BEHV 5810.715: PORTL Practicum  
Fall 2017

Instructors:
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Time and place:
Thursdays, 6:00 – 8:15 pm in LANG 211
Mary’s office hours: Thursdays from 3:00 - 4:30 pm and by appointment

Final exam:
Students will present their final projects in class on Dec 7 and Dec 14 in lieu of a final exam.

Course description:
In this class, students will see basic behavior principles in action using a table-top shaping game called PORTL. During the exercises, students will practice skills that are essential for teaching and research, including developing and executing shaping plans, arranging an appropriate teaching environment (and building apparatuses), designing reinforcement systems, recording behavior, and adjusting criteria based on the learner’s behavior. Students will also learn about the emotions that accompany behavior change. At the end of the semester, students will use the skills learned during the class to design and execute their own inquiry project into a behavior phenomenon or process of their choice. A selection of readings will help illustrate basic concepts, and short lectures will accompany some of the units to help further clarify important principles. However, the majority of each class period will involve hands-on activities.

Course objectives:
1. Design shaping plans, including writing objectives, developing reinforcement systems and measurement systems, and selecting an appropriate starting point and sequence of steps.
2. Implement shaping plans, including arranging an appropriate teaching environment, delivering stimuli and reinforcers, measuring behavior, and adjusting criteria based on the behavior of the learner.
3. Describe how different procedures produce different behavior changes and emotional changes, and use this as a guide to develop and adjust teaching plans.
4. Describe the behavior analytic approach to designing programs and conducting research.
5. Design and implement a PORTL inquiry project.

Textbooks:
A reading packet is available at CopyPro. Ask for BEHV 5810.715: PORTL Practicum.
Student activities and grades:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Activity</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lab reports</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>2. Reading comments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>3. Final project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>4. Reflection paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Letter grades: 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, <60% = F

Lab reports (30% of grade)
After each set of in-class PORTL exercises, you will turn in a lab report to document and reflect on your experience. You will write a short paragraph for each exercise explaining what you learned from the exercise, new things it made you think about, and/or how the exercise will change the way you teach in the future. Your lab report should be turned in on BlackBoard before the start of the next class.

Reading comments (20% of grade)
Readings should be completed before the class in which the reading is assigned. For each reading, you will need to submit a comment on BlackBoard before class. This should be a short paragraph discussing something you found intriguing in the reading, something you had a question about, or even something that you disagreed with. Your submission does not need to be long, but it should demonstrate familiarity with the reading.

Final project (30% of grade)
You will design your own PORTL inquiry project at the end of the semester. We will discuss the project in class on Nov 9, and then you will have two class periods (Nov 16 and Nov 30) to work on your project in class. You will present a summary of your project to the class at the end of the semester as part of your final grade.
For your project you will:
1. Pick a topic or question related to a particular behavior phenomenon that interests you.
2. Design a way to study this in PORTL, including writing a step-by-step program.
3. Try your program with a minimum of two learners.
4. Evaluate your program and make revisions or adjustments as needed.
5. Test your revised program with a minimum of three learners.
6. Present your project at the end of the semester and turn in a short written report summarizing your project.

Reflection paper (20% of grade)
At the end of the semester, you will write a five-page paper describing what you learned during this class. You may want to address what you learned from particular PORTL exercises, as well as what you learned in general about behavior principles, designing and executing instructional programs, and conducting research. You may also include things you learned from your final project, the class readings, and the class lectures.
**Academic dishonesty**
Students who cheat or plagiarize will receive a "0" for that assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. Please view the UNT catalog for more information about the University's policies on cheating and plagiarism.

**ADA statement**
The Department of Behavior Analysis, in cooperation with The Office of Disability Accommodation, makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request to me.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class topic and reading assignments</th>
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| Aug 31 | *Class introduction*  
Lecture: PORTL – Your Portable Skinner Box |
| Sept 7 | *Teaching tools and their execution*  
Reading 1: Ferster (1953). The use of the free operant in the analysis of behavior  
Lecture: To shape...  
PORTL exercises in class |
| Sept 14 | *Assessing the initial repertoire*  
PORTL exercises in class |
| Sept 21 | *Shaping, part 1*  
Reading 3: Herrick (1964). The successive differentiation of a lever displacement response  
PORTL exercises in class |
| Sept 28 | *Shaping, part 2*  
Reading 4: Peterson (2004). A day of great illumination: B.F. Skinner’s discover of shaping  
PORTL exercises in class |
| Oct 5 | *Schedules of reinforcement*  
Reading 5: Skinner (1948). ‘Superstition’ in the pigeon  
PORTL exercises in class |
| Oct 12 | *Stimulus control*  
Reading 6: Reynolds (1961) Attention in the pigeon  
7: Terrace (1963a) Errorless transfer of a discrimination across two continua  
8: Terrace (1963b) Errorless discrimination learning in the pigeon: Effects of chlorpromazine and imipramine  
PORTL exercises in class |
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| Oct 19 | *Chains and conditioned reinforcement*                              | 9: Skinner (1934). The extinction of chained reflexes  
10: Kelleher (1961). Schedules of conditioned reinforcement during experimental extinction  
11: Findley and Brady (1965). Facilitation of large ratio performance by use of conditioned reinforcement  
12: Kelleher and Fry (1962). Stimulus functions in chained and fixed-interval schedules | PORTL exercises in class |
| Nov 2  | *Writing shaping plans and planning instruction*                      | 14: Mager (1997, pp. 1-12, 43-49, 156-171). Preparing instructional objectives | PORTL exercises in class |
| Nov 9  | *Using PORTL to replicate research and inquire about research questions* | 15: Skinner (1956). A case history in scientific method | PORTL exercises in class |
| Nov 16 | *Using PORTL for research, part 1*                                   | 16: Sidman (2007). The analysis of behavior: What’s in it for us? Begin working on research projects |
| Nov 23 | ** No class: Thanksgiving **                                        |         |                                                                      |
| Nov 30 | *Using PORTL for research, part 2*                                   | none    | Continue working on individual research projects                     |
| Dec 7  | Class presentations                                                 |         | Each student will present a summary of his/her research project     |
| Dec 14 | ** Finals week **                                                   |         | Reflection paper due                                                 |
|        | Class presentations (continued)                                     |         | Students will finish presenting their research projects             |