**Brooklyn College - CUNY**

**Brooklyn, New York**

# Psychology 3510 MW12 Mon, Wed 12:50-2:05 pm

**Learning Fall, 2018**

**102 Roosevelt Ext**

**Course Description**

This course explores basic principles of animal learning. Some discussion will concern nonassociative forms of learning, but we will focus more on analyses of associative learning (especially Pavlovian and instrumental conditioning). The framework we will use considers learning as a form of knowledge acquisition. We will ask how knowledge about the relationships among events is acquired by animals, how to conceptualize "knowledge" in animals, and how such knowledge might be converted into observable behavior. Although most of the course will draw heavily on animal learning research not involving humans, we will also consider the relevance of basic principles in this domain to research questions in various human learning situations (e.g., category learning and causality judgment). The chief aims of the course are (1) to acquaint you with current thinking about learning and, more generally, (2) to help you appreciate the logic of empirical discovery.

**Instructor**

Dr. A. Delamater

Office # 4401 James Hall

Office hours: Mon, Wed 11:00 am - 12:00 pm & other times, by appointment

Office Phone: 951-5000 x6026, email: andrewd@brooklyn.cuny.edu

**Web Page**

Your exam grades and other information will be posted here:

**http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/psych/delam/53.1**

**Textbook**

Domjan, M. (2015). The Principles of Learning and Behavior (7tth Ed). Cengage Learning (ISBN: 978-1-285-08856-3)

It is important that you read the relevant chapters as we discuss them in class. You will also be responsible for additional material presented in class that is not contained within the text.

**Grading**

Your grade in this class will be determined by your test performance, exclusively. There will be four exams (3 tests and a final). Each of these will include only new information. Your grade will be based on a simple average of those test scores.

Studying in groups will be most helpful in this course. Often, the ideas are better grasped if you can articulate them to others. Moreover, you'll see where your deficiencies are in trying to articulate the ideas to others.

More on grades: Grades will be assigned based exclusively on your exam performance, but the grading scale will be fairly liberal and there will be some effort to grade you relative to your peers. However, I will not attempt to fit your scores to a normal distribution (so they will not, in this sense, be graded “on a curve”). The final grade boundaries will be determined at the end of the semester after all of the exam scores have been recorded. The A range will be from around an 84% on up, the B range from 70% - 83%, the C range from 55% - 69%, the D range from 40% - 54%, and the F range will be below a 40%. You will be given feedback on your test scores, but you should realize that these ranges could change somewhat (+/- 2 % points) depending on class performance.

**Missing an exam**

Make-up tests will be given only when there is "good" reason for having missed an exam. For example, if a sudden illness should cause you to miss an exam, then you should be prepared to provide me with a brief note signed by your physician. Contact me before an exam in the event that you anticipate missing one or as soon as possible otherwise. In all cases, communicate with me....

## A Note on Etiquette

It is your responsibility to attend class regularly. Doing so will help you understand what material I regard to be most important, and this should be helpful when you study for exams. Food should not be brought into the classroom, and any trash you have should be thrown away in a garbage bin before leaving. Please keep the place clean! Also, because it can be distracting, please make sure your cell phones have been turned off during class time. Finally, please refrain from leaving and re-entering the room repeatedly during class.

**Note regarding Student Disability Services**

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS).  Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the CSDS please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her as soon as possible and at an appropriate time.

**University's policy on Academic Integrity:**   
 The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both.  The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site:  <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>.  If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report it.

**Tentative Schedule**

**Date Chapter Topic**

Aug 27 1 Opening remarks

29 1 Historical and philosophical roots

Sept 5 2 Nonassociative learning: Habituation, Dishabituation, & Sensitization

12 2 Continued

17 3 Pavlovian Conditioning: Its generality and basic concepts

24 3 Continued

26 **\*\*\* TEST #1 \*\*\***

Oct 1 4 Determining Conditions of Pavlovian Learning

3 4 Continued

10 4 Theories of Pavlovian learning: Rescorla-Wagner Model

15 4 Mackintosh, Pearce-Hall

17 4 Associative Structures in Pavlovian Learning

22 4 Continued

24 4 Determinants of Pavlovian Performance

29 **\*\*\* TEST #2 \*\*\***

31 5 Instrumental Conditioning: Basic concepts

Nov 5 5 Continued

7 6 Schedules of Reinforcement and Choice

12 6 Continued

14 7 Associative Structures in Instrumental Learning

19 7 Continued

21 **\*\*\* TEST #3 \*\*\***

26 8 Stimulus Control: Basic Concepts & Theories

28 9 Extinction of Learned Behavior

Dec 3 10 Avoidance Learning

5 11 Comparative Cognition I: Memory

10 11 Continued

12 12 Comparative Cognition II: Categorization & Timing

Dec 19 (1:00 - 3:00 pm) **\*\*\* Final Exam \*\*\***