

COURSE APPROVAL DOCUMENT
Southeast Missouri State University

Department: College of Education, Departments of Elementary, Early, Special Education

Course No. AB 601

Title of Course: Conceptual Topics in Behavior Analysis

Date: Spring 2016

Please check: New

- I. **Catalog Description (1 Credit Hour of Course):** Explore Skinner’s writings and the foundations of radical behaviorism while considering issues of broad scientific, philosophic, and social significance. (3)

- II. **Pre/Co-requisite(s):**
Prerequisite: AB 531

- III. **Purposes or Objectives of the Course (optional):**
 - 1. Analyze Skinner’s theory of private events and discuss the impact of this theory on the science of behavior analysis.
 - 2. Analyze the significance of behavior as a subject matter in its own right.
 - 3. Describe the tenets of Radical Behaviorism.
 - 4. Compare different theoretical perspectives in psychology.
 - 5. Discuss the world view of behavior analysis.
 - 6. Examine the impact of Skinner’s “Selection by Consequences” on the science of behavior analysis and the field of psychology.
 - 7. Evaluate the theories and explanations of scientific verbal behavior.
 - 8. Describe the history of behaviorism.
 - 9. Analyze and describe elementary and complex verbal relations.

IV. **Student Learning Outcomes (Minimum of 3):**

SLO	Measurement Tool
1. Analyze Skinner’s theory of private events and discuss the impact of this theory on the science of behavior analysis.	Forum
2. Describe the tenets of Radical Behaviorism.	Forum
3. Compare different theoretical perspectives in psychology.	Forum

V. Course Content or Outline (Indicate number of class hours per unit or section):

Unit Topics	Class Hours	Objectives
Causes of behavior & technological talk	3	1
Introduction to Behaviorism	6	2, 5, 6
History of Behaviorism	5	8
Behavior as subject matter/Categories of behavior	5	2
Verbal relations	5	9
Private events	5	1
Scientific verbal behavior	5	7
World views in psychology	5	4
Radical behaviorism	6	3,4
TOTAL	45	

Please Attach copy of class syllabus and schedule as an example

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Chair

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Dean

Approved by Academic Council, April 1, 2014 Revision: April 1, 2014

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
COURSE SYLLABUS

AB 601: Conceptual Topics in Behavior Analysis

SPRING 2016 SEMESTER: OFFERED ONLINE

Instructor: Dr. Jamie Severtson

Phone: 573-986-6982

Office: Scully 401F

E-Mail: jsevertson@semo.edu (please include "AB 601" in the subject of your emails to me)

Office Hours: Tuesday: 10:00am – 11:30 am (401F Scully)

Wednesday: 1:30pm – 3:00 pm (401F Scully)

7:30pm – 8:30pm (Online using Google Chat: jamie.severtson)

Also available by appointment

I want you to be successful in this class. My wish for you is that you begin to love Behavior Analysis as much as I do. I am here to help you in any way I can, so please do not hesitate to come to office hours, chat with me online during online office hours, call or email. I am happy to meet with students outside of normal office hours.

Questions, Comments, Requests regarding this course or program should be taken to your instructor. Unanswered questions or unresolved issues involving this class may be taken to Dr. Julie Ray, Chair of the Elementary, Early and Special Education Department.

Course Purpose:

It can be difficult to fully appreciate the role philosophical assumptions play in the development of theory, science, and applied knowledge. Both scientists and practitioners often leave core assumptions unstated, cobble together patchwork theories in the hope of embracing diverse perspectives, or trust that "brute force" empiricism will reveal all of the relevant facts. Unfortunately, such practices are unlikely to contribute to the development of a coherent and progressive discipline. Those who do not specify their core assumptions or claim that they have none are typically just adopting those of their mainstream culture, and are likely relying on a poorly articulated, contradictory, and incomplete philosophy. Those who carelessly "integrate" diverse theories run the risk of trying to combine mutually exclusive premises and producing little more than incoherence. And those who trust in merely amassing raw empirical data are advocating a strategy that can be grossly inefficient, uncharacteristic of scientific research, and ill-suited to the development of true technological innovation. Theories, and the philosophical assumptions that guide their construction and evaluation, are the foundation of scientific and technological progress.

There are many different ways we can choose to describe, analyze, and understand the events of our world. Our philosophical premises and assumptions, whether stated explicitly or not, guide the types of statements and theories we make and value. While many theories are obviously tied to empirical data, philosophical assumptions will nonetheless influence the creation, assessment, and evaluation of knowledge claims and theories. Regardless of the empirical support a particular theory might enjoy, for example, it is typically not difficult to find scholars or practitioners who eschew it (this is particularly true in psychology!). Sometimes this is because the critics have different criteria (or respect) for "empirical support," sometimes it is because they do not view the theory as compatible with their belief system, and sometimes it is because they have a competing theory that can account for the same data. In all of these cases, philosophical assumptions are impacting their evaluation of the theory.

Behavior analysis is distinguished from other perspectives in psychology by its unique philosophical, theoretical, and methodological orientation. In this course you will learn about the premises and assumptions of B.F. Skinner's radical behaviorism, one of the philosophies of science underlying behavior analysis. We will also explore how the continual interpretation, modification, and evolution of this philosophy informs the development of theories, methods, and applications in our field. The course really is that awesome.

This course will primarily follow a discussion seminar format, not a lecture format. Thus, it is vital that you read all assigned materials meaningfully discuss them in the forums. Many of the activities and assignments described below are designed to foster discussion of the readings and active participation by all students

I. Catalog Descriptions and Credit Hours of Course:

AB 601. Conceptual Topics in Behavior Analysis. Explore Skinner's writings and the foundations of radical behaviorism while considering issues of broad scientific, philosophic, and social significance. (3 Credits)

II. Prerequisite(s):

AB 531

III. Objectives of the Course:

- a. Analyze Skinner's theory of private events and discuss the impact of this theory on the science of behavior analysis.
- b. Analyze the significance of behavior as a subject matter in its own right.
- c. Describe the tenets of Radical Behaviorism.
- d. Compare different theoretical perspectives in psychology.
- e. Discuss the world view of behavior analysis.
- f. Examine the impact of Skinner's "Selection by Consequences" on the science of behavior analysis and the field of psychology.
- g. Evaluate the theories and explanations of scientific verbal behavior.
- h. Describe the history of behaviorism.
- i. Analyze and describe elementary and complex verbal relations.

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (Notations in Course Content & Schedule)

- a. Analyze Skinner's theory of private events and discuss the impact of this theory on the science of behavior analysis.
- b. Describe the tenets of Radical Behaviorism.
- c. Compare different theoretical perspectives in psychology.

V. Expectations of the Student

- a. Read the assigned chapters in the text books as well as assigned readings from scientific journals.
- b. Participate in online forum discussions.
- c. Successfully complete all quizzes, exams, and assignments.
- d. Check the website twice per week for new materials and course updates.
- e. Respond to emails within 48 hours (except on weekends and holidays).
- f. Questions regarding the course in the course Q & A Forum(s).

- g. Complete all assignments, quizzes, discussion posts by 11:55pm on the date that they are due unless otherwise noted in the instructions.

VI. Expectations of the Instructor

Your instructor will:

- a. Respond to emails within 48 hours (except on the weekends and holidays).
- b. Participate in online forum discussions.
- c. Post grades for a given forum, quiz, exam, or assignment within 2 weeks following the due date.
- d. Not grade late assignments.
- e. Provide all updates regarding the course (e.g., cancellation of office hours) via the course News Forum.
- f. Maintain office hours and also meet with students outside of office hours as arranged by the students.

VII. Textbook(s) and Other Required Materials:

Required Textbooks (2):

Moore, J. (2008). Conceptual foundations of radical behaviorism. Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY: Sloan Publishing.

Skinner, B. F. (1974). About behaviorism. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Additional readings will be provided on the course website.

Required Technology:

A webcam or smart device with video capabilities is required for this course. You will be required to post videos of yourself for various assignments and forums (e.g., responses to readings, discussion questions). You will be required to upload videos to YouTube and save them as "Unlisted" Videos. **Students who do not post a video for a video assignment will receive 0 points for the entire assignment, regardless of whether other portions of the assignment were completed. If you have concerns about this, contact your professor during the first week of class.**

- If you do not have access to a webcam, you should contact or stop by the [Multimedia Center at Kent Library](#)

You may wish to purchase a webcam if you do not have one. You should be able to find a variety of webcams for under \$20.00. Here are some options to consider:

- **Webcam:** [click here to view options](#)

A microphone is not a requirement, but some students may find that a microphone helps produce a better sound quality.

- **Microphone:** [click here to view options](#)

VIII. Accessibility Statement:

Southeast Missouri State University and Disability Support Services remain committed to making every possible educational accommodation for students with disabilities. Many services and accommodations which aid a student's educational experience are available for students with various types of disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to contact [Disability Support Services](#) to become registered as a student with a disability. Accommodations are implemented on a case by case basis.

IX. Civility Statement

Every student at Southeast is obligated at all times to assume responsibility for his/her actions, to respect constituted authority, to be truthful, and to respect the rights of others, as to respect private and public property. In their academic activities, students are expected to maintain high standards of honesty and integrity and abide by the University's Policy on Academic Honesty. Alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct are adjudicated in accordance with the established procedures of the judicial system.

X. Academic Honesty Statement:

Academic honesty is one of the most important qualities influencing the character and vitality of an educational institution. Academic misconduct or dishonesty is inconsistent with membership in an academic community and cannot be accepted. Violations of academic honesty represent a serious breach of discipline and may be considered grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty is defined to include those acts which would deceive, cheat, or defraud so as to promote or enhance one's scholastic record. Knowingly or actively assisting any person in the commission of an above-mentioned act is also academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for upholding the principles of academic honesty in accordance with the "University Statement of Student Rights" found in the [STUDENT HANDBOOK](#). The University requires that all assignments submitted to faculty members by students be the work of the individual student submitting the work. An exception would be group projects assigned by the instructor. In this situation, the work must be that of the group. Academic dishonesty includes:

Plagiarism. In speaking or writing, plagiarism is the act of passing someone else's work off as one's own. In addition, plagiarism is defined as using the essential style and manner of expression of a source as if it were one's own. If there is any doubt, the student should consult his/her instructor or any manual of term paper or report writing. Violations of academic honesty include:

1. Presenting the exact words of a source without quotation marks;
2. Using another student's computer source code or algorithm or copying a laboratory report; or
3. Presenting information, judgments, ideas, or facts summarized from a source without giving credit.

Cheating. Cheating includes using or relying on the work of someone else in an inappropriate manner. It includes, but is not limited to, those activities where a student:

1. Obtains or attempts to obtain unauthorized knowledge of an examination's contents prior to the time of that examination.
2. Copies another student's work or intentionally allows others to copy assignments, examinations, source codes or designs;
3. Works in a group when she/he has been told to work individually;
4. Uses unauthorized reference material during an examination; or
5. Have someone else take an examination or takes the examination for another

XI. Basis for Student Evaluations:

a. For all students:

i. Late Submissions Policy:

Late work will not be accepted or graded. Students who submit assignments or Forum posts past the deadline will receive a grade of 0 points. If you do not complete a quiz or exam in the time frame that the quiz/exam is open, you will receive a 0.

ii. Quizzes

Weekly quizzes over the readings will be provided. They designed to help students ensure that students complete the readings each week and to foster ideas for discussion. All quizzes will be timed. Once a question is answered (or skipped), students will not be able to go back to the question.

The quizzes cover key points and issues in the assigned readings for that week. Although I will not give you specific study objectives for these quizzes, the study questions at the end of each chapter in the *Conceptual Foundations of Radical Behaviorism* textbook are a good guide for quizzes based on that book. You may use your readings and notes while taking the quiz. You may not work with other students on the quiz; however, and any reports of students doing so will be treated as a violation of the university's academic dishonest policy. Note that the quiz must be completed and submitted before the deadline. Quizzes submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of 0.

Each reading quiz consists of 10–15 questions (primarily multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank) and is worth a total of 15 points. You will have 90 minutes to complete each quiz. It is strongly recommended that you complete the readings before taking the quiz; if you try to look up all of the answers without having read anything yet, you will struggle to complete the quiz in the allotted time.

If you wish to contest your score on a reading quiz (i.e., answer key seems incorrect, minor spelling error on a fill-in-the-blank question, etc.), you must submit a re-grade request to the instructor via email within one week of the quiz deadline. Your request should identify the specific quiz score you are contesting, the question(s) you believe should be re-graded, and the reason(s) why you believe more points should be awarded. *References to relevant material in the readings (provide page numbers) will make it easier to evaluate your request. Re-grade requests submitted more than one week after the quiz in question will not be honored.*

iii. Weekly Video Forum Discussions

Students are required to participate in weekly forum discussions. **All** of the forums will require video presentations. Students will receive feedback from each other as well as the instructor. Initial posts are required by Friday at 11:55pm each week, and students are required to respond (by text or video) to at least 2 posts by the following Monday at 11:55pm.

Discussion Questions

For each unit, you will be required to prepare at least three discussion questions based on the assigned readings. The questions should address substantial issues and be designed to promote discussion. You will submit all three to your instructor, and then pick 1 question to post. In your post, you should provide some discussion over

the question. Other students will respond to your question/discussion, and you should be prepared to continue that discussion. The instructor may post any of your discussion questions to foster additional discussion over a particular topic. You should be prepared to take the lead on the discussion of any of your questions.

Each set of questions will be scored on a 10-point scale (please see “The Doc Fox Guide to Writing Awesome Discussion Questions” for detailed guidelines and scoring criteria), and must be submitted via the “Assignments” section of the course website by the deadline. Late assignments will be docked 2 points for every 10 minutes they are late.

iv. Final Paper and Presentation

Students will conduct an interview with a Board Certified Behavior Analyst to identify several ethical challenges he/she has encountered in practice, and then students will provide a brief presentation over one of the challenges. The presentation should include a description of the challenge, the relevant ethical codes, and a solution to the problem.

Final Paper Outline

You will submit an outline for your final paper worth 50 points. This will be your primary opportunity to receive guidance and feedback about the content, direction, and purpose of your paper. Guidelines for writing the outline will be provided.

Final Paper

You will write a 10–15 page paper for this course related to key philosophical assumptions of radical behaviorism, important conceptual or empirical developments in behavior analysis, an important historical influence on Skinner’s system, or some other approved topic. The final paper is worth up to 100 points. Detailed guidelines for the paper will be provided, along with a list of possible topics.

Final Paper Presentation

You will be required to provide a 10-minute video presentation of your final paper in summary form. Students will then post discussion questions over the next 3 days, and you are required to answer each question. The final presentation will be worth 60 points, with up to 20 points awarded via a peer evaluation system and up to 40 points awarded by the instructor.

COMPONENT EVALUATION CHART AB 601

This is a tentative plan for the semester; however, your instructor has the right to add, remove, or change assignments throughout the semester.

Component Description	Points	Due Date
Forum Discussions (12 x 20 points each)	240	
Reading Quizzes (12 x 15)	180	
Final Paper Outline	50	
Final Paper	100	
Final Paper Presentation	60	
Total Points:	630	

Grades are calculated by dividing the total points earned in the semester by the total points available in the semester and then multiplying by 100. For example, student who earned 185 points in the semester, when there were 200 points possible, would calculate his/her grade like this: $185 \div 200 = .925 \times 100 = 93\%$. This student would receive an A for the semester.

a. Basis for Graduate Student Evaluation:

<p>Grading Scale: 90-100%=A 80-89% = B 70-79% = C 69 or less=F</p>

Course Content and Schedule

Week	Topic
	CFRB = <i>Conceptual Foundations of Radical Behaviorism</i> textbook
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to course • A brief biography of BF Skinner Causes of behavior & technological talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Limits of Technical Talk (Hayes) • <i>About Behaviorism</i>: Introduction and Chapter 1
2	Introduction to Behaviorism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>About Behaviorism</i>: Chapters 9 – 14
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 1 – 3
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Phylogeny and Ontogeny of Behavior” (Skinner) • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 4 – 5
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Selection by Consequences” (Skinner) • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 6 –7
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 8 - 9
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Operational Analysis of Psychological Terms” (Skinner) • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 10 – 11
8	Final Paper Outline Due
9	SPRING BREAK
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are Theories of Learning Necessary?” (Skinner) • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 12 -13
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 14 -16
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 17 -18
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CFRB</i>: Chapter 19 • “Finding the Philosophical Core: A Review of Stephen C. Pepper’s <i>World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence</i>” (Hayes, Hayes, & Reese) • “Constructing a Pragmatic Science of Learning and Instruction with Functional Contextualism” (Fox)
14	Final Paper
15	Final Paper Presentations (Group A)
16	Final Paper Presentations (Group B)
17	Final Paper Presentations (Group C)

XII. References

- Fox, E. J. (2006). Constructing a pragmatic science of learning and instruction with functional contextualism. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 54, 5-36.
- Hayes, S. C. (1991). The limits of technological talk. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 24, 417-420.
- Hayes, S. C., & Hayes, L. J. (2013). Finding the philosophical core: A review of Stephen C. Pepper's world hypothesis: A study in evidence. *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 50, 97-111.
- Moore, J. (2008). *Conceptual foundations of radical behaviorism*. Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY: Sloan Publishing.
- Skinner, B. F. (1974). *About behaviorism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- Skinner, B. F. (1981). [Selection by consequences](#). *Science*, 213, 501-504.
- Skinner, B. F. (1984). The operational analysis of psychological terms. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 7, 547-553.
- Skinner, B. F. (1984). The phylogeny and ontogeny of behavior. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 7, 669-677.