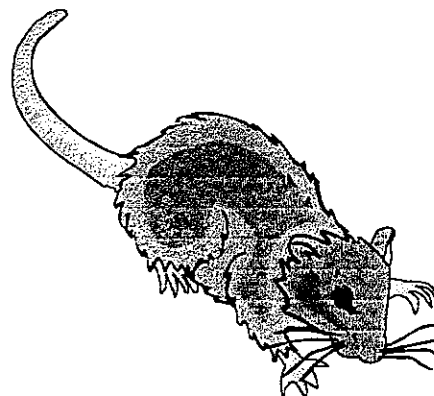


PSYCHOLOGY 304 SYLLABUS

Principles of Learning

Fall 1996

- Instructor: Larry Z. Daily, M.A.
- Office: David King Hall Room 2020
- Office Hours: Monday, 1:30-3:30 PM; Tuesday, 6:00-7:00 PM;
Wednesday, 9:30-10:20 AM; and by appointment
- Phone: 993-4118
- E-mail - ldaily@osfl.gmu.edu



Tentative Schedule:

Examination 1	Monday, September 30
Examination 2	Monday, November 4
Final Examination	Wednesday, December 11, 10:30 - 1:15

Topic	Assignment
Introduction, Historical Perspective	Chapters 1 and 2
Experimental Method	Chapter 3
Classical conditioning	Chapters 4 and 5
Instrumental conditioning	Chapter 6
Reinforcement	Chapter 7
Applications of Learning	Chapter 8
Choice behavior	Chapter 9
Machine learning: Neural Networks	TBA
Cognition and language	Chapter 10
Student Presentations (Last 2 weeks)	



Required texts:

Barker, L. M. (1994). *Learning and behavior: A psychobiological perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Macmillan Publishing Company.

You will also need to have access to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th edition) for use in the lab.

 **Lab:**

You must be enrolled in one of the two PSYC 304 lab sections. A lab syllabus will be distributed during the first lab meeting. Your lab instructor, Lynn Morin, will be responsible for conducting the lab and grading the lab assignments. In the lab, you will be required to write a number of papers in APA style and format; the papers will be discussed further in the lab.

 **Examinations:**

The exams will consist of a mixture of matching, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions. The essay questions will either focus on a single experiment or will be broad and integrative in nature. Study questions will be provided to assist in your preparation for the exams. I tend to draw exam questions from my lecture notes, and in lecture I try to supplement the material in the book. This suggests that class attendance is beneficial. Makeups of midterm examinations will only be given in the case of documented illness or other extreme hardship. Makeups of the final examination must follow university policy for rescheduling an exam.

 **Presentation:**

Over the course of the semester you will develop a research proposal. You will then present your proposal to the class during the last two weeks of class. Your topic should relate to learning and behavior (see the schedule on the first page of the syllabus or your text for appropriate topics). Please bear in mind that this is a proposal only - you do not need to collect data. Your presentation should be a formal presentation to the class as if we were members of an agency who may fund your research. Further details will be provided in class.

 **AC Course grade:**

The midterm exams will count for 15.0% each and the final exam for 20.0%. Your presentation will count for 15% and the lab for 35%. A specific breakdown of the relative values of the lab grades will be provided in the lab. In the case of borderline grades, consistency and direction of change will be taken into account.

 **Teaching Philosophy:**

Listed here are some things that I feel you should know about how I teach and what my goals for the course are. I'll also try to provide some tips for improving your performance in the course.

- 1) My goal for the course is not only to introduce you to the study of learning, but also to show you how questions about behavior can be answered using the experimental method. We're going to deal with the material on two levels: the specifics of individual studies and a broad view of how the studies relate to one another.
- 2) I expect, perhaps as a result of my management background, performance on exams and things turned in when they're due. I'll help you prepare for tests and papers as much as possible before they're due, but when the time comes, I expect you to be prepared. If you are having problems that

interfere with your ability to prepare for an assignment, see me as soon as possible *before* the assignment is due.

- 3) The ability to read and write are fundamental to our ability think and reason. As a result, I do pay attention to grammar and spelling in written work. I will relax standards somewhat on exams due to the time pressure, but exam questions should still be answered in complete, well-formed sentences.
- 4) Finally, I do not curve grades. The fundamental assumption of curving is that each class is a representative sample of the population. If you think about this issue using what you learned about sampling in statistics, you'll realize that this assumption is false.



Study Tips:

- 1) Rote memorization is not effective. Don't simply try to memorize the book.
- 2) Organization is a powerful aid to memory. For individual studies, keep the purpose of the study in mind. Then look for how individual studies relate to one another. This brings me to the next point...
- 3) Active processing on the part of the learner is essential. Take notes, rearrange the notes later, answer the study questions, quiz a classmate (and get quizzed in return).
- 4) Generating and answering your own questions has been shown to improve exam performance.
- 5) Multiple small study sessions spaced out over a period of time are more effective than a single, massive study session.



Honor code:

GMU's Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this class. You may use books, notes, and other sources in preparing answers to the study questions. You may also consult other students when answering the study questions. When taking the exams, however, you *may not* use any of these sources.

In the lab, the reports you prepare must be your own work, but may include properly cited references. Further guidance will be provided in the lab.