

PSY 4600, Survey of Behavior Analysis Research, CRN 11054  
Spring 2012 Course Syllabus and Calendar

*Instructor Information*

Professor:	Dr. A. Dickinson	Office:	3744 Wood Hall
Home Phone:	372-3206	Office Hours:	TR: 2:00 – 3:00 pm
Phone Hours:	9 a.m. -5 p.m. Monday through Friday		Others by appt.
Office Phone:	387-4473 (to leave messages)		
Email:	alyce.dickinson@wmich.edu (best way to contact me)		
Web site:	alycedickinson.com (for all course materials)		

*Course Assistants*

Graduate Assistant: Sarah E. Van Stelle, sarah.vanstelle@wmich.edu  
Undergraduate Assistants: Lindsay Baker, lindsay.s.baker@wmich.edu  
Scotty Lambert, scotty.j.lambert@wmich.edu

Questions about the study objectives and lecture material should be directed to the course assistants. Please do contact them if you have questions – they are here to help you. If you would like help in improving your study skills and/or exam grades, contact Sarah or me. You should contact me if you have any special requests related to the course.

A caution about emailing the assistants: If you email the course assistants with questions about the exam, you should do so at least 24 hours before the exam. Otherwise, they may not be able to respond to your questions before the exam.

*Instructional Assistance Hours*

Days: The day before the exam, Monday or Wednesday  
Time: 5:00-6:30PM  
Location: Wood Hall, first floor lounge area

If you are unable to attend the scheduled hours, but would like help, please contact me and I will try to arrange an individual appointment for you with one of the assistants.

*Web Site for Lecture Power Point Presentations and Supplemental Course Materials*

Course materials will be available on my web site: alycedickinson.com.  
Power point presentations for the unit will be posted on the web site and can be downloaded. I will post them before the first lecture of the week. There are also supplemental materials related to some of the units posted on the web site. Some material links to Dr. Doug Johnson's web site (Dr. Johnson developed some of it for me).

*Course Materials*

A course pack is the only text for this course. It can be purchased at Western's Campus Bookstore located in the Bernhard Student Center. The pack contains the study objectives for each unit in the course and all of the text/reading material. Copyright permissions have been obtained for all of the material.

I strongly recommend that you bring the study objectives for each unit to class along with a hard copy of the ppt presentation. This will make things much easier for you – sometimes students try to take too many notes during lecture because they do not know what is already in the study objectives. Thus, they often miss important information because they are too busy writing down information that is already in the study objectives and/or ppts.

### *General Course Description*

This course will provide an overview of diverse topics of behavior analysis research and applications. The objectives of the course are (a) to increase your understanding of the principles of respondent and operant conditioning and (b) to introduce you to diverse areas of applications of behavioral psychology. One purpose for doing so is to help you realize that our basic principles of behavior are relevant to all areas of psychology and all specializations in psychology. Topics include: Performance management, higher education (college teaching), teaching technology (direct instruction, precision teaching, and Headsprout reading program), motivation, behavioral medicine, gerontology, verbal behavior, ethics, and certification in behavior analysis.

Course prerequisites include PSY 3300 and 3600. PSY 3600 is a critical prerequisite - you cannot take it simultaneously with this class nor should you take this class if you received below a C. About 90% percent of students who have attempted to do this have been unsuccessful.

Just a note about the topics I will be covering in this class. Behavior analysis can be applied to any area that has to do with human and nonhuman behavior. Areas of application include ones with which you are probably familiar (i.e., school psychology, developmental disabilities and autism, and child and adult clinical psychology). But there are many other areas of application. I cannot cover all areas of application in one semester, so I have to make some choices about what to include and what not to include. I have avoided, for the most part, topics that are covered in popular electives in the department. But if you are interested in an area that I am not covering in this class and is not covered in one of our elective courses, chances are behavior analysts have worked in the area.

There are two excellent sources about various areas of application. One is the web site for the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies: [www.behavior.org](http://www.behavior.org). The other is the Association for Behavior Analysis International web site, especially the special interest groups that specialize in particular areas of application. That web site address is: [www.abainternational.org](http://www.abainternational.org).

### *General Course Format*

Except for the last unit (Unit 8) there will be two class lectures, followed by a 35-point essay examination. The days of the exams will rotate between Tuesday and Thursday throughout the semester. Please refer to the calendar at the end of the syllabus for the course schedule.

Unit 8 will also be worth 35 points. However, the assignment will be two parts. Fifteen points will be awarded for completing WMU's Human Subjects Institutional Review Board's on-line training program on research ethics. The other 20 points will be awarded based on your performance on an exam over certification in behavior analysis and ethics (when working with clients). For additional information about this unit, please see the Unit 8 study objectives in the course pack.

### *Course Grades*

Your course grade will be based on the number of points that you earn on the unit exams and the Unit 8 assignment. Points cannot be earned by doing alternative or extra activities. There will be a total of 8 unit exams/assignments and each will be worth 35 points. The total number of possible points is thus 280. Grades will be determined as follows:

	A	BA	B	CB	C	DC	D	E	
Percent		92	88	84	80	76	72	68	<68*
Points	258	246	235	224	213	202	190	<190*	

\* "<" means less than

### *Grade Requirement for PSY Majors*

You must obtain a C in this course in order for it to count toward the psychology major.

Some advice about grades for those of you who are planning to apply to graduate school: Many of our students plan on attending graduate school. If you are planning on that, you should be shooting for an A in the course. Graduate school is often very competitive, and, unlike undergraduate training programs, graduate programs only have a limited number of “seats” available. Thus, it is a competitive process in that your admission depends not only on your GPA (and GRE scores, etc.), but the GPAs of the other students who apply. Although undergraduate students who are planning on attending graduate school often believe a BA or even a B is a very good grade, alas, most faculty, particularly in psychology graduate training programs, who will be considering your application for graduate school will not. It is true, that your research and practical experience counts as well, but there are often plenty of applicants to graduate programs who have very high GPAs as well as research and practical experience.

Another word: Some students get the mistaken notion that I favor students who plan to pursue graduate school as opposed to those who don't. That is not true. It is true that I am very pleased when our students want to pursue graduate school. However, you do not have to go to graduate school to make valuable contributions to the world. This course is relevant for anyone – teachers, supervisors in work settings, direct care workers who work with clients with developmental disabilities and autism, stay-at-home moms and dads, those who work in nursing homes with older adults, animal trainers, police officers, social workers, etc. Each and every student in this class can contribute to society and the world by applying what you learn in this class and in other classes about behavior analysis.

### *Students with Disabilities*

If you have a documented disability and need reasonable accommodations, contact me during the first week of classes so that I have time to ensure that your needs are met in a timely manner. In order for me to provide accommodations, students must contact the University's Disabled Student Resources and Services or the Office of Services for Students with Learning Disabilities at the beginning of the semester to inform them of the disability and obtain a card from them indicating the type of accommodation that is appropriate. These offices provide very useful services. According to University policy: "Any student with a documented disability who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the professor and the appropriate Disability Services office at the beginning of the semester." I will conform to this policy and will not

provide accommodations in absence of a documentation from one of these two offices. For additional information, please see their web page: [wmich.edu/disabilityservices/](http://wmich.edu/disabilityservices/)

### *Religious Observance*

I will excuse students from class for the purpose of observing major religious holidays provided they make a request to me two weeks in advance so that I can make alternative arrangements for them to make up the work.

### *Unit Study Objectives*

There are study objectives for each unit in the course pack. The material to be included in the unit's assignment is listed at the top of the study objectives. Only the text material specified in the objectives will be covered on the exam, although the exams will also cover any additional material that I provide in lecture. It is important that you keep all of the study objectives so that you can refer to them later in the course. You will need to restudy some of the objectives for the make-up exams. For the make-up exams, I will select several study objectives from previous units and ask you to restudy them. I will give you a list of these review objectives prior to both make-up exams.

*I have included a description of how to study for this course as the first item in the course pack. Please read this carefully, particularly the material about making up and using study cards: I strongly encourage you to use study cards. Students typically find this the best way to study and prepare for exams in this class.*

### *Unit Exams*

Exams will primarily consist of short-answer questions (i.e., fill-in-the-blank, essay, listing information) with only a few multiple-choice items. Questions will be based on study objectives that are included in the course pack and any additional material that I provide in lecture. If you miss lecture you are still responsible for the lecture material and therefore you should get the notes from someone else. I cannot give students "individual lectures" or go over the study objectives on an individual basis, nor can the course assistants.

I give out answers after every exam. If you will are late to the exam and another student has left with the answers, you will not permitted to take the exam; you will receive a zero.

### *Approximate Amount of Study Time Required and Type of Study Time Required*

This course is designed to require **6 - 8 hours** studying outside of class **each and every unit** in order for students to get a C or a B. More study is typically required to get a BA or an A. The amount of studying you will need to do, of course, depends upon your background in behavior analysis and your study skills. You may have to spend more hours studying if your knowledge of behavioral principles or your study skills are weak. Because this class builds on what you learned in PSY 3600, students who received lower than a B in PSY 3600 often do have to spend additional hours studying.

**Please take the study time seriously.** When students have had trouble in the class, and have come to see me for help, the problem (almost always) is either (1) they simply do not have enough time to study due to the number of credit hours they are taking, the number of hours they are working, family obligations, or some combination of the three or (2) they are trying to

squeeze their studying in around other activities; that is, when they have a few minutes between classes or while they are at work and are not busy. Attempts to study this way often result in distractions that disrupt concentration and focus. This type of study time is usually not productive, yet students “feel” like they have studied a lot.

If you are unable to spend the amount of time studying that I have mentioned or schedule 6-8 hours of **focused** study time for each unit, you should drop this class. It will be frustrating for you and there won't be anything I can do to help you improve your grade in the course.

When scheduling time for this course, you should schedule ~ 3 hours to read all the material and study objectives **before** the first lecture of the unit and develop study cards for the first ½ of the study objectives; ~ 2 hours to develop study cards for the second ½ of the study objectives before **the second lecture** (and it really is better to have the study cards done before the first lecture); and 3 - 4 hours to study the day before the exam.

### *Exam Regrade Policy*

After the exams have been graded, returned, and discussed in class, you may submit your exam to me for regrading if you believe that an item was not graded accurately. I have included a copy of the form on the last page of the syllabus. You can also download a copy from my web site.

Regrade requests may be returned to me in class or placed in my faculty mailbox in Wood Hall. Regrade requests **MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING AND WITHIN ONE WEEK** after the exams have been returned. When submitting a regrade request you should attach the exam questions, your answers and the answers that I will give you after you have finished the exam. The request should state the reasons why more points should be awarded for a particular answer. References to a text page and paragraph or to specific lecture material will make it more likely that your request will be granted. It is not appropriate to state things such as "because it is right" (without further explanation), "but that is what I meant to say" (I can only grade what you wrote on the exam), "I missed the lecture in which you explained this", "Pat answered exactly the same way and got more points" (I might have graded Pat's answer too leniently; thus the appropriate thing for me to do would be to deduct the points from Pat – but I won't do that), etc.

<b>NOTE AGAIN: <u>YOU MAY NOT REQUEST REGRADES VOCALLY</u></b>
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I need to review the test question, recall my original grading criteria and reevaluate your answer. In order to give the attention that is necessary, I need to have the requests in writing.

Sometimes when students do not understand why they lost points, even after looking at the answers I provide, they ask me to explain why they lost points in order to determine whether they should submit a regrade request. At that point, I always ask students to submit a regrade request. If you do not understand why you lost points, I will explain that in writing through the regrade request procedure. Again, I often need time to review the question, study the student's answer, determine the conceptual problems the student may have about the item and respond to it. If, however, you know why you lost points but don't understand the material, the assistants and I are most happy to meet with you and explain the material to you.

Please do not word your regrade requests in a hostile manner. I grade your exams very carefully and if I have made a mistake it has been an "honest" mistake. I am very happy to return points if I have made an error. Consider regrade requests an intellectual not an emotional issue.

If a particular student requests too many regrades or inappropriate regrades (e.g., asking me to review my grading on all or nearly all questions or requesting regrades on issues that I addressed when I returned the exams), I will first discuss the problem with the student. If the student continues to abuse the regrade request procedure I will regrade all of the student's exam answers in addition to the ones requested. If I feel my original grading was too lenient, I will take off additional points.

### *Make-up Exams*

If you miss an exam for **any** reason (illness, injury, car trouble, doctor's appt., a field trip in another course, a job interview, an athletic event, too busy to study, etc.), the missing exam score will turn into a zero if you do not take the make-up exams or if you miss more exams than allowed by the make-up exam policy. Two make-up exams will be given during the semester that will permit you to make up for two such absences. In other words, you may miss one exam each half of the semester without having it hurt your grade as long as you then take the scheduled make-up exams.

If you are involved in anything that requires you to miss more than one exam each half of the semester  
**DROP THIS COURSE IMMEDIATELY.**

The first make-up exam will be given on March 13 and will review material from Units 1-4. The score you earn on this exam may be used to replace a missing score for one of the first four exams.

The second make-up exam will be given on Thursday, April 26, from 2:45- 4:45PM during final exam week. It will review material from Units 5-8. The score you earn on this second make-up exam may be used to replace a missing score one of these unit exams.

I will give you study objectives for the make-up exams - I will select about 35 study objectives from the relevant units.

If you do not miss any exams and *only if you do not miss any exam*, the score you obtain on the first make-up exam may be used to replace your lowest score on Exams 1-4, and the score you obtain on the second make-up exam may be used to replace your lowest score on Exams 5-8. If your make-up exam scores are lower than the scores on your unit exams, the make-up exam scores will be discarded. In other words, the make-up exams cannot hurt your grade.

If you do not miss any exams the make-up exams are optional. If you are satisfied with the scores you have obtained on the unit exams, you do not have to take them - you get the day off.

### *Additional Make-up Exams*

No make-up exams will be given in addition to the two that are scheduled, unless there are very special circumstances (such as a documented long illness). Additional make-up exams are given *solely at my discretion*. I am strict on this issue. My class is scheduled when it is and by enrolling in it, you have committed yourself to it. Also, the calendar of when exams will be given is included in this syllabus so you know in advance when they will be administered. Due to the large enrollment, I cannot give extra make-up exams to individual students.

Two "friendly" warnings about additional make-up exams:

(1) Sometimes a student will miss an exam due to a non-emergency. Later that same half of the semester, a real problem that was not and could not be anticipated such as illness, job interview, car trouble, a death in the family, etc., forces the student to miss a second exam. The student then asks me to give a special make-up exam for the second exam since that absence was due to a "legitimate" problem. I will not do that. In that situation the student receives a zero for one of the missed exams. Plan to take all of the weekly exams so that you will not end up with a zero in case a real problem makes you miss an exam later.

(2) Students who receive a poor grade on one exam and then miss another exam often ask me if I will give them a special make-up exam for the exam that they missed so that they can use the scheduled make-up exam to replace their low score. Again, I will not do that. In that situation the student must keep the low exam score.

SPECIAL MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL NOT BE GIVEN FOR  
THE TWO SCHEDULED MAKE-UP EXAMS

*Attendance at Lectures*

I will take attendance, but attendance at lectures is not required. You will be marked absent if you are more than 10 minutes late to class. If you miss a lecture or are late for whatever reason you are responsible for the lecture material and any announcements regarding changes in the weekly assignment, exam schedule, room change, etc. I make all such announcements at the beginning of class.

*Cell Phones, Pagers, iPods, MP3 Players, Calculators,  
all other hand-held electronic gadgets, Computers, etc.*

Cell phones, pagers, iPods, etc. must be turned off during all classes, both lecture days and exam days (that means no texting). ***On exam days, they must be completely out of sight, not just turned off.***

Computers are perfectly OK to bring to lectures, as long as you use them for the purpose of this class (no emailing or surfing). Students in the class have repeatedly told me that when other students text or surf in class, it is very distracting to them. I cannot permit students to distract other students. It also distracts me, and if I am distracted it affects the entire class (not to mention use of such gadgets in this type of setting is just plain rude). Unfortunately, I have had to implement a penalty in order to get students to comply with this policy. Thus, note this policy very carefully.

I will deduct *1 point from your total point score for each violation* of the above during lectures. If Sarah or I see a violation of the policy, the point will be deducted. We will not "police" the classroom, thus I fully realize that we may miss violations. On the other hand, this is no different than speeding; many instances of speeding go undetected by the police, but those that are detected are penalized. I will inform you when I deduct the point.

If these devices ***are in sight*** during the exam or if these devices are used/touched during the exam (including ear buds) ***it will be considered cheating***, and subject to the penalties described in the *Academic Dishonesty* section below.

### *Academic Dishonesty*

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the undergraduate catalog that pertain to academic honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity, and computer misuse. These policies can be found at <http://catalog.wmich.edu>. If I have reason to believe that you have been involved in academic dishonesty, I will inform the Office of Student Judicial Affairs (OSJA) with respect to the charge and refer you to them. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe that you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. *I will strongly recommend to the committee that any student who is found responsible for an act of academic dishonesty in this class be given a failing grade in the class. And, a word to the warning, the OSJA has always followed my recommendation.*

Cheating is the most relevant aspect of the policy for this course, thus I will provide a definition here. Cheating consists of, but is not limited to, looking at another student's examination, copying answers from someone else's examination, using external aids (such as cell phones, books, notes, calculators, conversation with other) when taking the examination, altering exam answers after you have seen the instructor-provided answers, and/or altering your original exam answers when submitting regrade requests.

### *Incompletes*

WMU's policy on incompletes states that: The student must be passing the course and have completed the majority of the course work to be eligible to receive an "I." The grade of "I" (incomplete) may not be given as a substitute for a failing grade.

In keeping with this policy, I will not give an incomplete as a substitute for a failing grade or for a grade that is lower than a C

However, if an extended illness, injury, or family problem prevents you from completing the class, do let me know about it. Depending upon the number of classes and exams that you missed, and your attendance and performance on the exams you took before the problem arose, I *may* be willing to give you an incomplete in the course. *This will be completely at my discretion.*

### *Late/Hardship Withdrawals*

WMU has a new policy re "Hardship Withdrawals" that took effect Summer 1 2011. Faculty can no longer approve these withdrawals. Students initiate a petition for a hardship withdrawal by contacting the Office of the Ombudsman: [wmich.edu/ombudsman/](http://wmich.edu/ombudsman/) A "Hardship Panel" will determine if a hardship exists and whether a withdrawal is warranted. The decision of the Hardship Panel is final and not subject to appeal.

Hardships may include: severe physical or mental illness; injury of student or close family member; death of a close family member; act of violence; and exigencies of military service. Examples of situations that are not considered hardship include: student dislikes the course, teaching method, or professor; student considers the course too difficult; student has taken on more academic or other obligations than he or she can handle; change in major so the course is no longer needed; financial constraints; any situations of resolved or unresolved academic integrity charges.

### *Emergency Class Cancellation*

In the event that classes are officially canceled (due to a snow storm, for example), the following schedule changes will automatically be in effect:

1. If the day canceled is a day on which an exam has been scheduled, then the exam will be given on the first day that classes resume. For example, if an exam is scheduled on Tuesday, and classes are canceled, the exam will be given on Thursday. If Thursday classes are canceled the exam will be given on the following Tuesday, and so on.
2. If the lecture day that immediately precedes the exam is canceled or if BOTH lecture days are canceled, the exam will be given on the regularly scheduled day, or on the first day that classes resume. For example, if an exam is scheduled on Thursday, and the preceding Tuesday lecture is canceled, then the exam will be given as scheduled on Thursday.

I am able to administer the exam because I have provided you with study objectives, and you will also have access to the power point presentations for the unit. When this happens, the exam I make up is typically easier than otherwise (as is often my grading) because I understand that you have not had the opportunity to ask questions over the material.

**Please remember this policy, or at least remember there is a policy and reread it if classes are canceled. It is not possible to predict when classes will be canceled and thus I may not be able to remind you about this policy at the critical time.**

### *Who to Contact if you have a Complaint or Problem*

Students often don't know whom to contact if they have a complaint or problem about a class. The recommended steps are:

1. Contact the instructor. In this class, obviously that would be me.  
Explain the situation in a professional manner and suggest a remedy. If the instructor's explanation or resolution (or lack thereof) is not acceptable then move to the next step.
2. Contact either the chair of the department or the WMU Ombudsman.  
The chair of our department is Dr. Wayne Fuqua, 387-4474.  
If you are reluctant to contact the chair, contact the ombudsman's office, 387-0718. The ombudsman's web site is: [wmich.edu/ombudsman](http://wmich.edu/ombudsman)  
If the issue is still not resolved to your satisfaction, these individuals will tell you what your next options are.

Students are protected against retribution for seeking this type of assistance.

**Note:** If students have concerns or complaints about unfair discrimination or sexual harassment, they should contact WMU's Office of Institutional Equity *directly*.

The phone number is 387-6316 and the web site is: [wmich.edu/oie](http://wmich.edu/oie)

## COURSE CALENDAR

(Note: L means lecture, E means Exam, and the number refers to the Unit)

### Tuesday

01/10 First Class

01/17 L1

01/24 L2: Operant Conditioning:

01/31 E2

02/07 L3

02/14 L4: Higher Education &  
Teaching Technology

02/21 E4

02/28 L5

03/06 No class: Semester break

03/13 ME1

### Thursday

01/12 L1 Respondent Conditioning

01/19 E1

01/26 L2

02/02 L3: Performance Management &  
Multiple Effects of Stimuli

02/09 E3

02/16 L4

02/23 L5: Verbal behavior

03/01 E5

03/08 No class: Semester break

03/15 L6: Motivating operations

### **Monday, 03/19: Last day to drop without academic penalty**

03/20 L6

03/27 E6

04/03 L7

04/10 L8: Ethics and Certification

04/17 E8

03/22 In-class review session for L6

03/29 L7: Health and Gerontology

04/05 E7

04/12 L8

04/19 Return of E8  
Special Grade sheet about ME2  
ME 2 Study Objectives handed out

### **MAKE-UP EXAM: THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2:45-4:45 pm**

#### Unit Topics

1. Respondent Conditioning: Principles and Applications
2. Operant Conditioning: Principles and Applications
3. Performance Management and Multiple Effects of Stimuli
4. Higher Education and Teaching Technology
5. Verbal Behavior
6. Motivating Operations
7. Health and Gerontology
8. Ethics and Certification in Behavior Analysis

REGRADE REQUEST FORM  
Dr. A. Dickinson

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Course #: 4600 Exam Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach:

1. The exam questions
2. The exam answers
3. Your answers

Where to return the request:

1. Hand it to me in class or
2. Put in my faculty mailbox in Wood Hall

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EXAM ITEM NUMBER      REASON FOR THE REGRADE REQUEST