Course Name: Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis
Course ID: PSY 360
Semester: Spring 2027
Mode: Online Asynchronous

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| Instructor: | Melanie DuBard, Ph.D., BCBA-D |
| Email: | mdubard@umassd.edu |
| Office Hours: | Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 |
| Zoom Info: | Meeting ID: 7468659216 Passcode: 987148 |

## Course Description

This is an introductory course in applied behavior analysis (ABA). The focus will be on the basic principles of behavior, data collection and research methods, assessment of behavior, behavioral intervention, and applications of ABA across a wide range of populations, settings, and behaviors.

**Course Credits**: This is a 3-credit course

**Required Reading (you can purchase a hard copy, e-book, or rent this text):**

Miltenberger, R.G. (2023). *Behavior modification: Principles and procedures*. (7th ed.). Cengage Learning.

## Course Objectives

Following completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA).
- Explain the basic principles of behavior involved in ABA.
- Recognize the research methods and data collection procedures used in ABA.
- Identify the most common treatment components used in the field
- Demonstrate how the information can be applied to change a targeted behavioral excess or deficit.

## Communication Plan

### Expectations for Electronic Communication

Please use email *ONLY* when the subject is a personal and confidential matter. If the question you ask is of a nature that even one other person in the course could benefit from the answer, post the question in the appropriate discussion board forum.

I check my email daily, Monday through Friday, during normal business hours only. You can expect a reply from me via email within 24 hours during the workweek. You *may* get an email reply during the weekend, but that would be an exception, not the rule.

I will also check the discussion forums daily during the workweek. I will post often during the first weeks of the course and then drop off in activity while expecting participants to fill any void. Rest assured, however, I *will* be participating in what I hope will be lively discussions and will *always* reply to any discussion comment directed specifically at me.

## Time Considerations

Students should be prepared to spend a minimum of 2-3 hours a week on reading and course assignments. While you may feel that I'm displaying a lot of information to you every week, remember that in a traditional "live" course, you would be coming to class for 3 hours and then spending an

additional 3-6 hours (at least) outside of class on assignments and reading. In our online course environment, I expect that you will be spending those 2-3 "class hours" on your own, working on the concepts that you would usually get in a live lecture. Please be sure to budget your time accordingly!

## The Online Weekly Schedule

Starting with Module 1, the week will run from Sunday to Saturday. Each module's content will open on Saturday night at 11:59 PM, and that Module's content will be due by the following Saturday at 11:59 PM.

- Day 1: Sunday
- Day2: Monday
- Day 3: Tuesday
- Day 4: Wednesday
- Day 5: Thursday
- Day 6: Friday
- Day 7: Saturday

## Online Discussions

Substantive participation in online discussions should:

- Add value to the discussion and avoid simply repeating, agreeing with, or answering yes or no to peers' comments.
- Challenge comments in class, including those of the facilitator.
- Ask insightful questions.
- Answer other people's questions.
- Exemplify the point with real-life events, when possible.
- Make comments that are relevant to the course content and objectives.

Things to keep in mind as you write discussion posts and communicate with other students:

- Share an experience related to the discussion. Comment on other participants' experiences that relate to the course.
- Ask other students questions about their ideas and experiences that are related to the course.
- Challenge a point that another participant made respectfully. Offer a different perspective on an idea that is being discussed.
- Give insights gained from assigned readings for the week. If you need more information, ask the participants a question about the week's reading.
- Discuss a work issue that is related to the course or discussion and ask for feedback.
- Relate how you have applied what you have read, learned, or discussed regarding the course to your personal and professional life.
- Share another resource, such as Web links, books, etc., that you have used to answer other participants' questions or as you explore the topics of the course (as it is a violation of copyright law to copy the actual page).

## Methods of Instruction

**Evaluation and Grading Breakdown**:

- Chapter Review Quizzes (10pts x 12) 120 points
- Engage & Expand assignments (10 pts x 26) 260 points
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- Behavior Project 100 points
- Behavior Project Check-ins (10 pts x 6) 60 points

**Total: 540 points**

**Explanation of Final Grade Components:**

**Chapter Review Quizzes**: For each chapter, there will be a brief, 10 item quiz over the content covered in that chapter. You may use your notes or any other information in the course to determine the answers. These quizzes are intended to be quick checks of your understanding of the information from each chapter.

**Engage Assignments:** There will be various assignments at the beginning of each module to introduce you to the topic for that module. Instructions and rubrics for each assignment will be posted. They will take a variety of formats from Kahoot, discussion boards, polls, annotations, and individual assignments.

**Expand Assignments:** There will be various assignments at the end of each module to help you apply or dig further into the topic of that module. Instructions and rubrics for each assignment will be posted. They will take a variety of formats from discussion boards, annotations, and individual assignments.

**Behavior Project**: Each student will complete a behavior project due at the end of the semester. Further instructions are provided following the syllabus.

**Behavior Project Check-ins:** To ensure success with the behavior project, components of the final project will be due throughout the semester, so students may turn in the work they are doing for feedback before turning in the completed final project. These components and due dates will be in the syllabus and posted in the modules in advance, so you may plan your work on the project.

**Grading Scale**:

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| A | 93-100 |
| A- | 90-92 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 83-86 |
| B- | 80-82 |
| C+ | 77-79 |
| C | 73-76 |
| C- | 70-72 |
| D+ | 67-69 |
| D | 63-66 |
| D- | 60-62 |
| F | Below 60 |

## Late Assignments

All assignments are expected to be completed by the assigned due date. If you will not be able to get an assignment completed by the due date, contact me by email **before** the due date. This is the only way you will be able to make up an assignment for full points.

Once the due date passes without any contact from you, make ups will only be allowed for work that is 1 week overdue or less and only for partial credit.

## University Policies

The link below provides information on:

- Workload and Class Planning Policies
- Academic Policies
- Accommodations and Support Policies

https://www.umassd.edu/provost/resourcesforfaculty/syllabus-language/

## Schedule

| Week/Date Beginning | Topic | Responsibilities |
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| Welcome | **Topics:**<br>• Welcome: Your Journey Begins Here! | **Reading:**<br>None; just go through the intro. to the course site<br><br>**Evaluation:**<br>Meet your Classmates (required to move to Module 1) |
| Module 1 | **Topics:**<br>• Review syllabus & structure of course<br>• Intro to Behavior Modification | **Reading**:<br>Chapter 1<br><br>**Evaluation:**<br>Expand Assignment: Characteristics of Behavior<br>Quiz<br>Behavior Project Check-In: Poll for Behavior Project |
| Module 2 | **Topic:**<br>• Observing & Recording Behavior | **Reading:**<br>Chapter 2<br><br>**Evaluation:**<br>Engage: Observation Discussion<br>Expand: Observing & Recording Behavior<br>Quiz<br>Behavior Project Check-In: Target Behavior |
| Module 3 | **Topic:**<br>• Graphing & Measuring change | **Readings**:<br>Chapter 3<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: Understanding Line Graphs Assignment-Level, Trend, & Variability<br>Expand: Graph a Data Set<br>Quiz<br>Behavior Project Check-In: Data Collection |
| Module 4 | **Topic:**<br>• Reinforcement | **Readings**:<br>Chapter 4<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: Law of Effect<br>Expand: Types of Reinforcement<br>Quiz |
| Module 5 | **Topic:**<br>• Punishment | **Readings**:<br>Chapters 6<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: What are your thoughts on the use of punishment?<br>Expand: Should those being treated get to choose?<br>Quiz<br>Behavior Project Check-In |

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| Module 6 | **Topic:**<br>• Extinction | **Readings**:<br>Chapters 5<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: Extinction gone wrong!<br>Expand: Back to the Grocery Store-Extinction<br>Quiz |
| Module 7 | **Topic:**<br>• Stimulus Control | **Readings**:<br>Chapter 7<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: Go ask your father!<br>Expand: Discrimination & Generalization<br>Quiz<br>Behavior Project Check-In: Intervention |
| Module 8 | **Topic:**<br>• Prompting & Transfer of Stimulus Control | **Readings**:<br>Chapters 10<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: Transfer of Stimulus Control Kahoot<br>Expand: How do you learn best?<br>Quiz<br>Behavior Project Check-In: Intervention Data & Analysis |
| Module 9 | **Topic:**<br>• Chaining | **Readings**:<br>Chapter 11<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: Task Analysis-Breaking Down Complex Tasks<br>Expand: Which chaining method would you use?<br>Quiz |
| Module 10 | **Topic:**<br>• Functional assessment | **Readings**:<br>Chapter 13<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: Thinking about function…<br>Expand: Functional Assessment: What's the function?<br>Expand: Functional Assessment Scenarios<br>Quiz |
| Module 11 | **Topic:**<br>• Differential reinforcement | **Readings**:<br>Chapter 15<br><br>**Evaluation**:<br>Engage: Differential Reinforcement Kahoot<br>Expand: Examples of Differential Reinforcement<br>Quiz |
| Module 12 | **Topic:**<br>Antecedent control procedures | **Readings**:<br>Chapter 16<br><br>**Evaluation**: |

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| | | Engage: What tricks do you use?<br>Expand: How would you intervene?<br>Quiz |
| Final Project | | Behavior Project Due<br>Peer Reviews (2 peers) Due |

Behavior Project
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1) Each student will complete a behavior project on one of their own behaviors over the course of the semester.
2) Throughout the semester, different components of the project will be due so you can receive feedback and keep you on track in the behavior project check-ins.
3) The assignment should include the following components:
    a. Identify a behavior of your own that you want to change. Why do you want to change that behavior?
        i. For example: study more, read more, increase steps, work out more, etc.
    b. Create a behavior label and operationally define your behavior in observable terms.
        i. For example: Going to the gym: arriving at the workout location of my choice, going inside, choosing an activity, working out for a duration not less than 45 minutes. (I will use my Apple Watch as a data collection tool).
    c. Identify a data collection measure and explain why it is the correct one based on the behavior you have chosen to target. Make sure you use behavior analytic language.
        i. For example: I am going to code the frequency of times I go to the gym each week. This is appropriate because I can count each day I attend the gym (as long as it meets my operational definition).
    d. Take baseline data on your behavior. Use the data collection measure identified above.
        i. Take data for 3-5 days before intervening to get a good sample of the behavior without doing anything new. Summarize your baseline data. What did it show you about your behavior?
    e. Identify an intervention and explain why you chose it. What is your goal? Make sure to use behavior analytic language.
        i. Think of an intervention or set of strategies to increase the behavior you are targeting. When you are creating an intervention for your own behavior this often involves meeting a goal or making a commitment. For example: I will go to the gym 4 days a week for a duration of at least 45 minutes. If I am going only 2 days a week at baseline, the intervention is what I will do to improve from 2 to 4 days. If I don't meet my goal _____ will happen. If I do meet my goal, I will reward myself with _____.
        ii. You will come up with an intervention you can implement on yourself.
    f. Implement the intervention. For this point you can say how long you implemented your intervention, where, etc.
        i. This should occur long enough to collect 3-5 data points.
        ii. For my gym example this would be 3-5 weeks to see if I hit 4 days per week.
    g. Continue to take data on the behavior.
        i. Continue taking data the same way as in baseline (summarize your data). Here you can include your raw data from your datasheet, pics from your app or iPhone if you

used those. I want to see the raw data you will be visually displaying in the next point.

h. Create a method to visually display your data.
    i. If you are confident with excel, make your graph in that format. You may also use google sheets, a word table or draw it on a piece of paper to turn it in. You need to make sure whatever format you use complies with the rules for visual displays for data (e.g., think Chapter 3 that we covered early in the semester).
i. Evaluate the effectiveness of your intervention. (It does not have to work. That is not the point of this project. The point is to try something new 😊 ).
    i. Basically, did it work? Did you meet your goal? Why or why not?
j. Write a summary about your experience with the project. Was it easy or difficulty? Why? What did you learn?

4) The final project that you will turn in at the end of the semester must be a video presentation of your project that reviews the information in a-j above. You will receive feedback on each component as you submit it so the presentation should be putting together the components that you have been working on throughout the semester.
    a. The final project must include a presentation with slides either in Prezi, PowerPoint, google slides, zoom, or some other format where you present text and graphics (maybe pictures) that explain the components of your project.
    b. I want to see you presenting it. So, you must be visible to me on the screen not just your voice.
    c. It should not be more than 8-10 minutes in duration.
    d. You will submit this using the link in Canvas through the Harmonize tool that we have used in many assignments this semester.
    e. Once you submit your presentation, you will conduct a peer review of two of your peers' projects. Instructions will be provided in Canvas.
5) For grading purposes, points will be assessed as follows based on the components required as listed above:
    a. 5 points (identify behavior)
    b. 10 points (label & definition
    c. 10 points (data collection measure)
    d. 5 points (baseline data collection)
    e. 10 points (intervention plan)
    f. 5 points (implement intervention)
    g. 5 points (intervention data)
    h. 15 points (visual display of data)
    i. 15 points (evaluate effectiveness & why)
    j. 10 points (summary)
    k. 10 points for video presentation with PowerPoint or other slides