

PSYC 3320
Fall 2015
Anthony Blum, Ph.D.

Class: MW 1:30-3:00
Office: Psychology Building 206
Office Hours: 3-4
or by appointment

Location: LART 323
Phone: x5313
email:ajblum@utep.edu

Text: John Lutz "Learning and Memory" (2nd edition) & Charles Yang "The Infinite Gift" & outside readings

Course Overview: The course will cover much of the classic work on learning that dominated experimental psychology for much of the last century. We will review classic and more contemporary work on classical (also called Pavlovian) conditioning (including work on generalization and discrimination). Even more time will be spent on research and the theories regarding operant conditioning: the differences between positive and negative reinforcement, the differences between negative reinforcement and punishment, the nature of reinforcement, and comparisons between classical and operant conditioning. We will then move on to human learning research with verbal materials which led naturally to the study of human memory. The course will cover the standard account of human memory and some alternatives to the standard view. Finally, we will examine a very different view of learning that comes from linguistics and language learning. If the traditional psychological view of learning is that learning is a form of acquisition, the view from linguistics looks at learning as elimination.

Course Objectives: The student should learn about historically important work on learning-- which was the major focal point of the early decades of American experimental psychology. Modern approaches to classical and operant conditioning will also be covered. The research and theories of learning naturally led to research and theories on human memory. The classic information processing theory of memory will be presented as well as more contemporary alternatives. The associated issues of memory representation will be covered as well. A very different view on the nature of learning (coming from linguistic research) will be discussed. In covering the research on learning and memory, the student will be introduced to examples of different research techniques and designs. Finally, the mini-assignments will allow the student to explore certain topics in greater depth.

Course Requirements: There will be three in-class exams worth 100 points each. The three exams will cover the material specified in the course schedule (see below). The students will receive study guides before each of the three exams that further specify the exam material. There will be 7-8 mini-assignments which will cover course material in greater depth. Combined the mini-assignments will be worth 100 points. Instead of a comprehensive finals week final exam, we will have a paper on a topic to be provided later. The final paper will be worth 100 points.

Grading Scale: 90-100 A; 80-89 B; 70-79 C; etc.

Attendance: I will not be grading your attendance, although typically students who attend class regularly do better than those who do not.

Classroom Etiquette: Use common sense--- that is, please be aware that there are other people in the classroom.

Contact: As you will notice above, I have provided you with my office hours, my phone number, and my email address. Of the three, email is probably the most reliable way to get a hold of me—although usually I am just sitting in my office during my office hours staring at the walls. I will not mind the interruption. I will use classroom announcements and email as my preferred ways for contacting you. Please check your utep.edu email accounts regularly.

Cheating: The instructor will report violations (cheating, plagiarism) to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict resolution. That office will decide the appropriate penalty. Just to avoid the appearance of cheating, during an exam the student will not have anything on his or her desk--- especially cell phones.

Make-up Exams: At the end of the semester--- during the time of our regularly scheduled final exam—you will take a make-up version of any exam that you have missed during the semester. If you have taken all three exams (**and only if you have taken all three exams**) and you are unhappy with one (and only one) of the exam scores, then you can re-take (a version of) that exam on make-up day (which occurs during our scheduled exam on finals' week). The make-up policy means that you cannot schedule your own exams--- if you miss an exam it is taken on the make-up day.

Outside Texts. There will be a few outside reading required above what is in the Yang and Lutz texts. Those readings will be posted on Blackboard and I will let you know when I am posting such texts.

Accomodations: If a Student has or suspects he/she has a disability and needs an accommodation, he/she should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or at cass@utep.edu or go to Room 106 Union East Building. The Student is responsible for presenting to the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions. If you need to take an exam with CASS you will need to schedule the exam with them no later than three (work) days prior to that exam.

Course Schedule (topics refer to Lutz text unless otherwise indicated).

8/24 Intro + Ch.1(What is learning?)
8/26 Ch.1/Ch.2 (Habituation & Sensitization)
8/31 Ch.2
9/2 Ch.2/3 (Classical Conditioning)
9/7 Labor Day
9/9 Ch.3
9/14 Ch.3
9/16 Ch. 3/4 (Operant Conditioning)
9/21 Ch.4
9/23 Ch.4
9/28 Exam 1
9/30 Ch. 5 (Punishment and Negative Reinforcement)
10/5 Ch. 5/6 (Theories of Reinforcement)
10/7 Ch.6
10/12 Ch.6/7 (Generalization and Discrimination)
10/14 Ch.7
10/19 Ch.7/8 (Classical vs Operant Conditioning)
10/21 Ch.8
10/26 Ch.8
10/28 Yang discussion
11/2 Exam 2
11/4 Ch.10 (Verbal Learning)
11/9 Ch.10
11/11 Ch.11 (Models of Memory)
11/16 Ch.11
11/18 Ch.12 (Knowledge Representation)
11/23 Ch.12
11/25 Ch.13 to p.300 (Processing and Remembering)
11/30 Yang discussion
12/2 Exam 3