



**PSY 511.001**  
**Psychology of Learning**  
**11:10 am-12:30 pm**  
**Tuesdays & Thursdays, GRH 3003**  
**Western Kentucky University**  
**Fall 2020**

**Instructor**

Thomas J. Gross, Ph.D., NCSP  
Office: GRH 3045  
Office Phone: (270) 745-4976  
Email: thomas.gross@wku.edu  
Office Hours: Virtually by appointment; office hours pending.

**Required Text**

Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L. (2020). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

**Required Articles.**

Additional readings as assigned.

**Catalog Description of Course**

Theories of learning including conditioning, social learning, reinforcement, problem solving, motivation, and structure of the learning situation.

**Further Description & Rationale:** This course is an introduction to the behavioral philosophy, concepts, and principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA). Behavior and analytical principles are applied to assessment and intervention development.

**Course Objectives and NASP Standards**

1. Basic concepts and theories in ABA (NASP 2.1, 2.4)
2. Identify key concepts and related terminology (NASP 2.1, 2.4)
3. Understand basic scientific logic underlying ABA (NASP 2.1, 2.4)
4. The functional basis for all behaviors (NASP 2.1, 2.4)
5. Promoting adaptive functioning through data-based methods (NASP 2.1, 2.4)
6. Application of many ABA concepts to practical needs (NASP 2.1, 2.4), e.g.:
  - a. Assessing level, trend, and variability of a behaviors
  - b. The relation between intervention conditions and behavior
  - c. Evaluating baseline functioning and treatment effectiveness
7. The student will appreciate and support the professional, ethical and legal issues surrounding the study of human behavior (NASP 2.1, 2.4, 2.10).

## **Course Requirements**

### **General Overview**

Most, if not all, chapters will have a quiz or a class exercise, or both. For every chapter, students are expected to develop and keep a set of study materials or note cards with key terms or concepts. There will be a cumulative final exam.

Assignments will be submitted either to Blackboard or directly to the instructor. Any assignment or document submitted by other means will not be graded and considered not submitted. Before submitting any assignment, confirm the absence of grammatical or mechanical errors in your writing. Excessive errors will result in point deductions or 0 points for the assignment.

### **A Note on Class Notes.**

Lectures will be posted before class. For this course, you will be asked to “View Lecture #,” which mean that you will view the lecture for the upcoming class period the day before. You are expected to independently view them and follow along with the activities. When we meet in class, you will be asked to discuss the activity areas related to each lecture. You will be work in small groups and report your group’s responses, as well as give your independent responses at times. Being observed as active during the class activities will account for **130 (26 in-class days x 5pts) participation points**.

There are corresponding PowerPoints for you to use as guides and follow along while taking notes. The PowerPoint slides contain minimal information and act as a guide for the instructor. ***These notes contain a general outline from the lectures you will need to write down more content from lecture than is on the slides.*** Students are encouraged to keep a copy of their written notes and synthesize them with PowerPoint slides, as well as notes from your readings. I would also suggest that notes be handwritten and students have a trusted folder or binder to store all course materials.

### **Quizzes (NASP 2.1, 2.4, 2.10).** (30 points x 4 = 120)

In this course, students are expected to engage with the material independently and to mastery. To facilitate this, quizzes are given, which cover the readings and potentially other material from class. There will be 12 quizzes. These will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions.

All quizzes are due by the beginning of class on the date indicated. All quizzes are take home quizzes and will be reviewed as a class at the beginning of each class period they are due. Students are expected to complete their quizzes in either black or blue ink only. Students are expected to self-correct their quizzes in a different color ink than was used to complete the quiz. ***Students are expected to complete the quizzes on their own.***

*The instructor will administer pop quizzes as needed.*

### **Key Terms (NASP 2.1, 2.4).** (15points x 26 = 390 points)

For each chapter covered, every student is expected to use the related key terms list to develop a set of flashcards as a study guide. These are required to be hand written. This will be crucial for passing the final exam. Each key term should be defined.

Every class period, 10 minutes will be set aside to use the flashcards to assist with remembering the key terms. Five (5) minutes will be used for students to review the flashcards related to that week’s readings using SAFMEDs and self-quizzing methods. Five (5) minutes will be used for peer assessment, where you will (a) partner with a classmate, (b) each quiz the other on their flashcard decks with feedback, and (c) record the number of known and unknown key terms for the week, as well as (d) record the cumulative number of key terms known. You will be *required to track the data* throughout the semester and consistently *graph the data* to receive credit.

Flashcards, tracking sheets, and graphs will be checked periodically during the semester. *For the first check*, only the flashcards and tracking sheets will be reviewed. *For all subsequent checks*, flashcards, tracking sheets, and graphs will be reviewed.

### **Graphing Data Tasks (NASP 2.1, 2.4)** (50 points x 5 = 250 points)

Students will receive a file of data for mock cases. The students are required to graph the data in the accepted ABA format using Microsoft Excel. To accomplish this, we will complete the graphs together and they will be checked for accuracy before class ends. For each graph, students are required to provide interpretations based on level, trend, and variability

across phases. Students will provide a Word (or similar) document with the graph and the interpretation underneath it. These will be due the class period after the in-class graphing task. Student are expected to learn how to graph

- (a) Basic time series single and 3 conditions data;
- (b) Reversal design data;
- (c) Alternating treatment design data;
- (d) Multiple baseline design data;
- (e) Changing criterion design data.

#### **Data-based interpretation of an intervention for behavior (NASP 2.1, 2.4) (200 points)**

Students will develop a set of data for a mock case. This will require students to select one case from a small pool of cases and follow the case from conceptualization to outcomes appraisal. This will be based on a referral problem and initial treatment plan with measureable goals. Students are required to graph the data in the accepted ABA format. For the case, students are required to provide interpretations based on level, trend, and variability across phases. Students are then required to provide an outcomes synthesis and recommendations using data-based decision making.

#### **Final Exam – Cumulative (NASP 2.1, 2.4, 2.10). (200 points)**

There is one cumulative final exam. It will cover all material from the course and will contain multiple choice and short answer questions. The questions will be related to key concepts and terms, and students are expected to answer questions related to objective (e.g., definitions, statements) and subjective (e.g., applied examples) questions. Short answer questions will require brief answers, but will assess how well students can concisely connect multiple concepts related to ABA principles and practices.

<b>Grades</b>	
Assignment	Points
Participation	130
Quizzes	120
Key Terms	390
In-class Graphing Data Tasks	250
Data-based interpretation of an intervention for behavior	200
Final Exam	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>1290</b>

- A = 90 – 100%
- B = 80 – 89.9%
- C = 70 – 79.9 %
- D = 60 – 69.9 %
- F = 59.9% and below

*If you believe that your grade on a particular assignment should be different, you must submit a request to review the assignment to the instructor in writing within 24 hours of receiving the grade for the assignment. Your request for review must contain the following elements to be considered:*

- 1) Your name and ID number
- 2) The title of the assignment
- 3) Your rationale for the review of the graded assignment

Your justification will be reviewed and a decision will be made as to whether or not your assignment will be reviewed. If your assignment is reviewed, *it will be reviewed in its entirety, which might result in an increase, decrease, or no change in the grade given.*

*Also, remember that this is a skills mastery course, rather than a strictly didactic course. To this end, all products will be reviewed and revised until mastery is evident.*

#### **Student Accommodations**

"In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. The phone number is 270-745-5004 [270.745.5121 V/TDD] or email at [sarc@wku.edu](mailto:sarc@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations

directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation (LOA) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center."

### **Additional Information**

#### **Academic Dishonesty**

Students are expected to complete their own work. As stated in the university catalog, "students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal." In other words, do your own work and do not cheat. This includes faking or modifying test administration responses to better match the manual's scoring criteria. The psychology faculty consider academic dishonesty an ethical matter. As a reminder, you should know that students can be dismissed from the program for unethical behavior.

#### **Late Assignments**

Late assignments are unacceptable. Plan accordingly and get assignments done ahead of time. The instructor has the right to reduce point value or refuse any late work, including, but not exclusive of exams, presentations, independent or group assignments, reflective elements, etc.

#### **Correspondence**

Students are welcome to come by during office hours or schedule an appointment. Other acceptable forms of communication are calling the instructor's office phone or sending an e-mail. The instructor will communicate with students by Blackboard announcements, student WKU e-mail, or notes in the student's department mailbox.

You are encouraged to check your WKU email account and graduate department mailbox daily during the workweek.

If you choose to correspond with the instructor via email:

- 1) Provide the course prefix and number in the subject line,
- 2) Provide your name within the text of the email, as well as at the end of the email, and
- 3) Type your concern as concisely as possible using a conventional letter format, and refrain from using all CAPS, emoji's, brightly colored fonts, etc.
- 4) Depending on the nature and type of response requested, it might take up to 48 hours to respond.

If you choose to call and leave a voicemail for the instructor:

- 1) Provide your name,
- 2) State what the call is regarding, and
- 3) Leave your phone number and email address.

### **TITLE IX STATEMENT**

"Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (#0.2070) at

<https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf>. Under this policy, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex-gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159."

### **Expectations of Students**

- 1) **Arrive.** Get to class before start time and return on time after breaks. This allows you to settle in, check with others, and be ready to start class on time. If you arrive after the start time of the class, you are likely to miss key information.
- 2) **Prepare.** Complete all readings before class and be prepared to apply what you have read, discuss it, and ask questions.
- 3) **Discontinue.** Do not allow your communication and entertainment devices to be a distraction in class. Put all devices in silent mode or off; and if you must, take any calls in the hall.

- 4) **Submit assignments on or before the dates listed.** When a special need arises, please arrange with the instructor ahead of time regarding what assignments can be completed and when the assignments are due.
- 5) **Produce scholarly work** (written, oral, and presentations) exemplary of the professional degree you seek. The written and spoken contributions are clear, coherent, organized, and use correct grammar and style. This means think before you speak and proofread carefully before you turn in your written work.
- 6) **Collaborate with your colleagues.** Be generous in conversing with others to discover new thoughts and ideas. If you have concerns, talk directly with those involved. It is important to learn to talk through differences in understanding, as well as learn others' points of view.
- 7) **Attendance and Participation.** Students are required to attend all classes for the entire scheduled time, to participate actively, and to contribute both experiential and research-based information to class discussion. After 4 absences, each additional absence might result in the lowering of your final grade by half a letter grade. A tardy will be considered a half of an absence; where two times tardy (tardy is defined as arriving late or leaving early) comprise one absence. An attendance sheet shall be completed at the beginning of each class period. If you miss a class, you need to ask a classmate for notes and other details, not the professor. **NO OFF TASK TEXTING OR NET SURFING!**

### **Course Policies**

**Class begins when Dr. Gross takes roll.** Absences, arriving late, and/or leaving early inherently limits your opportunities to learn the course material and will reduce your grade. If you arrive after your name is called, you are tardy. Class ends when Dr. Gross informs you class has ended. Leaving before class has ended is only partial attendance. If you need to arrive late or leave early inform the instructor and have it approved; if you do not, they will be counted as a half absence regardless of time in the class period. *If you miss 4 or more class periods, your grade will be reduced by half a letter grade.*

Mastering principles of behavioral psychology requires a mastery of great breadth and depth of knowledge, and requires a considerable amount of *individual and group effort*. That means each student is expected to exercise *attention to detail, be prepared, and use repeated practice* during in-class and out-of-class portions of the course.

In order to be best prepared for this course, you will need to *read all assigned readings, complete the course work as scheduled, and attend all class periods*. If you are having trouble with the course content, stop in during office hours or make an appointment with Dr. Gross as soon as possible – *my job is to make sure you master this material, I love this stuff and want you to benefit from knowing it, as well*. This course requires you to build upon previous knowledge and generalize skills across concepts. If you fail to address difficulties early, then you will struggle to keep pace with or catch-up to your peers. Your likelihood of success increases with *focused effort, attentiveness, and planning ahead* to complete assigned work and prepare for the final exam.

**Internet Access.** The university has numerous computer labs on campus that are available to students. Students in this course must make arrangements to access the internet regularly throughout the week. To complete homework assignments, to access course-related information, and to receive emails from Dr. Gross, which may include important announcements and changes in assignments, students will need to access the course website through Blackboard. *Students are responsible for making sure they receive Dr. Gross' emails and Blackboard updates, and follow through with any assignments or other information that is provided via email.*

**Academic Integrity.** In order for you to reach your full potential, it is critical that you do your own original work and not copy the ideas of others. Since cheating does not result in learning, Dr. Gross will assign an "F" or zero for the assignment or for the entire course. This practice is consistent with University policy. *If in doubt about whether an action is cheating or acceptable behavior, please ask Dr. Gross for clarification before proceeding.* Any material taken from another work must be documented, and in no case should one represent another's work as one's own, this includes information received from others during examinations or submitting another's assignments, papers, etc. as one's own. *Any amount of information copied word for word from the internet or any other source (without proper use of quotations and referencing) is plagiarism.* Students involved in authorized collaborative work, to avoid questions of plagiarism, should exercise extreme caution.

**Exclusion of Students from Class.** Instructors may temporarily remove or exclude any student engaged in disruptive conduct from the classroom. Students ejected from the classroom will remain responsible for all class assignments. *Students who are excluded from class will be counted as absent for that day.* For purposes of this class, disruptive conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Behavior that **obstructs the learning environment** (e.g., offensive language, harassment of students and professor, repeated outburst from a student which disrupts the flow of instruction or prevents concentration on the subject taught, failure to cooperate in maintaining classroom decorum, etc.).
- 2) Continued use of **any electronic or other device**, which disturbs others (e.g., disturbing noises from beepers, cell phones, palm pilots, laptop computers, games, etc.).
- 3) **Use of a cell phone to talk or text during class.** I understand that sometimes there are emergencies or urgent matters to which you need to attend. In such cases: (a) excuse yourself from class, (b) talk or text outside of the classroom, (c) only reenter after you are finished. If you need to excuse yourself for a second time: (a) gather your belongings, (b) excuse yourself, and (c) you will have to wait until the next class day to return to class.

**Cloth Face Covering.** Out of respect for the health and safety of the WKU community and in adherence with the [CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html>), the University requires that a cloth face covering (reusable or disposable) that covers both the nose and mouth must be worn at all times when in public areas within all buildings. Students must properly wear face coverings while in class regardless of the room size or the nature of the classroom activities. Students who fail to wear a face covering as required will be in violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct and will be asked to comply or will face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the University. Accommodations to face coverings must be determined by the Student Accessibility Resource Center and documented before a student may attend class.

### Tentative Course Schedule

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading for the Week</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>	<b>Viewing</b>
<b>1: 8/25</b>	<b>The Basics</b>			
D1	Introduction & Syllabus Review	*KT Set Ch.1-4		
D2	Definitions and Concepts	Ch. 1, 2	<b>Case interest form</b>	1.1
<b>2: 9/1</b>	<b>Define &amp; Measure</b>			
D1	Definitions and Concepts Cont.			1.2
D2	Selecting Target Behaviors	Ch. 3	<b>Assign Case</b>	2.1
<b>3: 9/8</b>	<b>Analyzing Behavior</b>			
D1	Measuring Target Behaviors	Ch. 4	<b>Quiz 1. Ch. 1-4</b>	2.2
			<b>KT Check-in Ch. 1-4</b>	
D2	Quality Measurement	Ch. 5		2.3
		*KT Set Ch. 5-8		
<b>4: 9/15</b>	<b>Representing Behavior &amp; Interpreting Outcomes</b>			
D1	Graphic Display	Ch 6, 7	<b>In-class Basic Graphing Task: Single and three condition</b>	Basic Graph rec.
D2	Assumptions of Analyzing Behavior		<b>Basic Graph write-up</b>	3
<b>5: 9/22</b>	<b>Representing Behavior &amp; Interpreting Outcomes</b>			
D1	Reversal and ATD	Ch. 8	<b>Quiz 2 Ch. 5-8</b>	Reversal & ATD rec.
			<b>In-class Reversal &amp; ATD Graphing Task</b>	
			<b>KT Check-in Ch. 5-8</b>	
D2	Multiple Baseline	Ch. 9	<b>Reversal &amp; ATD Graphs write-up</b>	MBL rec.
		*KT Set Ch. 9-13	<b>In-class MBL</b>	
<b>6: 9/29</b>	<b>Reinforcement</b>			
D1	Changing Criterion		<b>Changing Criterion Graphing Task</b>	Changing Criterion rec.
D2	Research/Scientific Basis	Ch. 10	<b>Changing Criterion Graphs write-up</b>	4
<b>7: 10/6</b>	<b>Reinforcement</b>			
D1	Positive, Negative, & Schedules of Reinforcement	Ch. 11		5.1
D2	Reinforcement cont.	Ch. 12	<b>Data-based interpretation case</b>	5.2
<b>8: 10/13</b>	<b>Punishment</b>			
D1	Reinforcement cont.	Ch. 13	<b>Quiz 3 (Ch9, 10, 11, 12, 13)</b>	5.3
			<b>KT Check-in Ch. 9-13</b>	
D2	Type I & Type II Punishment	Ch. 14, 15	<b>Data-based interpretation case</b>	6
		*KT Set Ch. 14-17		
<b>9: 10/20</b>	<b>Antecedents</b>			
D1	Motivators and Control	Ch. 16, 17		7.1
D2			<b>Quiz 4 (Ch. 14, 15, 16, 17)</b>	7.2
			<b>KT Check-in Ch. 14-17</b>	

10: 10/27	Acquisition			
D1	Modeling, Shaping	Ch. 21, 22		8.1
		*KT Set Ch. 21-26		
D2	Shaping, Chaining	Ch. 23		8.2
11: 11/3	Removal & Replacement			
D1	<b>No Class Election day</b>			
D2	Extinction, Differential Reinforcement	Ch. 24	<b>Data-based interpretation case</b>	9.1
12: 11/10				
D1	Differential Reinforcement	Ch. 25, 26		9.2
D2	Antecedent Intervention		<b>Data-based interpretation case</b>	9.3
			<b>KT Check-in Ch. 21-26</b>	
13: 11/17				
D1	Functional Assessment	Ch. 27		10.1
		*KT Set Ch. 27, 30, 31		
D2	Generalization and Maintenance	Ch. 30	<b>Data-based interpretation case</b>	10.2
14: 11/24	<b>THANKSGIVING WEEK – NO CLASS</b>			
D1	<b>NO CLASS</b>			
D2	<b>NO CLASS</b>			
15: 12/1	Keeping it going & Ethics			
D1	Ethics	Ch. 31	<b>KT Check-in Ch. 27, 30, 31</b>	11
D2			<b>Data-based interpretation case</b> <b>Final draft</b>	
16: 12/8	<b><u>Final Exam – TBD</u></b>			

\*Keep in mind that this is a tentative schedule and subject to change by the instructor.\*