strong understanding of diversity. Diversity refers to differences in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, abilities, class, nationality, and other factors. The Department of Psychology at the University of Maryland is committed to creating a respectful and affirming climate in which all students, staff, and faculty are inspired to achieve their full potential. We believe that actively fostering an affirming environment strengthens our department as a whole. A department that values and celebrates diversity among its students, staff, and faculty is best able to develop the strengths and talents of all members of the department community.

Reporting Racism and Other Forms of Hate and Bias.

If you experience racism or other form of bias or hate in this class or any psychology course, we encourage you to do at least one of the following: Please report the experience to the instructor or teaching assistant and/or use report to the Department of Psychology's Diversity and Inclusion Committee [using this link](#) (reports can be made anonymously). Please also report all incidents of hate and bias to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at <https://www.diversity.umd.edu/hbrp/>.

Names/Pronouns & Self Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.).

ELMS- Canvas now allows you to enter your preferred pronouns as well as provide pronunciation for your name. How? Sign in on elms.umd.edu.

- Update pronouns at: Account → Settings → Edit Settings → Pronouns
- Update name pronunciation at: Account → Namecoach

Please note that the pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

10 Course Outline

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary. Monitor the course ELMS page for current information, assignments and deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed. All assignments and lectures will be posted on ELMS in the modules tab. Information posted on the course ELMS page should be considered an extension of the syllabus.

Note the following important academic dates:

- Schedule Adjustment Period ends: September 13
- Drop a Course with "W" Deadline: November 8

Date	Day	Topic	Reading	Due
Aug. 31	T	Introduction	Ch. 1	course survey
Sept. 2	TH	Habituation & Sensitization	Ch. 2	
Sept. 7	T	Habituation & Sensitization	Ch. 2	Active learning #1
Sept. 9	TH	Foundations of Classical Conditioning	Ch. 3	
Sept.14	T	Foundations of Classical Conditioning	Ch. 3	Active learning #2
Sept.16	TH	Mechanisms of Classical Conditioning	Ch. 4	
Sept. 21	T	Mechanisms of Classical Conditioning	Ch. 4	Active learning #3
Sept. 23	TH	Review for Exam 1	Ch.1–Ch.4	extra credit
Sept. 28	T	Exam 1	Good Luck!	

Date	Day	Topic	Reading	Due
Sept. 30	TH	Instrumental Conditioning: Foundations	Ch. 5	
Oct. 5	T	Instrumental Conditioning: Foundations	Ch. 5	Active learning #4
Oct. 7	TH	Schedules and Choice Behavior	Ch. 6	
Oct. 12	T	Schedules and Choice Behavior	Ch. 6	Active learning #5
Oct. 14	TH	Instrumental Conditioning: Motivation	Ch. 7	

Date	Day	Topic	Reading	Due
Oct. 19	T	Instrumental Conditioning: Motivation	Ch. 7	Active learning #6
Oct. 21	TH	Stimulus Control of Behavior	Ch. 8	
Oct. 26	T	Stimulus Control of Behavior	Ch. 8	Active learning #7 and instrumental conditioning Haiku project
Oct. 28	TH	Exam 2 review	Ch.5- Ch.8	extra credit
Nov. 2	T	EXAM 2	Good Luck!	

Date	Day	Topic	Reading	Due
Nov. 4	TH	Extinction	Ch. 9	
Nov. 9	T	Extinction	Ch. 9	Active learning #8
Nov. 11	TH	Aversive Control	Ch. 10	
Nov. 16	T	Aversive Control	Ch. 10	Active learning #9
Nov. 18	TH	Cognition I: Memory	Ch. 11	
Nov. 23	T	Cognition I: Memory	Ch. 11	Active learning #10
Nov. 25	TH	Fall recess	No class	enjoy!
Nov. 30	T	Cognition II: Special Topics	Ch. 12	Final project due
Dec. 2	TH	Cognition II: Special Topics	Ch. 12	
Dec. 7	T	Cognition II: Special Topics	Ch. 12	Active learning #11
Dec. 9	TH	Exam 3 Review	Ch. 9-12	extra credit
Dec.18 1:30- 3:30	SAT	Exam 3	Good Luck!	