

**Texas A&M Commerce**

**Applied Behavior Analysis (Psy/Sped 535)**

**Wednesday's at 7:20 pm**

Instructor: Michelle De La Garza, PhD

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□Office Hours: by appointment

**Course description:**

The course provides a focus on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA). While wide application of ABA principles is possible, the application of ABA to the field of education is highlighted.

**Goals:**

1. To increase understanding of the principles of applied behavior analysis.
2. To develop beginning competency in the application of applied behavior analysis.

**Text**

Mayer, G. R., Sulzer-Azaroff, & Wallace, M (2014). Behavior analysis for lasting change, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Hudson, NY: Sloan Publishing.

Optional Supplemental Textbook: Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2007). Applied Behavior Analysis (Second Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

**Requirements & Grading:**

Students are expected to complete all readings and attend each class prepared to ask questions and/or contribute to class discussions. Course grades will be determined by performance in the following areas:

1. Exams – Exams will constitute a major portion of the grade. There will be two multiple-choice/short-answer exams (one mid-course and one final) worth 100 points each. Total: 200 points
2. Homework Activities – As we progress through the materials you will be given homework assignments to complete. They will be given out during the class period that we cover (and finish) a given topic and will be due the

following week. There will be five assignments, each worth 25 points. You will be allowed to throw out your lowest score. Please be aware that some of these activities involve writing short (about 1 page) papers. Keep in mind that clarity of writing (which includes proper spelling and punctuation) will be considered part of the overall grade. □ Total: 100 points

3. Selection of Journal Articles – Given that reviewing research is an essential component to determining which interventions are evidence-based, you will be asked to find two journal articles related to applied behavior analysis. The articles must be data-based and must be turned in to the instructor. □ You will be graded your review and presentation of an evidenced based intervention. Total: 50 points
4. Discussion Lead – You will be expected to lead a discussion topic for a group at least 2 times during the semester. You will be graded on the content of the discussion, the quality of your leadership, and your over professionalism. More information will be provided when discussions begin in class.
5. Functional Assessment Activity – For this activity you will be asked to choose someone that you come into regular contact with and conduct a functional assessment of their behavior using the strategies covered in class. Part of the assignment will include summarizing this information and developing possible intervention strategies to use given your results. Keep in mind that clarity of writing (which includes proper spelling and punctuation) will be considered part of the overall grade. More info to follow. Total: 100 points

***Failure to turn in assignments on time will result in points being deducted from the assignment grade. The number of points deducted for each day the assignment is late is equal to one letter grade. For example, if an assignment is worth 100 points and it is submitted a day late the maximum number of points you can earn is 89.***

**Evaluation: □**

Homework activities (25 points each) = 100 points

Mid-term exam = 100 points

Final exam = 100 points

Discussion Lead = 50 points

Journal Articles □ Total points possible = 50 points

Functional Assessment Activity = 100 points

= 500 points

A 90% and above

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F <60%

### **Ethical Considerations**

“All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.”

Students are expected to follow the code of conduct in class described in the Student Handbook (Policies and Procedures, Code of Student Conduct). Violation of the code will lead to an initiation of the disciplinary processes described in the Handbook. Proper student conduct also includes maintaining a standard of academic honesty. This means that neither cheating nor plagiarism will be tolerated and students who engage in either will be subject to the disciplinary processes described in the Code of Student Conduct). Plagiarism essentially means that you cannot use the words and ideas of another person without giving them credit. Therefore, “quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author you will need to credit the source in the text” (APA, 2001, p. 249). If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism please see me. Students who plagiarize any material will earn a grade of F for the course.

Students are expected to attend all classes unless they have excused absences as described in the Student’s Handbook (Policies and Procedures, Academics). When students are absent from class they are responsible for making up the work covered in class and speaking with me about these arrangements. More than 3 absences during the semester is considered excessive. “It is the prerogative of the faculty to drop students from courses in which they have obtained excessive absences as defined in the course syllabus. In such cases, faculty recommend through the department head to the appropriate college dean that a student be dropped from a class. The faculty member will make a reasonable effort to communicate with the student prior to recommending a drop. If approved, the college dean will forward the recommendation to the Records Office (Systems Policy 13.2).”

### **Student Conduct and Absences:**

Students are responsible for following University procedures to drop a class. If you stop attending the class for any reason, you must initiate the process of dropping, or you will receive a failing grade. Plan to take care of this several days ahead of time, so that you will have the time required to get the forms signed, submitted, etc.

Accommodations: Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must go through the Academic Support Committee. Instructors must be notified in writing by the Director of Disability Resources & Services before accommodations will be made. For more information, please contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services, Halladay Student Services Bldg., Room 303D, (903) 886-5835.

### **TEExES Competencies for Diagnosticians**

Competency 003: The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning, and instructional decision making.

Competency 004: The educational diagnostician selects and administers appropriate formal and informal assessments and evaluations.

Competency 006: The educational diagnostician understands appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for students with disabilities.

Competency 007: The educational diagnostician understands the use of appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning, and instructional strategies for developing students' behavioral and social skills.

Competency 008: The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of professional practices, roles, and responsibilities and the philosophical, legal and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education.

### **TEExES Competencies for Special Education**

Competency 002: The special education teacher understands formal and informal assessment procedures and knows how to evaluate student competencies to make instructional decisions.

Competency 004: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of procedures for managing the teaching and learning environment, including procedures related to the use of assistive technology.

Competency 006: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of issues and procedures for teaching appropriate student behavior

and social skills.

## **NASP Standards Covered (for School Psychologists)**

### **(Links to NASP Model 10 Domains of Practice)**

**2.1: Data-Based Decision Making & Accountability:** *You will gain knowledge of varied methods of assessment and data collection for identifying strengths and needs, developing effective services and programs, and measuring progress and outcomes.*

**2.2: Consultation and Collaboration:** *You will gain knowledge of varied models and strategies of consultation, collaboration, and communication applicable to individuals, families, groups, and systems and methods to promote effective implementation of services.*

**2.4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills:**  *You will gain knowledge of biological, cultural, developmental, and social influences on behavior and mental health, behavioral and emotional impacts on learning and life skills, and evidence-based strategies to promote social-emotional functioning and mental health.*

**2.6: Preventive and Responsive Services:** *You will gain knowledge of principles and research related to resilience and risk factors in learning & mental health, services in schools and communities to support multitiered prevention, and evidence-based strategies for effective crisis response.*

**2.9: Research and Program Evaluation** *You will gain knowledge of research design, statistics, measurement, varied data collection and analysis techniques, and program evaluation sufficient for understanding research and interpreting data in applied settings.*

Proposed Class Schedule		
Week 1	Achieving Lasting Change Through Behavior Analysis	1
Week 2	Introducing Effective Strategies of Change: Essential Building Blocks  Preparing an Environment Supportive of Behavior Change	2, 3
Week 3	Sharpening the Focus by Refining Goals and Objectives and	4, 5

	Reinforcement	
Week 4	Reinforcement	6 & 11
Week 5	Tools, Monitoring, and Analyzing Functions of Interventions	7, 8, 9
Week 6	Functional Assessment	10
Week 7	Midterm	
Week 8	Group Change and Shaping	12 & 13
Week 9	Motivating Operations & Identifying Forms of Discriminant Learning	15 & 16
Week 10	Selecting Specific Prompting Procedures and Instructional Programs	18
Week 11	Generalization	21
Week 12	Maintaining Behavior and Behavior Change	22, 23, & 24
Week 13	Preventing Unwanted Behavior and Reducing Behavior	26, 27, 28, 29, 30
Week 14	Presentations & Achieving Lasting Change Responsibly	31
Week 15	Final Exam	

\*\*Please be aware that this syllabus will serve as a guideline for the course and is subject to change as necessary.