PSYC3011 – Learning and Behaviour

Unit of Study Code: PSYC3011

Coordinator:  A/Prof. Justin Harris
Office: Room 478 Griffith Taylor Building
Phone: 9351 2864
E-mail: justinh [@psych.usyd.edu.au]

Other Teaching Staff:  Professor Bob Boakes
Office: Room 466 Griffith Taylor Building
Phone: 9351 3347
E-mail: bobb [@psych.usyd.edu.au]

Dr Evan Livesey
Office: Room 528 Griffith Taylor Building
Phone: 9351 8990
E-mail: evanl [@psych.usyd.edu.au]

Format of Unit: 2 x 1 hour lectures/week x 13 weeks
1 x 2 hour tutorial/week x 10 weeks
Tutorial classes: maximum of 20 students per group

Credit Point Value: 6 Credit Points

Prerequisites: 8 credit points of Intermediate Psychology:
PSYC2011 (or PSYC2111)
and at least one other Intermediate Psychology Unit from

Assessment: One 2hr exam (multiple-choice and written-answer questions): 50%
One 2000 word practical report: 30%
One tutorial quiz (multiple choice): 15%
Tutorial participation: 5%

Unit of study general description:
PSYC 3011 addresses the fundamental concepts and more important research findings related to contemporary theories of associative learning in animals and humans. It examines the application of such fundamental research to issues such as drug use, food choice, and learned helplessness. It is designed to foster skills in reading primary sources in this area, and provide the opportunity for hands-on experience in research projects in this area.
**Tutorial programme**

Starting in Week 2, regular 2-hour tutorial meetings will be held at which students will participate in a variety of research projects investigating different issues related to associative learning in both humans and rats. The 2,000-word report is based on one of these projects. These tutorials will run for 10 weeks (ending in week 11). Towards the end of this period, the location of the tutorials will change in order to conduct a study with rats in the teaching laboratory in the Badham building. A quiz will be conducted during tutorials in week 7.

**NOTE:** Attendance at the tutorials is compulsory. In addition, tutors will allocate a mark (5% of the total for the course) based on contribution to the tutorial program. This will be based on the tutor’s knowledge of contributions.

**Lecture programme**

Students are expected to attend two 1-hr lectures each week (weeks 1 to 13). Lectures are at 10am on Mondays and 10am on Wednesdays, in Bosch Lecture Theatre 3.

Below is a draft lecture timetable, showing the title of each lecture and the name of the lecturer (note: the scheduling of topics may change from that shown below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture #</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>L 1 &amp; 2:</td>
<td>Boakes</td>
<td>History of comparative psychology and learning theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>L 3 &amp; 4:</td>
<td>Boakes</td>
<td>History of comparative psychology and learning theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>L 5:</td>
<td>Boakes</td>
<td>Basic properties of classical conditioning, learned flavour preferences and aversions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L 6:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>----- mid-semester break -----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>L 7:</td>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>The content of conditioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L 8:</td>
<td></td>
<td>The conditions necessary for conditioning: contiguity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>L 9:</td>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>The conditions necessary for conditioning: contingency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>L 11:</td>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>The effects of non-reinforcement: extinction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L 12:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conditioned inhibition – its role in extinction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading

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


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


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


**Teaching outcomes:**

- Awareness of the recent issues and research in associative learning.
- Knowledge of theoretical development in learning, and appreciation of the role of theory in the generation of knowledge in learning.
- Experience with conducting research in learning, and the ability to evaluate research methodology and identify appropriate control conditions.
- Awareness of the role of learning in relevant behavioural health issues (especially drug taking).
- Capacity to derive applications of principles from learning in order to explain various aspects of human behaviour.
- Ability to write clearly on theoretical and empirical analyses of research in learning.
- Development of skills in reading primary sources in this area.