

WARNING: A syllabus describes the main features of a course and outlines students' responsibilities. A syllabus also serves as an implicit contract between the instructor and students.

820-565, Methods of Behavior Control Fall, 2001

Final Examination: Wednesday, Dec 9, 6:30-9:10
Course Meetings: Lec 401 Wednesday, 6:30-9:10, Curtin 118

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Text and Other Resources

Skinner, B. F. (1953). Science and human behavior. New York: The Free Press.

Our text was written for introductory psychology students at Harvard University, is some 50 years old, and in print! The text's principles have considerable generality and its low price is a bargain! The text can be purchased at Panther Books on Downer Avenue.

Some students may wish to go beyond the text. Journals that routinely publish behavioristic reports include: Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, Behavior Modification, and The Psychological Record.

There are, of course, many sites on the World Wide Web that provide information about behavior analysis. The best site is sponsored by The Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies and can be found here:

<http://www.behavior.org/>

If you point your browser here:

<http://www.virtualcommunity.org:8080/~BVC>

you can register at the "Behavioral Virtual Community" and subscribe to "behav-an" a program that allows persons to exchange information about behavior analysis via e-mail. If you subscribe, everyday a few messages will appear in your mailbox concerning some aspect of behavior analysis and eventually you may want to contribute. You can, of course discover other sites of interest using:

www.google.com.

Course Objectives

1. To familiarize participants with interpreting human behavior from the standpoint of a variety of behavior analytic theories.
2. To contrast the behavioral approach with traditional approaches.
3. To reinforce interpretations of everyday behavior from the standpoint of behavior analysis.
4. To reinforce speaking and writing that approximates the behavior of a behavior analyst.

Course Meetings

Usually there will be a reading assignment of about 35 pages per meeting. A well-prepared student should spend about four hours (two hours reading and two hours reviewing and mastering terms) preparing for each meeting. It is important to note the basic nature of the text. Just as it is impossible to master calculus without understanding college algebra, it is impossible to use behavioral principles to interpret everyday life without understanding the principles. Adequate preparation is important!

Weekly Examinations

Unless otherwise announced, there will be an "open book/open note" examination every meeting. The examination will be administered at the end of class at 8:50 PM and will be collected at 9:10 PM. Students who completed their "home work" should easily complete these examinations within twenty minutes.

The questions will be based primarily on:

1. "Some Key Terms and Questions Associated with B.F. Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior*"
2. "Useful Technical Terms for Behavior Analysis"

which are available here:

<http://www.uwm.edu/~dermer/courses/565/565page.html>

Model examination answers will be posted on the "565" reflector. A reflector is a computer program with a list of e-mail addresses based on student registration. When a message is sent to the reflector, the reflector sends the message to all the addresses on the list. The reflector will, therefore, not only permit sharing model answers with the class but permit communication between class members. The reflector's address is: 565@uwm.edu.

Your semester's grade for the weekly examinations will exclude your

lowest examination grade. Study carefully and continuously so the "lowest score" option can be used for an emergency.

NOTE WELL THAT ATTENDANCE WILL BE MONITORED AND THAT YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO USE YOUR TEXT OR YOUR NOTES ON THE WEEKLY EXAMINATION IF YOU HAD AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE THE PREVIOUS WEEK. ACCEPTABLE EXCUSES INCLUDE: A DEATH IN THE FAMILY, A RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY, HOSPITALIZATION, OR A DOCUMENTED MEDICAL EMERGENCY. (This semester, there may be a possibility of testing whether this contingency affects attendance. To test the contingency it may only be intermittently in effect.)

Essay

Students enrolled for graduate credit shall write an approximately 1000-word, behavioral interpretation, written in APA-style, regarding some aspect of his or her behavior.

A behavior analytic interpretation describes relations between the environment and behavior in terms of (a) behavior analytic principles and procedures derived from experimentation and (b) behavior analytic philosophy.

There are many behavioral interpretations in your text. You may use these interpretations as well as other published interpretations to help you craft an interpretation of *your behavior*, but be sure to credit your sources! I want you to interpret *your behavior* to reduce the extent you may be tempted to plagiarize. Plagiarism is intolerable.

These interpretations should (1) enhance your understanding of course material and (2) enhance your analytic and writing abilities. *The interpretations should be submitted by the last class meeting.*

I expect these interpretations to be well written from the standpoint of behavior analysis and writing conventions.

Lee J. Cronbach, an excellent writer and psychologist, wrote in his "Four Psychological Bulletin Articles in Perspective, (*Psychological Bulletin*, 1992, 112, 389-392):

The editors have pressed me to append advice for young psychologists aspiring to make an impact through the Bulletin. My advice must be like the legendary recipe for jugged hare, which begins, "First catch your hare." First, have a message worth delivering. Beyond that, it is care in writing that counts--a conclusion I derive from having refereed and having assigned course readings.

In the days before word processors, I found 10 retypings of a manuscript none too many, and that implies many rereadings by me. Pages going back to my typist often carried scribbles in five colors, each new color representing an additional reading. Always, one sees floating pronouns to anchor, sentences to clarify or vivify, paragraphs to move,

digressions to delete. Strunk and White (1979) is worth its weight in gold. Live by it. I advise the inexperienced writer to leave a near-final draft in a drawer for a few weeks and, returning to it fresh, to read it aloud. Try to listen through the ears of a graduate student new to the paper, indeed, new to the topic.

Rework any sentence that lacks flow or cadence, any sentence in which first-glance reading misplaces the emphasis, and any sentence in which comprehension comes less than instantly to the most knowledgeable (sic) of readers, the writer of the sentence. At best, technical writing can aspire to literary virtues--a change of pace from abstract thesis to memorable example, from brisk to easeful, from matter-of-fact to poetic.

In some year after publication, feedback will come when the writer sees one of his or her sentences quoted out of context. That is on its face a greater reward than citation; the quoter has preferred the writer's words to his or her own. But reincarnation can be for better or worse. The quoting author may use the quote to carry a message that was not intended. That is worse than being ignored. On the other hand, the quoted sentence in its new context may eloquently give force to an argument the original writer is happy to support. There's success for you!

The interpretation's grade will be based on material presented in this and other courses including: grammar, spelling, and style. Thirty percent of the grade will reflect writing quality.

Interpretations are assigned letter grades which are converted to a Grade Point Value (GPV) scale as follows:

GPV	13+	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
GRADE	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F+	F
% RIGHT	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35

Final Examination

On Dec 9, we will have a closed-book, closed-note final examination. The questions will be based primarily on:

1. "Some Key Terms and Questions Associated with B.F. Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior*"

and

2. "Useful Technical Terms for Behavior Analysis"

In other words, in preparing for the weekly examinations you will be preparing for the final examination, but unlike the weekly examinations you will be unable to use "outside" sources.

Course Grade

Here is the formula for course grades for students earning undergraduate credit:

- + .70 x GPV Weekly Examinations
- + .10 x GPV Class Contributions
- + .20 x GPV Final Examination

Here is the formula for course grades for students earning graduate credit:

- + .50 x GPV Weekly Examinations
- + .10 x GPV Class Contributions
- + .20 x GPV Final Examination
- + .20 x GPV Interpretation

Class Atmosphere

From time-to-time, I make mistakes. Either with or without correction from others I apologize.

Your suggestions, of course, are appreciated and will be seriously considered. If you have a problem with this course then please talk to the instructor. Complaining to others is unlikely to solve the problem. If you do not want yourself associated with the complaint then please submit an anonymous note in the instructor's mailbox. If the complaint is at all reasonable, the instructor will mention it in class and try to find a solution.

Office Hours

I keep my office hours so, unless there is an emergency, you can count on my being in my office. I can also schedule "special" appointments. Please feel free to meet and discuss the course or your progress.

Disabilities

If you have a learning, sensory, or physical disability, or if you believe you require special help regarding seminar, reading assignments, or testing, then please talk with me.

Note: Departmental policies regarding participation by students with disabilities, accommodation for religious observances, academic conduct, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures, and other standing policies (e.g., concerning sexual harassment and incompletes) are available in Pearse 224 during regular business hours.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct, including cheating on examinations and plagiarism, is intolerable.