PSYC3209 – Learning and Motivation

Unit of Study Code: PSYC3209

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Format of Unit:
2 x 1 hour lectures/week x 13 weeks
1 x 1 hour tutorial/week x 12 weeks
Tutorial classes: maximum of 20 students per group

Credit Point Value: 4 Credit Points

Prerequisites: 8 credit points of Second Year Psychology including PSYC 2111 and PSYC 2112

Assessment:
Classwork:
40% from 2,000-word Report;
Due Date: Thursday 26 May (week 11)

5% from tutorial contribution.

Examination:
55%: essay, multiple choice and short answer questions.
Unit of study general description:

**Tutorial format**

Starting in Week 2 regular tutorial meetings will be held at which students will be involved in a research project conducted by the group. The 2,000-word report is based on this project.

Tutorial groups decide on a project topic, design, plan and then run an experiment. Selecting and designing the research should last until Week 4 or 5. The experiment is then run. During this stage students may test subjects independently or work on a roster basis, and tutorial meetings will be held to discuss progress at times that fit in with the experimental schedule. Collection of results should be complete by Week 9 in time for a tutorial on analysis of the data. The tutorial in Week 10 may be devoted to discussion on writing the report, which is to be handed in at the Psychology 3 administration office on the Thursday of Week 11.

You should allocate at least 20 hours of tutorial time to this work over the semester, in addition to independent reading. This format is designed to allow you to become involved from start to finish in a meaningful piece of research on learning or motivation that is more than a replication of previous experiments. The more you put into it, the more valuable it will be. The timing of the tutorials may be flexible. Thus, you should expect that for some weeks when you are collecting data, tutorials may be shortened or replaced entirely by your tutor attending data collection sessions, supervising the experiment or general trouble-shooting regarding your procedures.

Limitations on available equipment will restrict the range of feasible experiments, as may time constraints. Projects both with rats and with human subjects will be available.

**Collaboration vs independence**

The project should be a team effort in which each member is expected to contribute the same amount of work towards developing the experiment, in terms of background reading and ideas on design and procedure, as well as towards the 'busy' work of actually carrying it out and analysing the data. Furthermore, there is likely to be considerable group discussion of what the results mean. On the other hand, writing a report has to be an individual effort, carried out independently of anyone else. Reports, including figures and tables, should have no more similarity to other students than would arise from a casual discussion of the project over the phone.

**NOTE:** Reports will only be marked for students who have made a satisfactory contribution to the conduct of the project. Tutorial attendance alone does not constitute a satisfactory contribution. Tutors will keep a record of contributions, such as reporting from literature reviews, preparing materials, acting as an experimenter/data collection, data coding and entry, data analysis for the group. Any student who submits a report without satisfactory contribution to the conduct of the research will receive a zero for the report. In addition, tutors will allocate a mark (5% of the total for the course) based on contribution to the tutorial program and conduct of the project. This will be based on the tutor's knowledge of contributions and on a (half page) list of your own contributions to be handed with the report.
Lecture programme

Lecture 1: Basic properties of classical conditioning (Harris)
*Domjan, pp.59-79; 86-88.

Lecture 2: Learned flavour preferences and aversions. (Harris)
*Domjan, pp.72-74;

Lecture 3: The role of conditioning in drug taking. (Harris)
*Domjan, pp. 101-105

Lecture 4: The content of conditioning. (Harris)
*Domjan. Chapter 4, pp 92-109.

Lecture 5: The conditions necessary for conditioning: contiguity. (Harris)
Domjan. Chapter 4, pp 109-112.

Lecture 6: The conditions necessary for conditioning: contingency. (Harris)
Domjan. Chapter 4, pp 109-112.

Lecture 7: Theoretical models of conditioning: Variations in associability of the CS or US. (Harris)
*Domjan, pp.112-117.
Dickinson, pp 123-146.

Lecture 8: The effects of non-reinforcement: Extinction (Harris)
*Domjan, pp. 114-115; 251-266.
Lecture 9:  Conditioned Inhibition – its role in extinction and latent inhibition?  (Harris)

*Domjan, pp. 79-86; 114-115; 251-266.

Lecture 10:  Further models of conditioning: Wagner’s SOP model  (Harris)

Dickinson, pp 134-140.

Lecture 11:  Learned helplessness in the aversive context.  (Karazinov)

In R.R Mowrer & S.B Klein. (Eds.) Handbook of contemporary learning theories (pp.469-504).

Lecture 12:  Learned helplessness in the appetitive context.  (Karazinov)


Lecture 13:  Attributional style, depression and other applications of Helplessness.  (Karazinov)

LoLordo, V.M. (2001). Learned helplessness and depression. In M.E Carroll & J.B. Overmier (Eds.),
Animal research and human health: Advancing human welfare through behavioral science (pp.63-77).

Lecture 14:  Theories of the effects of uncontrollability  (Karazinov)

Domjan, pp.151-156.
Minor, T.R., Dess, N.K., & Overmier, J.B (1991) Inverting the traditional view of "learned helplessness":
Reinterpretation in terms of anxiety and modulator operations. In: M.R. Denny (Ed.), pp 87-133, Fear,

Lecture 15:  Learned Irrelevance  (Karazinov)


Lecture 16:  Human contingency and causality judgements.  (Karazinov)

257-279.

Lecture 17:  Learning retrospectively.  (Boakes)


Lecture 18:  Human evaluative conditioning.  (Boakes)

Lecture 19:  Perceptual learning  (Boakes)


Lecture 20:  Instrumental conditioning  (Boakes)

*Domjan, pp.124-151.

Lecture 21:  Actions and habits  (Boakes)

*Domjan, pp.191-215.

Lecture 22:  Social learning  (Boakes)


Lecture 23:  Conditioning and awareness.  (Boakes)


Lecture 24:  Implicit learning.  (Boakes)


Lecture 25:  Course Review.  (Boakes)

Reading

The main text for the Learning component of Psychology 2 is suitable for many of the lecture topics:


Alternative textbooks (with multiple copies in Fisher Undergraduate Library) that may sometimes be useful include:


See also later editions by Schwartz & Robbins (1995), and Schwartz, Wasserman & Robbins (2001)

The following book presents the basic ideas of associative learning in a non-textbook way that some students may find highly illuminating:

For a detailed treatment of some of the topics presented in Lectures 1 – 20 the following often still provides the best analysis:


Similarly, detailed treatment of learned helplessness (Lectures 11 – 14) is provided by


Copies of papers listed above for lectures should be available in Special Reserve, Fisher Library.

**Teaching outcomes:**

(1) Awareness of the recent issues and research in learning.

(2) Knowledge of theoretical development in learning and motivation.

(3) Appreciation of the role of theory in the generation of knowledge in learning and motivation.

(4) Ability to evaluate research methodology in learning and motivation, and identify appropriate control conditions.

(5) Awareness of the role of learning and motivation in relevant social/health problems.

(6) Capacity to derive applications of principles from learning and motivation in order to explain various aspects of human behaviour.

(7) Encourage ability to design and conduct research in learning and motivation.

(8) Ability to write clearly on theoretical and empirical analyses of research in learning and motivation.

(9) Development of skills in reading primary sources in this area.

**Evidence of learning:**

Assessment of learning consists of: (1) an individually written report on the group project to which a student has contributed; and (2) a 2-hour formal examination which will cover all teaching outcomes. Students are expected to attend all lectures and tutorials (regardless of which class assessment option is chosen, unless other arrangements are made with the tutor), to read the recommended papers, and to provide evidence of having obtained the appropriate knowledge, awareness and abilities through the two items of assessment.