

**Fall 2011 • Hofstra University • Department of Psychology
Behavior Modification (Psy 11-01) – Dr. Oskar Pineño**

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Time and place of lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9:35 am to 11:00 pm, in Breslin Hall 111.
Office: Hauser Hall (Department of Psychology) Room 116.
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 1 pm to 6:00 pm, or by appointment.

I will be available to speak with individual students immediately after class, during the office hours, and by appointment (scheduled by e-mail).

Course description

Psy 11: “Major principles of behavior modification through the application of reinforcement and token economies, techniques of self-control, desensitization, relaxation and biofeedback will be studied.”

Behavior modification concerns the analysis and modification of human behavior by employing the techniques derived over the last 60 years from the principles of animal and human learning. In this course we will review these techniques (e.g., reinforcement, extinction, punishment...) as well as their empirical foundations. The application of these techniques will be discussed in relation to not only the reduction and prevention of undesirable behavior, but also the enhancement of desirable behavior.

This introduction to the technology of behavioral change should endow students with the skills necessary to measure and analyze behavior, apply behavioral techniques to produce the desired change in the target behavior, and assess the effectiveness of treatment. The contents taught in this course will encourage students to think critically and objectively about behavior, focusing on *observable* behavior and its *observable* causes and consequences. Despite the rigorous, scientifically-oriented approach of behavior modification, by the end of the course the students should be able to creatively find and apply (sometimes simple) solutions to (generally complex) behavioral problems.

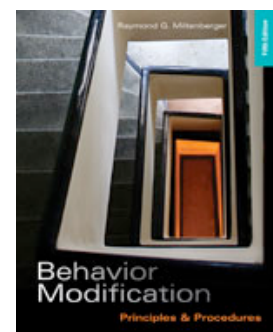
Prerequisite

Introduction to psychology (Psy 1, formerly Psy 111).

Required reading

Miltenberger, R. G. (2012). *Behavior Modification: Principles and Procedures*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

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Grade calculation

Your grade is calculated as follows:

A midterm exam:	30%
A final exam:	30%
A paper:	40%

You can see the above percentages of credit as *points*. During the course, you will accrue points as a function of your performance in the exams and the quality of your paper. At the end of the course, your points will be converted into your final grade, according to the following table:

Grade	Points (%)
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	85-89
B	80-84
B-	75-79
C+	70-74
C	65-69
C-	60-64
D+	55-59
D	50-54
F	0-49

Exams

The midterm and final exams will consist of 2 essay questions each. Each exam will be worth up to 30% of the final grade. A few days before the exam, a list of 6-8 candidate questions will be given to the students, being 2 of those questions then selected for the exam.

Assignment

A paper (essay) will be required in this course and it will be worth up to 40% of the final grade. The essay must be 2000 words in length (approx.). Essays of less than 1800 words will be automatically deducted 20 points (out of 40). The essay topic will be distributed in advance. In an effort to reduce our paper waste, the assignments will be accepted *only* in an electronic format: drafts will be provided by email and the final essays will be uploaded to Turnitin (on Blackboard). The submission deadline is indicated in the assignment schedule. No late essays will be accepted (unless excused by official documentation, e.g., your doctor).

Academic honesty

Plagiarism is a serious ethical and professional infraction. Hofstra’s policy on academic honesty reads: “The academic community assumes that work of any kind [...] is done, entirely, and without assistance, by and only for the individual(s) whose name(s) it bears.” Please refer to the “Procedure for Handling Violations of Academic Honesty by Undergraduate Students at Hofstra University” to be found at http://www.hofstra.edu/PDF/Senate_FPS_11.pdf, for details about what constitutes plagiarism, and Hofstra’s procedures for handling violations.

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Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional presentation of other people's work as your own. Papers containing material from any sources (including but not limited to textbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias, newspapers, televised programs, class handouts and blackboard postings), without explicitly referencing those sources will receive a grade of zero. This applies to direct quotations and paraphrases equally. If your paper is found to be plagiarized, it will receive a grade of zero, and, in compliance with official Hofstra policy, notice of this will be sent to the Dean's office.

Sources

When writing papers for this class, you are required to include a last section containing a list of all sources that you have either referred to in your paper, or consulted in researching your paper. Papers are not considered submitted until the list of sources is included. If your paper is found to contain material from sources that are not listed on this document, it is plagiarized, and will be punished as described above.

Special needs

If you have any concerns regarding a physical, psychological and/or learning disability that may have an impact upon your performance in this course, appropriate accommodations can be made on an individualized, as-needed basis after the needs, circumstances and documentation have been evaluated by the appropriate office on campus.

The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in 212 Memorial Hall. Telephone: 516-463-7074. Please see the Hofstra Guide to Pride, or see their site: <http://www.hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/stdis/index.html>. All disability-related information will be kept confidential.

A few rules

The following "common-sense" rules will be effective in this course:

- You are expected to *arrive on time*.
- Any kind of voluntary *disruptive behavior* will negatively affect your grade. Examples of disruptive behavior include, but are not limited to:
 - "Parallel chatting", or talking to somebody while the professor and/or another student is speaking, or when you are supposed to remain quiet.
 - Talking/texting on the cell phone. Please, turn your cell phone off before entering the class. Receiving a phone call or texting while you are in the class could lower your grade.
- No kind of *electronic device* (e.g., cell phones, beepers, MP3 players, PDAs...) will be allowed during the exams. Failing to follow this rule will result in your losing credit for the corresponding exam.

Your interaction with the professor and your peers should *always* be *respectful*. Offenses and insults of any kind, either overt or insinuated, have no room in our course. Failure to follow this rule will lower your grade.

Departmental goals and objectives for Psy 11

- Learning goal: Base of knowledge
 - (a) Students will learn and retain a broad base of knowledge in the various domains of Psychology in order to prepare for graduate schools in various disciplines of psychology or education and for a wide variety of postgraduate career opportunities, including but not limited to jobs in education, industry, human health services, and professional schools.
- Learning objectives
 - (a) Students will demonstrate through papers, reports, examinations, theses and other written means, systematic knowledge in foundational areas such as History of Psychology, Biological Bases of Behavior, Human Development, Social Psychology, Learning, and Cognitive Psychology.
 - (b) Students will demonstrate through papers, reports, examinations, theses and other written means, systematic knowledge in the applied areas, such as Clinical Psychology, Industrial-Organizational Psychology, and Psychology as it relates to Legal Settings.

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Tentative assignment schedule:

Date	Day	Topics (chapters) to be discussed
Sep. 06	T	Short intro to the course
Sep. 08	R	Chapter 1: Introduction to behavior modification
<i>Part I: Measurement of behavior and behavior change</i>		
Sep. 13	T	Chapter 2: Observing and recording behavior
Sep. 15	R	Chapter 3: Graphing behavior and measuring change
<i>Part II: Basic principles</i>		
Sep. 20	T	Chapter 4: Reinforcement
Sep. 22	R	Chapter 5: Extinction Chapter 6: Punishment
Sep. 27	T	Chapter 7: Stimulus control: Discrimination and generalization
Oct. 04	T	Chapter 8: Respondent conditioning
<i>Part III: Procedures to establish new behaviors</i>		
Oct. 06	R	Chapter 9: Shaping Chapter 10: Prompting and transfer of stimulus control <i>Assignment is announced</i>
Oct. 11	T	Chapter 11: Chaining
Oct. 13	R	Chapter 12: Behavioral skills training procedures
Oct. 18	T	<i>Class devoted to questions (Chapters 1-12)</i>
Oct. 20	R	Midterm exam (class time)
<i>Part IV: Procedures to increase desirable behaviors and decrease undesirable behaviors</i>		
Oct. 25	T	Chapter 13: Understanding problem behaviors through functional assessment
Oct. 27	R	Chapter 14: Applying extinction Chapter 15: Differential reinforcement
Nov. 01	T	Chapter 16: Antecedent control procedures
Nov. 03	R	Chapter 17: Using punishment: Time-out and response cost
Nov. 08	T	Chapter 18: Positive punishment procedures and the ethics of punishment
Nov. 10	R	Chapter 19: Promoting generalization <i>Assignment is due</i>
<i>Part V: Other behavior change procedures</i>		
Nov. 15	T	Chapter 20: Self-management Chapter 21: Habit reversal procedures
Nov. 17	R	Chapter 22: The token economy Chapter 23: Behavioral contracts
Nov. 22	T	Chapter 24: Fear and anxiety reduction procedures
Nov. 29	T	Chapter 25: Cognitive behavior modification
Dec. 01	R	<i>Class devoted to presentations (extra credit opportunity)</i>
Dec. 06	T	<i>Class devoted to presentations (extra credit opportunity)</i>
Dec. 08	R	<i>Class devoted to questions (Chapters 13-25)</i>
Dec. 13	T	Final exam (10:30 am – 12:30 pm)