

# PSYC3011 – Learning and Behaviour

**Unit of Study Code:** PSYC3011

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**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:** 12 credit points of Intermediate Psychology:  
PSYC2011 (or PSYC2111)  
and at least one other Intermediate Psychology Unit from  
PSYC2012 / 2112, PSYC2013 / 2113, PSYC2014 / 2114.

**Assessment:** One 2hr exam (multiple-choice and written-answer questions): 50%  
One 2000 word practical report (due Monday week 11): 30%  
One multiple choice tutorial quiz (in week 7): 15%  
Tutorial participation (weeks 2-11): 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 phobias and food choice. 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.

### **Specific Graduate Attributes & Student Learning Outcomes.**

This course is structured around the graduate attributes associated with the scientist-practitioner model, the basis for the training of psychologists in Australia and internationally.

Graduate Attributes are the generic skills, abilities and qualities that students should acquire during their university experience and the School of Psychology is committed to providing an environment to promote these skills. In addition, this unit of study will provide students with generalised and transferable skills that will also be useful in careers outside psychology.

The following graduate attributes and student learning outcomes will be developed through lectures, tutorial and assessment activities in particular. They will be assessed primarily in the report, mid-semester quiz, and in the final examination.

### ***Knowledge and Understanding of the Principles and Theory of Learning Processes***

- To know the fundamental factors that influence simple associative learning and learn about some basic phenomena that have been discovered through scientific exploration of the behaviour of animals (including humans).
- To understand some of the major theoretical models that have been proposed to describe the mechanisms underlying simple associative learning, and to appreciate the role of theory in the generation of knowledge in learning
- To recognize how principles of associative learning apply to everyday lives of humans and other animals, and see how research into learning is relevant to clinical conditions.

### ***Research Methods***

Students are expected to discover basic methods of research into associative learning by participating in experiments and learning about the objective, experimental design, analysis of results, and interpretation of results from these experiments. Through this students should develop a critical understanding of the virtues and limitations of experimental methods, and develop an astute understand of the power of experimental design. They should also learn to work with data and draw conclusions from experimental findings, and write a research report based a real experiment.

### ***Communication Skills***

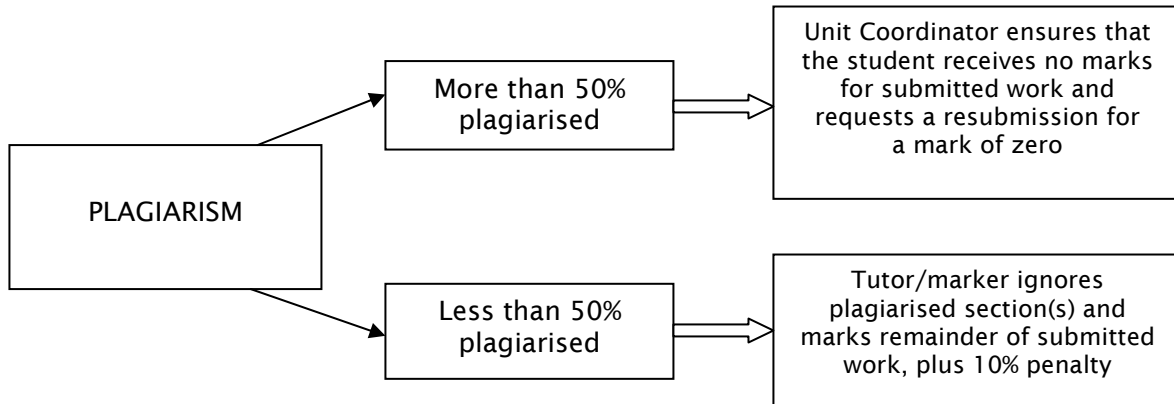
The students will develop skills in reading primary sources in this area, and will write a standard research report following American Psychological Association (APA) structure and formatting conventions.

## Policy on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is NOT permitted.

Are you sure you know what plagiarism is? Please refer to the University policy on plagiarism: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/senate/policies/Plagiarism.pdf>

The School of Psychology will penalise **all** submitted work that is plagiarised

The School of Psychology is using software to detect **all** forms of plagiarism



## Tutorial Programme

Starting in Week 2, ten 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. 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 mid-semester quiz will be conducted during one of these tutorials.

**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.

**NOTE: The research report must be submitted on line, as well as in hard copy.** It will be analysed by plagiarism detection software.

## 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).

Week	Lecture #	Lecturer	Topic
1	L 1 & 2:	Boakes	History of comparative psychology and learning theory.
2	L 3 & 4:	Boakes	History of comparative psychology and learning theory.
3	L 5: L 6:	Boakes	Basic properties of classical conditioning. Learned flavour preferences and aversions.
4	L 7: L 8:	Harris	The content of conditioning. The conditions necessary for conditioning: contiguity.
5	L 9: L 10:	Harris	The conditions necessary for conditioning: contingency. Theories of conditioning: Variations in associability of the CS.
6	L 11 & 12:	Harris	Theories of conditioning: Variations in associability of the US (the Rescorla-Wagner model).
			----- mid-semester break -----
7	L 13: L 14:	Harris	The effects of non-reinforcement: extinction. Conditioned inhibition – its role in extinction.
8	L 15: L 16:	Harris	Latent inhibition. Social learning.
9	L 17: L 18:	Harris	Social learning. Placebo.
10	L 19: L 20:	Johnston	Actions and habits in instrumental behaviour Choice and self-control

11	L 21: L 21:	Johnston	Intrinsic motivation Biological constraints on learned behaviour
12	L 22: L 23:	Johnston	Measuring intelligence in non-verbal animals Measuring memory in non-verbal animals
13	L 24: L 25:	Johnston	Language and communication in non-human animals Applied behavioural analysis focusing on Autism

## Reading

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

**Bouton, M. E. (2007). *Learning and Behavior: A contemporary synthesis*. Sunderland, MA: Sinauer.**

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

Domjan, M (2003). *The principles of learning and behavior* 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole.

Mazur, J. *Learning and behavior*. (2nd ed 1990; 3rd ed 1994).

Schwartz, B. (1989) *Psychology of learning and behavior*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Norton.

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

Dickinson, A. (1980). *Contemporary animal learning theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mackintosh, N.J. (1983) *Conditioning and associative learning*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

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Poppy Prezios is your Psychology Faculty Liaison Librarian. You can find her at Badham Library Ground Floor, Badham Building Science Rd, Camperdown Campus. You can phone her on 0434 606 913 or email at [p.prezios@library.usyd.edu.au](mailto:p.prezios@library.usyd.edu.au).

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Reserve (located on Level 2 of Fisher Library) is a 2 hour loan collection. Most of the required and recommended items will be here. Details of items required can be located in the catalogue.

<http://opac.library.usyd.edu.au/search/r>

### **Psychology Guide**

includes links to Psychology databases, internet resources, information on tests and more.

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