

PSY317: Learning

Instructor: Sharon Himmanen

Class times: Mon 10:00-10:50am, 1:00-3:30pm

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Office Hours: Wed. 2-4pm, by appointment

Date	Topic	Reading	Lab
1/25	Introduction	1	
2/1	Traditional learning theories	2	Sniffy lab: CER; Handling rats
2/8	Elicited behavior, habituation and sensitization	3	Sniffy lab: Blocking; Introduction to operant chambers
2/15	Classical conditioning	4 & 5	Shaping & CRF
2/22	Exam 1		Shaping & CRF
3/1	Operant Conditioning	6 & 7	Higher order conditioning
3/15	Schedules of reinforcement / Extinction		Fixed Ratio Schedules
3/22	Aversive conditioning	8 & 9	Fixed Ratio Schedules
3/29	Exam 2		Variable Ratio Schedules
4/6	Stimulus control	10	Variable Ratio Schedules
4/12	Cognitive control	11	Extinction
4/19	Biological influences	12	Spontaneous recovery
4/24	Complex learning	13	Generalization /Discrimination
5/3	Exam 3		

Description: This course is a broad introduction to basic principles of learning, including such aspects as motivation, reinforcement and discrimination, with emphasis on data derived from animal behavior. Laboratory research uses live rats as well as a few assignments using a virtual animal. Lecture three hours, laboratory.

Prerequisites: Psychology 100, 211, and 212

Required textbook:

Klein, S. B.. (2009). *Learning: Principles and Applications*, (5th Ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.: New York. ISBN: 978-1-4129-5652-9

Alloway, T., Wilson, G., & Graham, J. (2004). *Sniffy the Virtual Rat Pro, Version 2.0 (with CD-ROM)*. Wadsworth: New York. ISBN: 978-0-5346-3360-8

Recommended textbooks:

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author. ISBN: 978-1-4338-0561-5

COURSE POLICIES Please read this section carefully. You are responsible for knowing this information.

Psychology Department Attendance Policy: The Psychology Department is committed to the principle that regular and punctual class attendance is essential to the students' optimum learning and successful academic achievement. Regular class attendance is a student obligation, and students are responsible for all work, tests and written assignments. Therefore, students are expected to be present for all class sessions. The Psychology Department's attendance policy recognizes that there will be times when attendance at class is not possible. You may think of the policy as being similar to the type used in the corporate world where each employee is given a certain number of "personal/sick days." Based on the number of regularly scheduled class meetings, you will be allowed a certain number of absences (see below) with no consequences, no questions asked. In other words, there is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. You are of course responsible for anything covered during those missed classes, and for submitting assignments on time, regardless of whether or not you attend. Beyond the allowable number of absences, there are consequences that will adversely impact your grade, much as missing too many days of work can adversely impact your employment status. Above all else, you should carefully consider each decision to not attend class, as once your allotted absences have been used, they are gone. It is important that students arrive for class on time. Late arrivals are very distracting, not only to the instructor, but also to fellow students. Repeated late arrivals are not acceptable and will be addressed. It is each student's responsibility to understand this policy and to keep track of absences throughout the semester.

Application to this Class: Formal attendance will be taken during all class sessions. This class meets once per week (14 class meetings). You may miss **2 classes** without penalty. If you miss **3 classes**, your final grade (cumulative percentage of points) will be lowered by 5%. That means that if you have earned 84% of the available points in the class, which is a B grade, you would be lowered to 79%, which is a C+. Likewise, if you have earned 77% of the points available, the penalty would take you down to 72%, which is a C-. As a reminder, a C grade (73%) is required in all Psychology courses. If you miss **4 classes**, you will be docked an additional 5% points off of your final grade (for a total of 10%). If you miss **5 classes**, you will receive a failing grade for the course. If you miss six classes, you have missed nearly half the course meetings.

Cell phones: Cell phones ringers must be turned off for class. Vibrate mode is fine as long as students do not disrupt the class by checking their cell phones or leaving the room in the middle of the lecture or discussion unless absolutely necessary. During exams, cell phones must be placed out of sight and not taken out at any point during the exam.

Changes: Students are responsible for knowing about changes to the syllabus. All changes will be clearly announced in class, and an updated version of the syllabus will be available via eCollege. It is highly unlikely that any major due dates, such as lab due dates or exams, will be changed. However, not knowing about a change does not constitute an acceptable excuse for late papers or missed exams.

Cheating: Cheating is against the college's code of conduct, and will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating you will immediately fail the course, and I will turn over all evidence to the psychology department for further disciplinary action.

eCollege: All students must be able to access eCollege. I post all course material there, including any updated versions of the syllabus. All questions outside of class time will be directed to the eCollege discussion boards so that all students may benefit from and participate in the discussion. Also, in the unlikely event that class will be cancelled, an announcement will be made as early as possible on eCollege. Most importantly, any handouts will be made available on eCollege. If you are having difficulty accessing eCollege, please contact IT Services for assistance.

Late papers:

Please turn all assignments in on time for full points. Beginning 15 minutes after the start of class, I will deduct five points from your final score for every day the paper is late. It is acceptable to turn in papers via email, but they will be marked on-time according to the date stamp on MY end. Please email papers well in advance of the due date to avoid problems.

Make-up exams:

If an emergency arises, and you must miss an exam, please contact me as soon as possible, I will allow students to make-up a missed exam under certain, documented circumstances, such as illness, a family emergency, etc. Make-up exams are given at my discretion, so please document the reason for your absence as thoroughly as possible.

Taping:

Please do not record lectures without checking with me first. Attending class, taking notes, and doing the readings should be sufficient. My experience is that taping lectures makes students less likely to take good notes or pay attention in class.

Textbook:

The textbooks are an important source of information for the course, and I recommend strongly that you buy the edition specified above. If you do buy an earlier edition, you will be responsible for any differences between the current text and the one you are using.

Grading:

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Exams – Three non-cumulative exams worth 100 point each for a total of 300 points. Material covered in lecture and the textbook will be on the exams. There will be NO make-up exams without a valid, documented excuse. There will be NO extra credit. Multiple choice and short essay.

Lab exercises – Each lab topic will come with a handout indicating what data you are to collect, and questions to answer. You may drop one of the nine topics. The remaining eight are worth a maximum of 10 points apiece for a total of 80 points toward your final grade.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT LABS: Although recitation is scheduled for Mondays from 10am to 10:50am be prepared to spend some time outside of class and recitation working on your labs. This is necessary because live animals can be unpredictable. During the first week of classes I will post a schedule of when the lab is available, and will make every effort to accommodate students as they work on their projects.

Your final grade will be based on a total of 380 points. You must receive a grade of C or better for this course to count toward the psychology major.

Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score
		B+	331-341	C+	293-303	D+	255-265	F	0-227
A	353-380	B	315-330	C	277-292	D	239-254		
A-	342-352	B-	304-314	C-	266-276	D-	228-238		

Labs									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total

Exams			
1	2	3	Total

1	2	3	Total