Syllabus

Course: Psychology 620
Instructor: James T. Todd, Ph.D.
Required Texts: Readings to be supplied online or in class
Course Time: 5:30-8:10 Thursday Evening
Room Number: 518 Mark Jefferson Hall
Final Exam: December 14, 2006
E-mail: james.todd@emich.edu
Website: people.emich.edu/jtodd
Office: 532 Mark Jefferson
Office Hours: 2:00-3:30 am MWF, and by appointment

Course Objectives

This course is an introduction to theories of learning. The approach will be historical and the coverage will range from the late 1800s to the present. Through readings, lectures, assignments, and class discussion the student will become familiar with the history and philosophy of a selection of modern learning. A special emphasis will be placed on the social context of theories of learning and their implications different views of behavioral adjustment for applied practice. This course will also include coverage of historical and modern theories of development, social psychology, and other areas as each relates to the study of learning. For successful completion of the course, each student will be expected to participate constructively in class discussions, correctly answer questions on quizzes and examinations, complete a project, and provide input for discussion.

Assignments

The student will be expected to complete a variety of assignments and exercises.

1. Each week of class, unless otherwise informed, each student is required to compose one question directly related to the assigned reading or class lecture topic. Each question will ordinarily be submitted via email or the instructor’s website. The questions must be substantive and deal with a fundamental issue. The question should not be answered. The questions are due at or before the beginning of each class period. Appropriate questions handed-in on time will receive full credit. Questions that are not substantive or well composed might be returned for revision. Revised questions must be submitted before the next class period to be eligible for revision. Late questions will be accepted under the following circumstances: After one day and until the next class period, unexcused late questions will receive half credit. After one full week, unexcused late questions will receive no credit. Students who hand in late questions may earn back some credit, however, by composing additional questions. That is, for example, a student may hand in two questions after two days and still earn full credit. The instructor may apply a higher standard to late questions as well. However, the student is limited to one extra question per week. The questions will be used as material for in-class discussion, take home assignments, and examinations.
2. Otherwise directed by the instructor, the student will hand in the answer to the take-home question or questions assigned the previous class period. These answers should be typed and written and formatted in a manner consistent with current APA style (with references if appropriate). The answers should be no more than approximately 250 words (one APA style page) in length. These questions will be drawn from the pool created by the students and supplemented by questions composed by the instructor. The answers to these questions may be used as the basis for in-class discussion. The instructor will rank the answers: “Acceptable,” “acceptable with revisions,” and “revise and resubmit.” The answers will receive full, half, and no credit, respectively. Within one week, however, an answer may be resubmitted for reconsideration. If the revised answer is acceptable, it can be awarded additional credit. A higher standard may be applied to resubmitted answers.

3. Four times during the semester and during the final test period students will complete an examination. The questions on the quizzes may include any combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. They should not generally take more than 30 minutes to complete. The examination might be in-class, take home, or online.

4. On the day scheduled for the final examination, the student will turn in a completed final project. This project may be a term paper based upon library research, a substantive annotated bibliography, or take other forms consistent with the amount, type, and level of work typically expected of students in graduate school. The topic of each student’s project will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Further details about this project will be provided in class by the instructor.

Make-ups

Make-up quizzes and assignments will be arranged only for those students who provide valid, overriding medical or personal reasons for missing a scheduled requirement. If you know beforehand you will miss a scheduled requirement, inform the instructor as soon as possible. Documentation verifying a valid reason for the absence from the test may be required in all cases a make-up is arranged. Make-ups will be conducted at a time convenient for the instructor.

Office Hours

The instructor will ordinarily hold office hours from 2:00-3:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and by appointment. The instructor’s schedule is variable, so please call ahead if possible.

Attendance

Except as required by university and other regulations, attendance will not be recorded. However, since the examinations will cover lecture material and important announcements may be made at any time regarding issues such as reading assignment changes, class cancellations, and examination coverage, attendance at every class
meeting is encouraged. Furthermore, unless you provide an overriding medical or personal reason for missing a scheduled course meeting (see make-ups), you will receive a grade of 0 (zero) for any in-class exercises conducted that day. Attendance at examinations will be required.

Grading

Grade weighting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home assignments:</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class quizzes:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Final Exam

This course has a final examination scheduled for regular class time December 16, 2004.

Cheating

University and departmental policies with respect to academic dishonesty and cheating will be followed and enforced. You will not be permitted to use notes, books, tape players, radios, or similar items during testing periods.

Course Status

Although Psychology 620 is a required course for some MS and Ph.D. students in the Psychology programs at EMU, it is open to any student with the appropriate enrollment status and background. However, attendance in or successful completion of the course should not be taken as tacit acceptance of the student into any EMU program or permission to take any other program course.

Student Requests

Requests for make-up tests, grade changes, extensions, special grades, etc. should be made in writing directly to the instructor and include supporting documentation.

Syllabus Changes

Unforeseen circumstances may result in changes in any aspect of this syllabus. The instructor may make changes in the syllabus, schedule, requirements, and other aspects of the course. These changes will be announced in class and by other means as appropriate.
Accommodations

Students who require accommodations for physical and other kinds of disabilities or other recognized conditions should make appropriate arrangements through the Office of Access Services.

Class Cancellations

Class meetings may be canceled by university authorities or by the instructor. Cancellations will be announced in as timely a manner as possible. Assignments due on the day of the canceled class may be turned in at the next scheduled class meeting.

Other policies

Please refer to official university publications, especially the class schedule, graduate catalog, and appropriate departmental documents for questions regarding enrollment, registration, schedules, adds, drops, grading options, and other policies.
Course Schedule

**Week 1 (9/7):** Introduction to the course

Core issues:  Why a historical approach to learning theory?
Some basic issues, principles, and terms

**Week 2 (9/14):** Some background for the analysis of a natural science approach to behavior

Reading:  Basic Terms

**Week 3 (9/21):** The formal beginnings of learning theory

Reading:  Watson: “Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist”
Chapters by Samelson, Baum, Dewsbury, Boakes, & Keller
Dunlap (1912) “The case against introspection”

**Week 4 (9/28):** Early Classical Learning Theories; Some basic principles

Reading:  Excerpts from Pavlov, Thorndike.

**Week 5 (10/5):** Classical Learning Theories

Reading:  Skinner’s *Behavior of Organisms*
Tolman’s *Purposive Behavior in Animals and Men*
Hull’s *Principles of Behavior*
Guthrie: *Psychology of Learning*

**Week 6 (10/12):** Classical Learning Theories (continued); More basic principles

Core Issue:  Why are Skinner, Hull, Guthrie, Tolman, and Watson all called behaviorists?

**Week 7 (10/19):** Beginnings of modern behavior analysis

Reading:  Skinner: “Are Theories of Learning Necessary”
Skinner: “Case History in Scientific Method”
Core Issue:  Why a "natural science" approach to behavior?

**Week 8 (10/26):** Modern Behavior Analysis (continued)

Reading:  Skinner "The Operational Analysis of Psychological Terms;" Smith, Dinsmoor, Keller.

Core Issue:  Why behavior analysis cannot be fairly labeled "black-box psychology."
Week 9 (11/2): Developmental Theories

Readings: Gesell, Piaget, Bijou & Baer, Gould, Hall, Watson

Week 10 (11/9): Basic single-subject experimental designs and other empirical issues.

Reading: Parsonson & Baer

Week 11 (11/16): Applying learning theory to behavior problems.

Reading: Fuller, Wolf, Risley, and other classic studies
Epling “Corn Soup Principle”

Week 12 (11/23): Thanksgiving Recess, No class

Week 13 (11/30): Application of learning theory to complex human behavior.

Reading: Excerpts from Skinner & Chomsky on Language
Palmer (2000a & 200b). Comments on Chomsky
Festinger & Carlsmith (1959) “Cognitive consequences of forced compliance.”

Week 14 (12/7): Cognitive psychologies
Reading: Watkins: “Mediationism and the Obfuscation of Memory”
Excerpt from Classic studies

Week 15 (12/14): Cognitive psychology, radical behaviorism, and misunderstanding

Reading: Todd and Morris; “Case Histories in the Great Power of Steady Misrepresentation” (Website)
Bailey & Bailey; Garcia
Core issue: Why so much unnecessary misunderstanding?