San José State University
Psychology Department
Psyc 255, Seminar in Learning, Section 1, Fall 2010

Instructor: Sean Laraway, PhD
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Email: sean.laraway@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday, 3-5 p.m.
Class Days/Time: Wednesday, 12-2:45 p.m.
Classroom: DMH 308

Faculty Web Page and Blackboard Site
Course web site: https://sjsu.desire2learn.com/

The best method of contacting me is via Desire2Learn (D2L) email. Please allow 1-2 business days for a response. Responses will be sent Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Copies of the course materials may be found on the desire2learn site. Articles will be posted to the D2L site only. You are responsible for regularly checking the D2L for announcements, etc.

Course Description
Psyc 255 covers current problems in learning with primary emphasis on learning theory. Topics will include: reinforcement, aversive control of behavior, operant and classical conditioning, motivation, stimulus control, reinforcement schedules, choice, behavioral economics, social learning, verbal behavior, rule-governed behavior, memory, cognition, and problem solving. Examples from basic and applied research will be discussed, as will practical applications to human behavior (e.g., substance use/abuse, organizational behavior, human factors).

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives
The goal of Psyc 255 is to familiarize students with behavior analysis and its principles, methods, findings, and applications to human behavior. Students are particularly encouraged to discover how learning theory relates to their areas of interest and expertise.
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the methods used to study learning and memory
2. Describe the principles of different forms of learning, including operant and respondent conditioning, social learning, and verbal learning
3. Describe the relationship between motivation and learning/behavior
4. Describe the control over behavior by environmental stimuli, including antecedents and consequences
5. Describe the function of verbal behavior (language)
6. Describe the structure and function of remembering (memory)
7. Distinguish between different types of memory and describe the properties of each type
8. Describe a brief history of learning theory, including the primary scientists involved
9. Apply the course material to their own areas of research and study
10. Demonstrate an understanding of course material via timed exams, presentations, activities, and course discussions

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Other Readings
Additional readings will be provided by the instructor or obtained by the student.

Classroom Protocol
Students are expected to attend class and maintain a level of professional and courteous behavior in the classroom. Students disrupting the classroom will be asked to leave. In-class laptop use will be restricted to course-related activities (e.g., taking notes). Other activities will not be allowed. You will be asked to turn off your laptop if you are engaged in non-class activities and you may be asked to refrain from laptop use for the duration of the course if this behavior continues. In addition, you will lose 2% of your final grade for each infraction.

Cell phones and other electronic devices
Please be certain to turn off or put in silent mode (not vibrate mode as that is still audible and is distracting) all cell phones, pagers, and any other devices that produce distraction prior to entering the classroom. Do not use any communication device during class. No text messaging is allowed. You will be
asked to leave class if you violate this policy; in addition you will lose 2% points from your final grade for every violation.

Late arrivals
If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so quietly and with a minimum of distraction. It is expected that you will arrive to class on time and stay until the end of class.

I expect you to come to class prepared
"Prepared" means: (1) you have completed the readings and are ready to discuss them before class starts, and (2) you have completed all assignments before they are due. Preparation will be assessed periodically using unannounced quizzes/activities.

Check the course D2L site regularly
Announcements will be posted on D2L and it is your responsibility to check the site daily. If I become ill, I will inform you as soon as I can on D2L and via email. Please email me before class if you will not be in class. Please set your spam controls to accept my email address.

Dropping and Adding
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops are available at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html>. Information about late drop is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/ >. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

Assignments and Grading Policy
Your grade will be determined by the total number of points earned on all assignments (out of a possible 100 points).

Papers
You will write 2 papers, each worth 15 points (30% of your final grade). Paper topics must generally relate to the course material for the first and second half of the semester. Specific subjects should reflect your career interests and areas (e.g., experimental psychology, human factors/ergonomics). You will find, summarize, and synthesize at least 7 scientific peer-reviewed journal articles on any single subject within the broad areas listed above. You must get approval for your topic before starting your paper by submitting a brief (1 short paragraph) description of your proposed topic and how it fits the general area. Failure to do so will result in a 0 for the paper and related presentation. Papers must be 10-15 written pages in length (1" margins, 12-point Times New Roman font) and
conform to current APA style (6th Edition). Note that the cover page, abstract, and the reference page do not count toward paper length. Please submit papers to http://www.turnitin.com/static/index.html by 11:59 p.m. the night before the due date. **Hard copies will not be accepted.** Except in the case of documented emergencies, late papers will automatically lose 3 points and must be submitted within 24 hours of the due date or they will receive a score of 0.

As an example, you might describe research related to topic of stimulus control in the design of warning stimuli in industrial settings. This paper could describe the principles of stimulus control, how stimulus control is achieved in industrial settings, what kinds of stimuli are most effective at controlling the behavior of interest, the consequences of ineffective stimuli, etc.

**Presentations**

You will have 2 presentations, each worth 10 points (20% of your final grade). The presentations will comprise summaries of your papers. Presentations should last 10 minutes and should incorporate 5-10 PowerPoint slides (or equivalent). Part of your grade (10%) will be determined by peer evaluations, which will assess, among other things, the clarity of your presentation and your perceived knowledge of the topic. Presentations shorter than 10 minutes or longer than 12 minutes will result in lost points. All students should be prepared to ask questions of each presenter, and presenters should be prepared to answer these questions clearly and thoughtfully.

**Exams**

You will have 4 exams, each worth 10 points (40% of your final grade). Exams will comprise multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Study guides will be provided for each exam. Exams will occur at the beginning of the schedule class. You will have 1 hr to complete the exam. Class will resume after the exam time is over.

**Quizzes/Activities**

You will have ~5 unannounced quizzes/activities, given at the discretion of the instructor (10% of your final grade). These quizzes/activities will take a variety of formats. Unless, you have a documented excuse and/or prior permission from the instructor, you must be in class to receive credit for these assignments.

**Grading Scale**

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points earned</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points earned</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 98</td>
<td>≥ 98</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing Policy
The quality of your writing is graded in this class. You will lose points if I cannot understand what you are trying to say. If you are not comfortable writing, you should seek additional assistance (see below). Whenever referencing something you have read, you are expected to provide a complete, APA-style reference. It is assumed that you know, understand, and can properly apply APA-style. If not, it is your responsibility to re-familiarize yourself with this style guide. Never reference a web site or web source, ever. If you find a good article referred to on the web, get it, read it, and use that original source.

The Department of Psychology has adopted the policy that designated written assignments will be returned ungraded for substantial errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, clarity, conciseness, and validity of content. Papers returned will suffer a minimum penalty of 10% on the final grade on rewritten work. The revised paper must be returned within a maximum of seven calendar days and submitted with a copy of the original work. This policy is in effect for all courses 100W and above and by instructor discretion for courses under 100.

Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins, and use a standard font (i.e., Arial, Times New Roman, or Helvetica) of size 12. Multiple pages must be sequentially numbered and stabled in the upper left corner. Assignments will not be accepted and will be considered "late" until they are consistent with the above policy.

Late Work Policy
All assignments must be handed in immediately upon request according to the schedule below. Material handed in after this period will be considered late. Ten percent (10%) will be deducted from the final grade for each day that an assignment is late. Assignments more than three days late will not be accepted unless other arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Classroom Environment and Electronics Policy
In an effort to create a classroom environment conducive to sharing one’s thoughts, I require the following classroom etiquette:
• Be polite and respectful to the other people in the class.
• Do not carry on conversations with others during class.
• Do not work on any other course material during class, including studying for other exams.
• Do not sleep during class.

Professional Communication

As a University student, you are encouraged to engage in professional communication with faculty, staff, and your fellow students. This is especially important in electronic mail notes that you might send. When sending email, I would encourage you to create an email account that includes your name (e.g., your.name@internet.com). If you do not create such an email, be certain to include your name in the correspondence. Please be sure to follow the following basic guidelines when communicating in a professional capacity:
• Do not leave the Subject: field blank. Always fill in the Subject: field with a brief and concise description of the content of your email.
• Be sure to identify yourself clearly by stating your full name and the specific course and section number in which you are enrolled.
• Be clear and concise in your statement about what you are asking for or of what you are informing the reader.
• Always spell check your email, proofread for errors, capitalize your sentences and use appropriate punctuation and grammar. No not use abbreviations common to text messages.
• Refrain from formatting your email with colored text, fancy fonts, or strange backgrounds.
• When sending an email to groups of people, list all of the recipients email addresses in the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) field. When an email address is designated in the BCC field, the recipient will get a copy of the email while their email address remains invisible and protected from the view of the other recipients of the email - some of whom they may or may not know.
• If needed, clearly request a reply. I strongly encourage you to request a response back if you send something that needs to be graded in a timely matter to be certain it was received. If you do not hear back within a reasonable amount of time from the person you sent the email to, politely request a response and resend the original message (you can use the forward function here).
• Do not use Return Receipt Request (RR) for every email you send because you like "knowing" when someone opens your email. Not only is this annoying to the recipient, this feature is intrusive!
• Do not expect an immediate reply. Electronic communication is available 24/7. This is not true of your instructor or your classmates.
• Raise your right hand and repeat after me: "I will not forward any dumb joke, chain letters, virus warnings, or unimportant emails to others without their permission."
University Policies

Academic integrity

Students should know the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (e.g., presenting the work of another as your own, the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit, improper paraphrasing, or lack of proper citations) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. All assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. You cannot submit assignments you have submitted, or plan to submit, for another class.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Learning Assistance Resource Center

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer
academic preparation and basic skills development. Visit the LARC website for more information.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. Visit the Writing Center website for more information.

**Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. Visit the Peer Mentor Center website for more information.

**Acknowledgment**

This syllabus incorporates materials developed by Dr. Ron Rogers, Dr. Susan Snycerski, and the SJSU Center for Faculty Development’s Accessible Syllabus Template. I thank them for the use of their materials.
## Psyc 255, Seminar in Learning, Section 1, Fall 2010 Tentative Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is subject to change with fair notice via the Desire2Learn site and in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8-25-10</td>
<td>Introduction to Psyc 255, Overview of Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2    | 9-01-10| Overview of Learning, Behavioral Research Methods  
Catania, Ch. 1-2; Huitema & Laraway (2006) |
| 3    | 9-08-10| Elicited & Emitted Behavior; Respondent Conditioning  
Catania, Ch. 4, 12; Griffiths & Leonard (1997) |
| 4    | 9-15-10| Motivating Operations, Part 1  
Laraway et al. (2004) |
| 5    | 9-22-10| Motivating Operations, Part 2  
Olson et al. (2001); Fagerstrom (2007, 2010) |
| 6    | 9-29-10| EXAM 1  
Control by Consequences: Reinforcement & Aversive Control  
Catania, Ch. 5-6 + Addenda to Ch. 5-6; Dallery et al. (2007) |
| 7    | 10-06-10| Paper 1 Due + Presentations |
| 8    | 10-13-10| Stimulus Control  
Catania, Ch. 8-9 + Addenda to Ch. 7-9; Rantz et al. (2009) |
| 9    | 10-20-10| Reinforcement Schedules  
Catania, Ch.10-11 + Addenda to Ch. 10-11 |
| 10   | 10-27-10| Behavioral Economics, Choice, Impulsivity  
Hursch et al. (2005); Reynolds & Schiffbauer (2004); Hantula et al. (2008) |
| 11   | 11-03-10| EXAM 2  
Social Learning  
Catania, Ch. 13; Olson et al. (2009); Scherrrer & Wilder (2008) |
| 12   | 11-10-10| Verbal Behavior, Part 1  
Catania, Ch. 14 |
| 13   | 11-17-10| Verbal Behavior, Part 2  
Catania, Ch. 15 |
| 14   | 11-24-10| EXAM 3  
Remembering: Function & Structure  
Catania, Ch. 18-19 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12-01-10</td>
<td><strong>Cognition and Problem Solving, Structure &amp; Function in Learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Catania, Ch. 20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12-08-10</td>
<td><strong>Paper 2 Due + Presentations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>12-13-09</td>
<td><strong>EXAM 4</strong></td>
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<td>DMH 308, 9:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.</td>
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