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PSYX 270.50: Fundamentals of the Psychology of Learning (Online)

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PSYX 270 Online – Fundamentals of the Psychology of Learning

Fall Semester 2020

Instructor Information

Instructor: Nora Uhrich

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: nora.uhrich@umontana.edu

Required Text

Powell, R.A., Honey, P.L., & Symbaluk, D.G. (2016). Introduction to Learning and Behavior. (5th edition).

Course Objectives

There are three primary goals of this course: 1) become familiar with current knowledge and theory regarding learning processes, both elementary and complex, 2) gain exposure to the types of research methods used in investigating learning phenomena, and 3) gain a broader understanding of how learning processes impact everyday aspects of our lives.

The major topics to be covered include habituation, sensitization, Pavlovian conditioning, instrumental & operant learning, vicarious learning, stimulus control, schedules of reinforcement, limits of learning, and basic animal cognition.

The course emphasizes current theoretical and experimental investigations of learning processes as well as some exposure to current theories in animal cognition. While much of the research presented is based on non-human animals, this is not to suggest the application of these processes will not extend to humans. In fact, many of the basic learning processes extend throughout the animal kingdom, with differences being due to the interaction of the animal's evolutionary history, nervous system architecture, and ecology.

Course Assignments & Grading Criteria

Assignments for this class include quizzes, labs, and discussions.

Quizzes

The weekly quizzes are comprised of 20 multiple choice questions (1 point each) and are worth a total of 20 points. The quizzes test your knowledge of the reading material for the current week. Students are allowed one attempt for each quiz. Quizzes are administered using the adaptive mode, which allows multiple attempts at each question before moving on to the next question, but subtracts a penalty for each wrong attempt. For example, choosing the correct answer on the first attempt would earn 1 point, second attempt would earn 0.67 points, third attempt would earn .33 points, and fourth attempt would earn 0.00 points. Please read the assigned readings before attempting the quizzes.

Lab Assignments

Lab assignments are supplements to the required readings, quizzes, and discussions in class. These assignments are described in full detail on the course Moodle page. There are three lab assignments

across the semester, and they are worth 40 points each. Lab assignments are due by 11:55pm on Friday of the week assigned. Example of a lab assignment: Using the attached Excel file, describe how the Rescorla-Wagner model predicts trial by trial learning.

Discussion Forum

Doing well on the Discussion Forum requires consistent and detailed participation each week. **The Discussion Forum is where the majority of your points come from to calculate your final grade in the course.** Discussion Forum grades are based on (1) attendance and (2) quality of posts.

You will be expected to post your response to the discussion question (DQ) found on Moodle by Monday at 11:55pm (Tuesday for Week 4) in order to allow ample time for your peers to read and respond to your post. You may submit your post earlier than this if you would like. As a general guideline, your post that answers the DQ should be roughly 2-3 paragraphs. You will not be graded based on this length, but it is unlikely you can earn full credit with less than that. In addition to your original discussion post, you are expected to post three responses to your peers on the Discussion Forum. Your peer responses should be about 1-2 paragraphs in order to incorporate evidence that you have read your peer’s post, and then relay your interpretations and insights. **You must post to the Discussion Forum on three separate days of the week to earn full credit.** Each Discussion Forum will **open on Saturday at 7am and close on Friday at 11:55pm**. You must post your original post and peer responses during this allotted time in order to earn full credit.

You cannot earn full credit if you wait until Friday to post a discussion post and three peer responses since this does not meet the requirement of posting to the forum on three separate days of the week.

IMPORTANT: Full credit on the Discussion Forum (40 points) is achieved through posting to the Discussion Forum on three separate days of the week, responding to three peers, and high-quality posts. The charts below explain how your discussion posts are graded. Please use these charts as check-lists to make sure you receive full points.

<i>ATTENDANCE GRADING (40 points possible)</i>		
Students must <u>post/respond a minimum of three separate days to the Discussion Forum</u> . You can post more than three days, and post more than three times, but, at a minimum, you must post on three separate days each week (unless otherwise specified by the instructor).	<i># Days Posted</i>	<i>Points Earned</i>
	3 days	40 points
	2 days	30 points
	1 day	20 points
	0 days	0 points
Students must make a post answering the discussion question (DQ) in the Discussion Forum. Each DQ post will be due by <u>Monday at 11:55pm</u> (unless otherwise specified by the instructor). Suggested length: 2-3 paragraphs.	Each day late	2 points lost

<u>ATTENDANCE GRADING (40 points possible)</u>		
Students must respond to a minimum of three of their peers . You can post to more than three, but, at a minimum, you must reply to three of your peers. This promotes student engagement with each other, rather than just responding to the DQ posted by the instructor. Suggested length: 1-2 paragraphs.		
	3 peers	0 points lost
	2 peers	5 points lost
	1 peer	10 points lost
	0 peers	15 points lost

Once I have calculated your "Attendance" score, then I grade the quality of your posts, as explained below.

<u>QUALITY GRADING</u>		
Students must make detailed and thoughtful posts that reflect an appropriate application of emerging knowledge and vocabulary in the topic area. Each post must add value to the discussion and be related to the required readings for the week. Below are additional details of how I grade the quality of your posts.	Superior	0 points lost
	Above Average	5 points lost
	Average	10 points lost
	Below Average	15 points lost
	Unacceptable	20 points lost

Superior

Your contributions demonstrate a complete mastery of the materials assigned. Your responses might integrate multiple views and/or show strong analysis and reflection on topics and other student's posts. You provide evidence that you are reading the assigned materials and other student postings. You know the facts and are able to analyze them, apply them to real life scenarios, and handle conceptual ideas.

Above Average

Your responses build on the ideas of other participants and dig deeper into assignment questions or issues. When you make intelligent posts during the week, including some good critique of the course material, then you have demonstrated you have an understanding of the material, are reading posts of your colleagues, and are contributing to the class. Your posts demonstrate confidence with the materials, but may be just a bit off target in one area or another.

Average

You have meaningful interaction with other participants' postings. Posts that state, "I agree" or "I disagree" and include a detailed explanation of what is disagreed or agreed upon and why, or introduce a perspective or concept that adds to the discussion. However, you may have rambling, lengthy posts with no clear point, your writing has a lack of clarity and comprehension, or there are considerable typos and grammatical errors.

Below Average

You answer questions asked by me or other students but do not expand upon your response, or you answer questions based only on your opinion, rather than on research or proper evidence. Your posts are unusually short (one paragraph or less) and you fail to demonstrate a clear working knowledge of the material covered for the week.

Unacceptable

You will receive little credit in the week's discussion by just showing up and making trivial comments, without adding any new thought to the discussion. At the low end of the spectrum, no participation gets a "0." If you are not in the discussion, you do not earn any points. Comments such as "I agree" or other one-sentence responses will result in zero points. Copying and pasting from a website without providing your own substantial insight is also an unacceptable post – even if you have properly cited your sources. Copying and pasting from websites does not demonstrate a working knowledge of the material.

Special Note: I check very carefully for plagiarism in the discussion posts. If you have plagiarized, you will get a zero for the assignment. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course. If you engage in flaming behavior posts, you will get a zero for the assignment.

Course Grading

Your final grade for the course will consist of scores on weekly quizzes, discussion posts, and lab assignments. Your final grade is the percentage of the total points earned divided by the total possible points. I will NOT be using the "+/-" grading system. All grades of "Incomplete" will adhere strictly to University [Academic Policies and Procedures](#).

The following chart breaks down the points for each assignment type.

<i>Assignment type</i>	<i>Points</i>
Discussion Posts (7, at 40 pts each)	280 points possible
Quizzes (14, at 20 pts each)	280 points possible
Lab Assignments (3, at 40 points each)	120 points possible
Total Points	680 points possible

The following chart shows the grade scale for the final course grade.

<i>Final Course Grade</i>	<i>Number of points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A	609-680	90% - 100%
B	541-608	80% - 89%
C	473-540	70% - 79%
D	405-472	60% - 69%
F	0-404	< 59%

Course Policies and Guidelines

Announcements

Students are responsible for all announcements made in class. These may include changes in policy, due dates, or assignment requirements. Announcements are posted in the announcements section of the course or are directly emailed to the students. Students are responsible for checking their official UM e-mail account (or forwarding their UM account to an email address that is regularly used).

Technology Policies

Please contact UOnline if you experience technical difficulties. Though I would love to be able to help, I am not qualified to do so. To ensure your protection, please keep technical support contact information available offline and please do not wait until the last minute to complete your work each week. To access technical support (and save their contact information offline) please click on the "Tech Support" link on the course Moodle page. Also, keep in mind your technical alternative if you have computer difficulties. If you live near the University, campus computers are an option. Otherwise, consider the public library, an Internet café, a computer at work, or a friend or family member's computer. Have a plan of action in mind so that you can complete the required work each week if an issue arises.

Assignment Due Dates, Late Work, and Make-up Work

Assignments are due every week on Friday by 11:55pm MST. Please be sure to start your assignments early enough to complete them by the time the week closes. If you must miss class, please e-mail the instructor as soon as possible. Due to the interactive nature of this assignment, students must be engaged in participation throughout the week each week in order to receive credit.

To make up missed assignments, it is mandatory that you 1) notify your instructor before the time of the assignment and 2) provide proper documentation verifying the reason for your absence. Examples of proper documentation include a medical note or a death or family emergency. Remember, prior notification and documentation is mandatory! I do not allow students to make up work until I have received the proper documents.

Grades of Incomplete

Departmental and university policies regarding incompletes do not allow changing "incomplete" grades after one year has passed since the "I" was granted.

Academic Misconduct

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#).

Plagiarism

The Student Conduct Code discusses plagiarism. However, it is a serious offense worth re-mentioning. This course requires students to **adhere to APA format** when citing, paraphrasing, or referencing sources. If you have plagiarized, either intentionally or accidentally, you will receive a zero on the entire assignment. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course.

Netiquette

Students must engage in proper "netiquette." Netiquette or "network etiquette" is a professional and mannerly way of communicating with others in the online medium. Failure to engage in proper netiquette will result in earning a zero for each assignment where an incident has occurred.

Disability Modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406-243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Dropping/Adding/Changing Grade Option

Please refer to the Registrar's [Drop/Add Policy](#) and the [Official Dates & Deadlines Calendar](#) for all questions related to dropping, adding, or changing the grade option for a course.

Communication

The best way to contact me is by e-mail. I will try to respond to your e-mail as soon as I can, but you should not have to wait more than 24 hours during weekdays for a reply. If it has been longer, please resend your message in case I did not receive it the first time.

Course Schedule

Schedule subject to change. Additional required materials will be posted online each week.

Date	Topic	Readings	Discussion	Quiz	Assignment
Week 1 8/19 – 8/21	Intro to Online Learning & Netiquette	Netiquette Guidelines; Online Learning Study Habits; Time Management Calendar	Welcome Forum (2 bonus points if completed)	Week 1 Quiz due 8/28	
Week 2 8/24 – 8/28	Intro. to Learning & Behavior	Ch. 1; Evolution Primer	Week 2 Discussion Forum	Week 2 Quiz due 8/28	
Week 3 8/31 – 9/4	Research Methods & Ethics	Ch. 2; Ethics Primer		Week 3 Quiz due 9/4	
Week 4 9/7 – 9/11	Elicited Behaviors & Classical Conditioning	Ch. 3	Week 4 Discussion Forum (First post due on 9/8)	Week 4 Quiz due 9/11	
Week 5 9/14 – 9/18	Classical Cond.: Basic Phenomena & Various Complexities	Ch. 4; Lab #1		Week 5 Quiz due 9/18	Lab Assignment #1 due Friday, 9/18 @ 11:55pm
Week 6 9/21 – 9/25	Classical Cond.: Underlying Processes & Practical Applications	Ch. 5	Week 6 Discussion Forum	Week 6 Quiz due 9/25	
Week 7 9/28 – 10/2	Operant Conditioning	Ch. 6		Week 7 Quiz due 10/2	
Week 8 10/5 – 10/9	Schedules & Theories of Reinforcement	Ch. 7	Week 8 Discussion Forum	Week 8 Quiz due 10/9	
Week 9 10/12 – 10/16	Extinction & Stimulus	Ch. 8; Lab #2		Week 9 Quiz due	Lab Assignment #2 due Friday, 10/16

Date	Topic	Readings	Discussion	Quiz	Assignment
	Control			10/16	@ 11:55pm
Week 10 10/29 – 10/23	Escape, Avoidance, & Punishment	Ch. 9	Week 10 Discussion Forum	Week 10 Quiz due 10/23	
Week 11 10/26 – 10/30	Choice, Matching, & Self-Control	Ch. 10		Week 11 Quiz due 10/30	
Week 12 11/2 – 11/6	Observational Learning	Ch. 11	Week 12 Discussion Forum	Week 12 Quiz due 11/6	
Week 13 11/9 – 11/13	Biological Dispositions in Learning	Ch. 12; Lab #3		Week 13 Quiz due 11/13	Lab Assignment #3 due Friday, 11/13 @ 11:55pm
Week 14 11/16 – 11/20	Comparative Cognition	Ch. 13	Week 14 Discussion Forum	Week 14 Quiz due 11/20	
Week 15 11/23 – 11/25	Summary & Future Directions		Extra-Credit Discussion Forum (2 bonus points)		