

## SYLLABUS & First Day's Notes

**Psychology 2103 / 5103 -- Learning & Behavior Analysis**

**Spring Semester/ 2009 MWF 10:40 – 11:30, Weiss Hall, room B – 32+**

**Instructor: Philip N. Hinline**

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**Instructor's Office Hours (days of the week / times / location):  
Wednesday & Friday, 11:30 – 12:30 Weiss Hall 819 or 950 South**

**Prerequisites: 1071 (Intro to Psych as Natural Science) or Permission of Instructor**

**First Day's handouts, supplied in hard copy, and available on BlackBoard**

**Syllabus w. Notes, Questionnaire, Prep. Guides 1, 2, 3**

**The Textbook**, Available at the Temple bookstore, with additional copies available  
at Zavelles, on Broad Street across from Progress Plaza:

Pages for the first three assignments are also available as pdf files on BlackBoard.

Malott: **Principles of Behavior - Sixth Edition**– Pearson / Prentice-Hall ISBN 978-0-13-243363-1  
or ISBN 10: 0-13-243363-X

Earlier editions will not be easy to use, since study questions are keyed to pages,  
and there have been substantial changes since the 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

### **Course Goals, Methods, and Policies**

**In this course you will learn key principles and a special way of talking about some basic facts, concepts and experiments in psychology, and to use those principles in predicting, interpreting, and perhaps even changing what some people and other creatures do.**

In arranging to accomplish this, I have used several of those principles in planning the course itself, as you will see in the coming weeks. For several reasons, this means breaking away from the conventional information-dispensing format that is typical of most university classes, cultivating a situation where students can interact with each other as well as with the instructor. You will find that our class time seems to pass quickly; we might even be having fun most of the time. Still, it will be a no-nonsense, intellectually challenging enterprise. It will require at least as much work on my part as would be required by a conventional lecture format. From you, I shall require preparation before most class meetings, and there will be repeated evaluations of your performance. On the other hand, you should encounter little uncertainty, no rude surprises, frequent indications of how you are doing, and opportunities to improve your grade even if you get off to a poor start.

To accomplish these things, the latter parts of most class meetings will be spent in "**interteaching**:" one-to-one discussion based on assigned readings and occasional lectures, as described below.

## WORKING ASSUMPTIONS for the design of this course:

What you know is what you can do.

What you have learned in a college course, is what you can do afterward,  
that you could not do before.

Learning, too, is doing. It is not a "passive happening."

Good teaching is the facilitating of learning, not mainly information-dispensing.

A college course, then, is a sort of social contract.

You've put yourself under the "guidance" of a special sort of coach.

## CAN ALL STUDENTS DO AS THE BEST STUDENTS DO?

They study regularly, not just before exams.

They study actively, comparing, contrasting, organizing.

They participate actively in class.

Conventional course formats do little to facilitate these patterns,  
So, How shall we do better?

## A) INTERTEACHING

1. An **"inter teach"** is a mutually probing, mutually informing conversation between two people. It lasts about 30 minutes, and deals with the main points in a specified reading assignment. The first one is scheduled for our next class meeting.
2. A **"Preparation Guide"** will be provided in advance, indicating the source material, the due date, and what should be stressed. The first three are supplied as hard copies today; they subsequently will be supplied via BlackBoard.

The Guides may be used as guides for studying, and will probably provide the structure for supplementary notes. **During interteaching**, however, supplementary notes should be used little if at all. **You should use that time for discussing, not reading.**  
Use the Guide as a prompt.

3. As you interteach, be sure that you can clearly **define** any of the **key concepts** that are involved in the study questions, even if the questions do not specifically ask for definitions. If you do this, there will be less danger of, and less damage resulting from possible misinterpretation of the questions. If you are unsure, or if you disagree about an answer, check it out with me or with one of the advanced students, who will be assisting in the course. Our job during interteaching will be to provide individual help and clarification for those who request it. If you never have difficulty or disagreements, or if you consistently finish early, you probably are not preparing adequately.





## The Final Examination

The Final Examination will be based upon questions supplied at least two weeks in advance, to be hand-written during the scheduled exam period. A summary of no more than 200 words can be prepared in advance to aid remembering during the exam, and must be turned in with the examination book.

## Papers

See "Final examination or paper" (Item C, above): The paper is due on the first day of the final exam period.

Undergraduates may complete either this requirement or take the Final Exam, each for 30% of their grade.

Graduate students must complete both requirements, with each counting 23% toward the final grade.

## Late papers policy

A late final paper may result in an Incomplete in the course.

## Schedule of Class Topics and Assignments

The course content will be substantially defined by the 30 Preparation Guides, with preparation assigned as indicated above.

In case we run short of time, let me remind you now:

**Please turn in a completed Questionnaire before leaving.**

**Then: Acquire the Book,**

**Get yourself on Blackboard.**

**(The first three reading assignments, copied from the textbook, are also available there)**

**Prepare for Interteaching on Guide # 1 at our next meeting.**

## MISCELLANEOUS ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Supplementary materials: You would be wise to acquire two folders:

The usual method of distribution will be via **BLACKBOARD**.

a) Lecture notes (including your own supplementary notes)

b) Preparation Guides **THE FIRST ONE IS FOR OUR NEXT MEETING.**

By virtue of your registration, you are entitled to a "\_\_\_\_@temple.edu" account, and you should be automatically given access to the Blackboard facility for this course. (Sometimes I've had to manually enter a person's address)

I anticipate that the class notes of a given day will be posted for downloading and printing by 8:30 that morning if not before.

Preparation Guides will be posted roughly a week before you need them.

Thus, you need, very soon, to take care of the details for gaining access to Blackboard,  
Via the TU Portal

Regarding enrollment, and "green cards," our limit is based on room size & availability of books.

Due to an impending "certification crisis" in Pennsylvania,  
I've allowed the enrollment to push the limits;  
Once we get going, the size of the class should not impair the quality of the course.  
The presence of both undergraduates and master's level students works to our advantage.

### **FINALLY, WHAT IS THE COURSE TO BE ABOUT ?**

This will be a no-nonsense, scientific approach; terms will have precise, specific usage.

The difficult part -- many of the words are already in your vocabulary,  
but used differently, or at least less precisely.

**Rather than "translating" these terms into ordinary usage,  
you will need to learn to use them in this special way.**

We shall be addressing causes of human action, but in so doing,  
we will be challenging the kind of explanation that you and I learned at home.

Within our culture, consciousness and rational thought are taken as basic to human functioning; they seem straightforward, non-mysterious, and directly accessible via self-examination. Unconscious human action is acknowledged but is commonly viewed as mysterious or even sinister, as revealed in fascinations over "primal unconscious urges" and the like. An alternative viewpoint will be presented here, one that accepts action without awareness as basic, benign, and relatively non-mysterious. In this view, it is awareness that is more difficult to account for, but the origins of awareness and of logical action can be understood in terms of the same principles that apply to more basic functioning. In the context of these developments, we will examine what is involved when we speak of knowing, of acting rationally, and of being aware.

You will see that in this approach, the behavior of the scientist, or of the interpreter,  
is included within the science, or the interpretation.

That is, we will sometimes be talking about my behavior,  
as well as yours, and that of others.

You will affect what I do during the coming week,  
just as I will be affecting what you do.

## PREPARATION GUIDE # 1

Based on Pp. 1 – 12 of **Principles of Behavior ( 6<sup>th</sup> Edition)**, by Malott  
For **interteaching on Friday, 23 January**.

- 1) What is the difference between *positive reinforcer* and *positive reinforcement* ?  
Describe two ways in which the story about Dawn, Sid and Rod illustrates the distinction.
- 2) Given that we can easily remember stimuli or events longer than a minute,  
why is delayed delivery of a reinforcer likely to be so much less effective  
than immediate delivery?  
Explain, and illustrate with an example of your own devising.
- 3) An item from the book (pp. 4-5) :  
“Give an example of something that is probably a reinforcer for some people and not for others.”
- 4) Looking ahead (perhaps far ahead), what, other than other peoples’ attention,  
could have been an effective consequence of Eric’s tantruming?
- 5) Often, when teachers express “concern about a child’s behavior”  
they are talking about a child’s actions that are offensive or disruptive to others.  
  
How does Malott’s definition of behavior differ from this?
- 6) Thought question ( ☺ ): For a behavior analyst, thinking is behaving.  
Must one buy into this  
to view effective teaching as performance management?  
  
Why, or why not?
- 7) Have any changes in your repertoire occurred since the beginning of this course?  
  
If so, what were those changes?
- 8) Occasionally I’ve heard someone say, “I tried a reinforcement procedure, but it didn’t work.?”  
  
Specifically, how might a reinforcer assessment have been relevant to this?
- 9) Identify a major relationship between behavior analysis and biology.
- 10) Compare the free-operant rate of professors’ joke-telling in two of your courses.  
  
Were there differing consequences in the two situations?  
  
How else do you suppose a behavior analyst would account for observed differences?

## PREPARATION GUIDE # 2

Based on Pp. 13- 20 of **Principles of Behavior ( 6<sup>th</sup> Edition)**, by Malott  
For **interteaching on Monday, 26 January.**

- 1) What is involved in accomplishing the baseline period of a behavioral intervention?  
How is it important for what comes later?
- 2) While Malott doesn't introduce it until later,  
Reinforcement contingencies are often identified through an "A-B-C analysis,"  
  
Where "A" stands for "Antecedent"  
"B" stands for "Behavior" (of concern)  
And "C" stands for "Consequence."  
  
a) Substitute those terms into the appropriate positions in the diagram in the first column of p. 14.  
  
b) How would they apply to the grandmother's behavior, under Juke's arrangement?
- 3) What is the meaning of "contingent," as applied to parts a) and b) of the above question?
- 4) Explain, and illustrate with an example of your own devising:  
"Delayed reinforcement of one response  
is likely to be immediate reinforcement of a different response."
- 5) The "antecedent" part of a behavioral contingency is also called an "occasion."  
Thus, the antecedent is said to "set the occasion"  
For the specified behavior to be reinforced.

And, after this has consistently happened,  
We speak of the antecedent event "occasioning" the response.

Try using these terms for the situation in which Juke's grandmother  
occasions her husband's behavior.

- 6) Explain (from p. 17):  
"You might think rain is contingent on your going on picnics. But it probably is noncontingent.  
However, your going on picnics is contingent on its not raining (although that's not what we'd call  
a behavioral contingency."
- 7) What is the likely kind of explanation that a behavior analyst would give  
In accounting for the students' initial silence in response to Sid's questions? (p. 17).
- 8) Explain, and illustrate with an example, the author's basis for criticizing  
what he calls "the general rule of environmental quality."
- 9) Publishers often give advance payments to well-known authors.  
  
Is this bribery? Why, or why not?  
  
What specific behavior is it likely to have reinforced?  
  
In what way does it contribute to difficulty in a writer's career?