BEHV 5330

Verbal Behavior & the Analysis of Human Behavior
Credits: 03

Department of Behavior Analysis
The University of North Texas

Fall, 2015

COURSE INSTRUCTORS: Traci Cihon, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA
Daniele Ortu, PhD
Jennifer Wade, PhD

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION:
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WEB SITE ADDRESS: https://learn.unt.edu

COURSE TIME: Thursday 6:00 pm to 8:50 pm (Physics 112)

COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS

Official Course Description
Use of behavior analysis in understanding the nature and development of human communication. Explores how and why communication fails; develops guidelines for enhancing communication through understanding of the underlying behavioral processes.

Additional Course Description
The purpose of this course is to introduce a behavioral framework for the analysis of verbal behavior. Skinner (1957) defined verbal behavior as behavior that is mediated through the reinforcement provided by another individual. He provided a framework of several elementary verbal operants defined by the environmental controlling variables and reinforced via indirect action on the environment. In this course, students will learn about Skinner’s analysis of verbal behavior and the
controlling variables associated with each verbal operant. In addition, we will discuss and analyze multiply-controlled verbal operants and extensions of Skinner’s analysis. Students will read current research and conceptual pieces informed by Skinner’s analysis and determine how it has impacted our understanding of verbal behavior and what is commonly conceptualized as “language.”

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course has been divided into units. Each unit has specific corresponding reading objectives that will be used as guides for Interteaching discussions. The units for the course are listed at the end of the syllabus. The reading objectives are available on the course website.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES & EVALUATION

Interteaching
The course will be run using a modified Interteaching format (c.f., Boyce & Hineline, 2002). Students will be required to complete the Reading Objectives for the corresponding unit. Students should bring their prepared responses to class. Preparation does not necessarily entail complete essay answers to each objective. Instead, verbal prompts that enable a fluent discussion of the material qualifies as preparation for interteaching in class. During class, students will divide into pairs to discuss the material from the readings. Approximately one-third of the class time will be spent in these discussion pairs. Each week, students should select new partners (or persons with whom they have not worked before). At the end of the Interteaching session, students will create a brief powerpoint presentation reviewing the most important/interesting aspects of the interteaching session.

After each interteach, one or more interteach groups will be selected by the course instructors to present to the rest of the class. All other presentations will be submitted to the instructors via BlackBoard. An interteaching participation grade is based upon a combination of weekly powerpoint presentation submissions, one or more presentations to the entire class, and consistent preparedness/active contributions during time allotted to interteaching. Following each interteach, the course instructor(s) will deliver a brief, clarifying lecture informed by the information detailed in the reading/discussion objectives. There will be 13 Interteaching sessions. PowerPoints will be worth 15 points each (195 total points) and presentation(s) will be worth 45 points. In summary, students can accumulate up to 240 points in the Interteaching component of the course.

Online Tutorial
Students will complete an online tutorial that has been structured in a format consistent with the personalized system of instruction (PSI; cf., Keller, 1968). The online tutorial covers the basic concepts and ideas that will serve as the building blocks that will allow for more in-depth discussion of the material. Suggested completion dates for the specific units in the online tutorial are noted on the course schedule at the end of the syllabus. The online tutorial can be accessed at www.FoxyLearning.com. Upon purchasing the tutorial, students should “connect” to the course using this code: 207098. This can be accomplished, after creating an account, by going to the ‘myLearning’ section and clicking on ‘the connect a course’ button. Satisfactory completion of the final quiz for the online tutorial will be worth 45 points.
**SAFMEDS**
See All Fast Minute Each Day Shuffle (SAFMEDS) is an instructional tool that allows students to become both fast and accurate with a variety of course content including basic concepts and terms and definitions (cf., Eshleman, 1985). SAFMEDS will be used to assist students in identifying the controlling variables and corresponding definitions for various vocabulary associated with the topic of verbal behavior. The goal for the final checkout is 20 correct responses per minute, with the pinpointed learning channel being: see term/say definition.

Fifty total points are available for the SAFMEDS checkouts. Points will be awarded based on the following criteria and students have until November 12th.

- **20+ cpm** 50 points
- **15-19 cpm** 25 points
- **10-14 cpm** 12 points
- **5-9 cpm** 6 points
- **4 or less cpm** 3 points

cpm = correct responses per minute

**SAFMEDS Alternative Assignment**
Students who would prefer to not use SAFMEDS as a study tool can earn their 50 points by completing an alternative assignment. Students interested in this option should first read Meindl et al. (2013) and construct a brief summary of the article. Then, students interested in this option will create a second set of SAFMEDS to parallel the deck provided in this course. The student created terms and definitions should maintain the critical features of the definitions in the instructor provided SAFMEDS, maintain brevity in the alternative definitions, and include a “matched” card for at least 25 of the cards in the instructor provided deck. Two points will be awarded for each student created card that fits the aforementioned criteria (50 possible points). The alternative assignment is also due by November 12, 2015.

**Midterm Exam**
Half of the class session on October 15th will be spent taking a midterm exam. Material from the beginning of the semester through October 8th will be covered on this exam. The exam will be a combination of True or False Questions, short answer questions, and two short essays from your choice of four essay options (50 points).

**Research Application Paper**
Each student will select one research article; pertaining to one or more verbal operants (students must gain approval before choosing an article). The research application assignment should include a one paragraph (4 to 6 sentence) summary of the article, a description (approximately 1 page) of: (a) how the verbal relation(s) addressed in the article relate to one or more verbal operant(s) reviewed by Skinner (make sure to discuss the relevant controlling variables—ex: stimulus control); (b) the implications or relevance for individuals with developmental disabilities; and (c) how you might conduct a meaningful extension of that research. The description should go beyond simply proposing a replication with different participants or restating a direction for future research proposed by the author(s). The article may be selected from the provided list, or students may choose another article (in the latter case, please attach a copy of the article along with the paper and obtain approval from the course instructors). The
research application assignment will be worth 50 points.

**Final Paper**

Each student will prepare a literature review pertaining to a particular verbal operant or an extension of Skinner’s (1957) analysis of verbal behavior. Students choosing the literature review may select from any topic covered in class (or may select a topic that was not covered in class with permission of the course instructors). Students choosing the VB extension analysis may choose from: stimulus equivalence as it pertains to verbal behavior, relational frame theory, naming, joint control, or verbal behavior developmental theory. There is not a page limit for the final paper, as the length will vary with respect to the extension, research proposal topic, or operant of interest. Students are free to organize the paper in the best way that fits their topic and are encouraged to discuss their paper with the instructors at several points throughout the semester.

Final papers will be evaluated as if they were undergoing review for publication in a professional, peer-reviewed journal. The final paper will be worth 100 points. Students who choose to complete a literature review or an extension analysis will receive final grades based on the following mock editorial decisions: No Revisions Necessary (100 pts), Accept with Minor Revisions (90 pts), Accept with Major Revisions (75 pts), Reject with an Invitation to Resubmit (60 pts), or Reject (50 pts).

**Concept Paper**

Students will be required to select a topic and a thesis for their Concept Paper. Students should schedule a meeting with the instructor prior to that week to discuss topic and thesis selections. Each student will prepare a 1-3 page paper prior to completion of the final paper that includes 1) a detailed topic/thesis statement that includes either the specific area of research or the specific research question you plan to address in your final paper, 2) the rationale for selecting your topic/thesis (e.g., why it is important, what led you to select this topic/thesis, what you think you will learn from researching said topic/thesis), 3) your plan for conducting your research (i.e., method), and 4) a preliminary list of articles you plan to include. While not required, we strongly urge you to discuss your topic/thesis with one or more of the course instructors prior to submitting your Concept Paper in preparation for your Final Paper. Your concept paper must adhere to APA formatting guidelines and will be worth 45 points.

**Final Paper Draft for Peer Review**

A draft of your final paper will be due in class on November 12th. Please bring in your draft with your name on the final page of the paper (so that course instructors can assign credit for completion but this page can be removed before peer reviews of drafts). Students will receive credit for finishing the draft on time (60 pts) and participating in a double blind review of another student’s paper (45 pts). Each paper should include a minimum of ten references and be in Times New Roman, 12 pt font, and be formatted according to APA style requirements.

**Peer Reviews**

Peer reviews are due on November 19th. Your review should be objective in nature, alluding to strengths and areas for improvement. Your review should refer to material
from the course to make suggestions for improvements. Reviews should be approximately 2-4 pages in length. Please bring two copies of your peer review to class; the copy kept by the course instructors should have your name while the copy provided for your student peer should not have your name. Peer review comments will be worth 45 points.

POINT SUMMARY

Interteaching = 240 total points
  
  Powerpoint Presentations 13 @ 15 points each = 195 points
  
  Presentation(s) = 45 points

Online Tutorial = 45 points

SAFMEDS/SAFMEDS Alternative = 50 points

Midterm Exam = 50 points

Research Application Paper = 50 points

Final Paper = 250 points
  
  Concept Paper = 45 points
  
  Final Paper Draft = 60 points
  
  Peer Review = 45 points
  
  Final Paper = 100 points

Total Points Possible = 685 points

GRADE EQUIVALENTS (% of 685 points earned):

A: 90% to 100%    B: 80% to 89%    C: 70% to 79%    F: 69% or less

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at http://www.unt.edu/oda/apply/index.html. Also, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation in the Sage Hall (room 167) or call them at (940) 565-4323.

POLICIES

No individual exceptions can be made to the syllabus.

Re-grades: If a student believes an error has been made in grading, a written request for reconsideration of the item(s) in question may be submitted within 1 week of receipt of the graded material. The written request should specify the item(s) in question, and the reason the
student believes the answer given was correct, citing relevant sources (e.g., page number from readings on which the answer was based).

**Absences:** If a student must be absent for any reason, s/he should arrange to submit the applicable written assignment early, as no assignments turned in after the due date can be accepted. Students are responsible for making their own arrangements to obtain information from any missed class period. There will be no additional make-up opportunities for missed examinations.

**Student Conduct:** Each student automatically certifies that any material submitted for grading is his/her own independent work. UNT policies require reporting of plagiarism or any suspected violations that constitute possible academic misconduct. Students are responsible for being familiar with the Code of Student Conduct.

Group work is encouraged; however, in the past there have been situations in which group work could have been considered cheating or plagiarism. “Legitimate” group work takes advantage of consultation with your peers, provides you with ideas, suggestions, corrections, etc., which you take into consideration in the development of your unique and individual product. Examples include reading the text and writing answers to the study guide items, then working closely with other students to compare study guide answers, and to attempt to resolve different understandings. Failing to do the reading, and memorizing answers that another student has written for the study guide is not legitimate group work; it is cheating. Drafting the assignments, then comparing specific aspects of your product to others’ is appropriate. Copying someone else’s work products (or making your work available to another student to copy) is not legitimate; it is cheating. Always, if you are unsure about boundaries of legitimate group work, please (1) ask for clarification from the instructor, and (2) make full disclosure so that there is no question about your intentions. We are very happy to talk about these boundaries and work with you to maximize your learning and maintain individual accountability.

**Assistance:** Students are encouraged to contact the instructor (by email or during office hours) or teaching assistant any time clarification or additional help in understanding the material is needed. Any questions that will aid you in mastering the material are welcomed.

**Diversity Statement:** It is the policy of the University of North Texas (and this instructor) not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment policies. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations, the university through its diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences (including sexual orientation) inconsistent with its mission and educational goals. Direct questions or concerns to the equal opportunity office, (940) 565-2456, or the dean of students, (940) 565-2648. TTY access is available through Relay Texas: (800) 735-2989.

**REQUIRED TEXT, ARTICLES, AND COURSE MATERIALS**


**Unit 1: Course Introduction & Syllabus - Daniele & Traci**  
*August 27, 2015*


**Unit 2: Functional Analysis of Verbal Behavior - Traci**  
*September 3, 2015*


**Unit 3: The Importance of Social Reinforcers - Traci**  
*September 10, 2015*


**Unit 4: Verbal Operants - Motivating Operations & Mands - Traci**  
*September 17, 2015*


Unit 5: Verbal Operants - Codics & Duplicates - Jenny
September 24, 2015


Unit 6: Verbal Operants - Tacts - Jenny
October 1, 2015


Unit 7: Verbal Operants - Intraverbals - Daniele
October 8, 2015


Unit 8: The Role of the Listener & Audience Control - Jenny
October 15, 2015


Unit 9: Multiple Control - Traci
October 22, 2015


Unit 10: Autoclitics - Jenny
October 29, 2015


Unit 11: Stimulus Equivalence & Relational Frame Theory - Daniele
November 5, 2015


Skinner (1957). Chapter 8 in *Verbal Behavior*.

**Unit 12: Peer Review of Papers**
*November 12, 2015*

**Unit 13: Responses from Other Disciplines - Then & Now - Traci**
*November 19, 2015*


**No Class - Thanksgiving**
*November 26, 2015*

**Unit 14: Connections with Other Disciplines - Daniele, Jenny & Traci**
*December 3, 2015*


**Unit 15: Moving Forward - Culture & More - Daniele**

December 10, 2015


**OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS**

*(and options for the research application assignment)*


*Kodak, T, & Clements, A. (2009) Acquisition of mands and tacts with concurrent echoic


### Weekly Class Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| **1**   | **Unit 1:** Review Syllabus; Course Introduction  
**Readings:** Bailey & Wallander (1999); Eshleman (1991); Lloyd (1994)  
Interteach Practice Session |
| **2**   | **Unit 2:** Functional Analysis of Verbal Behavior & Radical Behaviorism  
**Readings:** Skinner (1957) Chapters 1&2; Palmer et al. (2004); Skinner (1945)  
Interteach, Presentations, & Clarifying Lecture  
**Online Tutorial:** Suggested completion, Lessons 1-3 |
| **3**   | **Unit 3:** The Importance of Social Reinforcers  
**Readings:** Skinner (1953) Chapter 19; Greer & Du (2015); Palmer (1996)  
Interteach, Presentations, & Clarifying Lecture |
| **4**   | **Unit 4:** Verbal Operants: MOs & Mands  
**Readings:** Skinner (1957) Chapter 3; Miguel (2013); Shafer (1994)  
Interteach, Presentations, & Clarifying Lecture |
| **5**   | **Unit 5:** Verbal Operants: Codics & Duplicates  
**Readings:** Skinner (1957) Chapter 4; Michael (1982)  
Interteach, Presentations, & Clarifying Lecture |
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Interteach, Presentations, &amp; Clarifying Lecture</th>
<th>Due:</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>October 1, 2015</td>
<td>Unit 6: Verbal Operants: Tacts&lt;br&gt;Reading: Skinner (1957) Chapter 5; Lorah et al. (2014)&lt;br&gt;Interteach, Presentations, &amp; Clarifying Lecture</td>
<td><strong>RESEARCH APPLICATION PAPER</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>October 8, 2015</td>
<td>Unit 7: Verbal Operants: Intraverbals&lt;br&gt;Reading: Eikeseth &amp; Smith (2013); Ortu (2012); Palmer (2009); Vargas (1982)&lt;br&gt;Interteach, Presentations, &amp; Clarifying Lecture&lt;br&gt;Online Tutorial: Suggested completion, Lessons 1-19</td>
<td><strong>CONCEPT PAPER</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>MIDTERM EXAM</strong></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>October 22, 2015</td>
<td>Unit 9: Multiple Control&lt;br&gt;Reading: Skinner (1957) Chapters 9-11; Gamba et al. (2015); Michael et al. (2011)&lt;br&gt;Interteach, Presentations, &amp; Clarifying Lecture&lt;br&gt;Online Tutorial: Suggested completion, Lessons 1-44</td>
<td><strong>FINAL PAPER DRAFT FOR PEER REVIEW</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>November 12, 2015</td>
<td>Unit 12: Peer Review of Papers</td>
<td><strong>FINAL PAPER DRAFT FOR PEER REVIEW</strong></td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Unit</td>
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<td>November 19, 2015</td>
<td><strong>Unit 13:</strong> Responses from Other Disciplines - Then &amp; Now</td>
<td>Carr et al (2015); Chomsky (1959); Elman (1993); MacCorquodale (1970); Palmer (2006)</td>
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<td><strong>PEER REVIEW OF PAPER</strong>**</td>
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<td>November 26, 2015</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>December 3, 2015</td>
<td><strong>Unit 14:</strong> Connections Between VB &amp; Other Disciplines</td>
<td>Field &amp; Hineline (2009); Guerin (1992); Guerin &amp; Miyazaki (2006); Mace &amp; Lalli (1991); Matos &amp; Passos (2006); Palmer (1991)</td>
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<td><strong>FINAL PAPER</strong>**</td>
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<td>December 10, 2015</td>
<td><strong>Unit 15:</strong> Moving Forward; Culture &amp; More</td>
<td>Skinner (1957) Appendix: The Verbal Community; Glenn (1989); Harris (1964); Sundberg (1991); Vargas (2013)</td>
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*The professor has the right to adjust and modify this schedule based on the needs of the students*

*Components of this syllabus are courtesy of Dr. Nancy A. Neef and Dr. John O. Cooper*