APSC 5134 Applied Behavior Analysis for Animal Behaviorists

**Fall 2020**

“That there could be a **science of behavior**, of what we do, of who we are? **How could you** **resist that**?–Donald M. Baer

Professor:

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8-9 pm EST Wednesday

By appointment

# Course Overview

The field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a well-established field of research and application and one of the most effective fields for producing meaningful behavior change in humans. The same principles (Pavlovian and operant conditioning) apply to animal behavior. Thus, the principles and techniques of ABA are sought after by animal behavior professionals, including private behavior consultants, trainers, shelter behavior professionals, and zoo/sanctuary behavior professionals. This course will focus on these basic principles with an eye to application of these principles to applied animal settings.

# Expectations

* Watch lectures and complete assignments as designated
* Civil discourse is expected at all times in this class, as embodied in the Principles of Community that are available on the web: <http://inclusive.vt.edu/vtpoc0.html>
* Check your email and visit Canvas regularly (at least once a day)
* Your email will be answered within 24 hours of you sending it, except on weekends which will be answered by the next school day
* If you have a technical issue with an online assignment, please email the computer help desk immediately and cc me on the email

# Course Activities, Objectives, & Assessment

***Weekly Modules: Each week students will work through modules consisting of short videos, questions after the videos, pertinent readings, online forum posts, and a brief assignment. The details of each of those pieces is below.***

**Weekly Videos:** Short videos on specific topics will be provided each week. To ensure comprehension, students will answer 1-3 questions after watching the video. Multiple attempts are allowed—students must answer all questions correctly to earn credit for the module. The

**Weekly Readings:** Each week, readings from the textbooks and/or journal articles will be assigned. Students will use the readings to gain a broader comprehension of the material and its applications. The readings will be

**Weekly Assignments:** Each week, a short assignment pertinent to the week will require students to synthesize information from the lectures and readings. Occasionally these might be group assignments.

**Online Forums:** Each week, students will post to and respond in the online forums to engage with the content and practice their verbal behavior with the terminology. The online forum will also serve as a space for peer-to-peer learning.

* Post one response to the guided prompt
* Post at least one comment/question on the general forum of the week
  + Respond to at least one comment/question posted by a peer

**Exams:** Using the reading, lecture materials, and in class discussion, students will synthesize the materials completing two online exams comprised of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. Any material from lectures, discussions, readings, or assignments may appear on the exams. Three attempts are allowed. If a student takes the exam twice and does not earn at least 80%, they must meet with the instructor before trying their third attempt.

* **Module videos and quizzes should be completed each week by Saturday 11:59 PM EST**
* **Posts to the Weekly Discussion Board should be completed each week by Sunday 11:59 PM EST**
* **Responses to the posts from the Weekly Discussion Board should be completed each week by Tuesday 11:59 PM EST (of the following week; that is, the Tuesday after the Sunday original posts are due)**

# Missed Assignments Policy

* Late assignments will be accepted but a point reduction of 5% per day late will be applied.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Activity | Points/Activity | Number of Activities | Total Points |
| Point  Distributions | Weekly Videos | 10 | 15 | 150 |
| Online Forum Posts | 10 | 15 | 150 |
| Weekly Assignments | 10 | 15 | 150 |
| Exams | 100 | 2 | 200 |
| TOTAL |  |  | 650 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Points |
| A | 604-650 |
| A- | 585-603.9 |
| B+ | 565-584.9 |
| B | 539-564.9 |
| B- | 525-538.9 |
| C+ | 500-524.9 |
| C | 474-499.9 |
| C- | 460-473.9 |
| D+ | 435-459.9 |
| D | 409-434.9 |
| D- | 395-408.9 |
| F | <395 |

# Required Material

**Required Text:**

Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). *Applied behavior analysis*. Pearson.

Schneider, S. M. (2012). *The science of consequences: How they affect genes, change the brain, and impact our world*. Prometheus Books.

*Other readings will be assigned throughout the semester and will be provided to you on Canvas.*

**Recommended Text:**

Catania, A. C. (2013). Learning (5th edn). *Cornwall-on-Hudson: Sloan*.

Donahoe, J. W., & Palmer, D. C. (1994). *Learning and complex behavior*. Allyn & Bacon.

# Honor Code

A student with **conflicting examinations** or **with more than two officially scheduled examinations in twenty-four hours may reschedule an examination** with permission sought by the student from the student's college dean **no later than 3 weeks prior to the start of Final Examinations** and by arrangement with the appropriate instructor.

The **Graduate Honor Code** requires that *all* graduate students exercise honesty and ethical behavior in all their academic pursuits at Virginia Tech, whether these undertakings pertain to study, course work, research, extension, or teaching.

It is recognized that graduate students have very diverse cultural backgrounds. In light of this, the term *ethical behavior*is defined as conforming to accepted professional standards of conduct, such as codes of ethics used by professional societies in the United States to regulate the manner in which their professions are practiced. The knowledge and practice of ethical behavior shall be the full responsibility of the student. Graduate students may, however, consult with their major professors, department heads, International Graduate Student Services, or the Graduate School for further information on what is expected of them.

More specifically, all graduate students, while being affiliated with Virginia Tech, shall abide by the standards established by Virginia Tech, as described in this Constitution. Graduate students, in accepting admission, indicate their willingness to subscribe to and be governed by the Graduate Honor Code and acknowledge the right of the University to establish policies and procedures and to take disciplinary action (including suspension or expulsion) when such action is warranted. Ignorance shall be no excuse for actions which violate the integrity of the academic community.

The fundamental beliefs underlying and reflected in the Graduate Honor Code are that (1) to trust in a person is a positive force in making a person worthy of trust, (2) to study, perform research, and teach in an environment that is free from the inconveniences and injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty is a right of every graduate student, and (3) to live by an Honor System, which places a positive emphasis on honesty as a means of protecting this right, is consistent with, and a contribution to, the University's quest for truth.

Find out more at: <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/expectations/graduate-honor-system.html>

All assignments submitted shall be considered "graded work” and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor Code. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.

Cheating, plagiarism, falsification shall constitute academic misconduct. This listing is not, however, exclusive of other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute academic misconduct. Clarification for each definition with some examples of prohibited behaviors in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual are located at: <https://honorsystem.vt.edu/honor_code_policy_test.html>

# Accommodations

If you need accommodations because of disability, please see me as soon as possible. Each student is responsible for informing the instructor at the start of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

# Copyright

All material provided in this course are limited to use by those Virginia Tech students who are enrolled in this course for the current semester. **As a student enrolled in this course, you are expressly prohibited from using these materials outside of the course without the instructor’s specific consent.** “Materials” includes: all lectures, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, tests, homework, and any other assignment and assessment as well as all information provided on Scholar for this course. Using the materials outside this course includes, but it not limited to, selling information to any organization that makes the information available to other students for study guides.