

# Behavior Modification Principles

## PSYC 2440

### Syllabus

Welcome to Behavior Modification Principles, PSYC 2440.

### Contacting your instructor

For information on contacting your instructor as well as other important information from your instructor see the Instructor Letter link in your course website.

### Course description

The fundamental assumptions, principles, and procedures of behaviour modification are described and illustrated in the course textbook, with applications to normal and abnormal human behaviour. During the past sixty years, behavioral scientists have investigated and developed practical behaviour modification principles and techniques for changing behavior. In situations where someone wanted to behave differently, learn a new skill, develop persistence, or eliminate a bad habit, effective behavior modification procedures have been used. Thousands of research reports have demonstrated the value of behavior modification techniques for improving a wide variety of behaviors of thousands of individuals in diverse settings. Successful applications have been documented with populations from persons with profound intellectual disability to the exceptionally intelligent, with the very young and the very old, in highly controlled institutional programs as well as in uncontrolled community settings, and ranging from simple motor behaviors to complex intellectual problem solving. Applications are occurring with an ever-increasing frequency in such areas as education, social work, nursing, clinical psychology, psychiatry, community psychology, medicine, rehabilitation medicine, business and industry, and sport psychology.

This course is designed to help you to learn to talk about and apply behavior modification principles and techniques effectively. You need no prior knowledge about behavior modification to read and understand the material that will be presented in this course. In fact, although Introductory Psychology (PSYC 1200) is a prerequisite for this course, our text assumes no specific prior knowledge about psychology or behavior modification on the part of the reader. Individuals can learn to apply behavior modification techniques with a reasonable amount of study and practice. Those who do so will find it exceptionally useful in adjusting to the demands of everyday living, ranging from helping their children learn life's necessary skills to solving some of their own personal behavior problems.

### Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. list techniques for changing behavior;
2. discuss successful behavior modification techniques such as: positive reinforcement, extinction, shaping, intermittent reinforcement, stimulus discrimination learning, fading, conditioned reinforcement, chaining, etc.;
3. develop and plan to change an identified behavior issue for yourself or someone you know;
4. apply behavior modification techniques in a practice setting; and
5. evaluate your success in the application of behavior modification techniques.

# Textbook

## Required

The following required materials are available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order your materials immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order your materials.

Martin, G. L., & Pear, J. J. (2015). *Behavior modification: What it is and how to do it* (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

## Course overview

Please note that you must have the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the textbook. We will cover approximately the first half of the text during this course; the second half of the text is used in the course, Behavior Modification Applications (PSYC 3150). This text was designed to help you learn to talk about and apply behavior modification effectively. The text is very broad in its coverage, because behavior modification is a very broad field. The text also provides a great deal of depth because, at its roots, behavior modification is a very complex field, with many ramifications. Some students will require or desire a deeper knowledge of behavior modification than others.

In each chapter of this book, the elementary material is separated from the material that demands more thought and study. The former material is presented in the main body of each chapter; the latter material is presented at the end of each chapter under the heading “Notes for Further Learning.” Reference numerals (such as those used for footnotes) are placed beside key statements in the text to refer you to the corresponding numbered passages in the “Notes for Further Learning” section at the end of that chapter. The “Notes for Further Learning” sections are not required material in this course. However, many students will find these sections very informative and you are encouraged to read them on your own while you are studying the textual material.

Another major way in which the text was designed to help you learn the material is that it provides guidelines on the use of all the behavior modification methods discussed in the text. These guidelines should prove useful as **summaries** of the material covered in each unit, as well as in helping you to actually apply the methods described in the text.

Numerous **Questions for Learning** are also presented throughout each chapter. These questions are intended to help you check your knowledge of the material, complete assignments, and also to prepare for the final exam. At the end of each chapter you will also find **Application Exercises** that are intended to help you develop the practical skills you will need to carry out behavior modification projects effectively.

The course is divided into 15 units, with each unit based on one chapter from the textbook. You are required to complete Units 1-4 for Assignment 1, Units 5-8 for Assignment 2, Units 9-12 for Assignment 3, and Units 13-15 for Assignment 4.

## Specific learning activities for each unit

### 1. Read assigned chapter

Your first step is to read the assigned chapter in the textbook for the unit. Don't just passively read for the sake of reading. Passively reading is like watching someone else perform. That's much different than having to perform yourself. Keep in mind when you're reading that you are going to have to do something with the material that you are examining. You might have to find the answer to a question, complete an application exercise, or give an example of a principle. If you read the text with the idea of discovering answers to questions, rather than just generally reading with no goal in mind, then your reading time will be put to much more efficient use.

The learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter in the textbook will help you to focus your reading and prepare you for the “Questions for Learning” that appear throughout each chapter.

## **2. Prepare answers to questions that are eligible for the final exam**

In this course, your final exam will contain no surprises. You will have seen all of the questions ahead of time. Specifically, scattered throughout each chapter in the text are Questions for Learning. We indicate in each unit which of those questions are potential final exam questions, but we will not ask all of them on the final exam. Your final exam will be made up of 12 to 16 questions and will be a two hour exam.

After reading the assigned chapters for a unit, your first task should be to prepare your answers to the potential final exam questions. Preparing the answers to potential final exam questions as you complete each unit (rather than leaving them to the end when you begin to review for the final exam) will help you in three ways. First, it will give you a background to complete the other assignments for each chapter (described below). Second, the material in the Martin and Pear book is cumulative in the sense that later chapters build on earlier chapters. Mastering the basic concepts as you go will make it easier for you to understand the later material. Third, learning the answers to the questions on a chapter-by-chapter basis will make it a lot easier when it's time to study for your final exam. Studying for the final will then be more like reviewing for a test rather than learning new material.

## **3. Prepare for and take a self-test**

Several of the Questions for Learning scattered throughout the chapter assigned for a unit will be identified as self-test questions. Although the self-test questions are optional, they will help you determine whether or not you understand and can apply the basic concepts of the chapter. You should prepare your answers to the questions designated for the self-test, and compare them to the answers that are contained at the end of each unit on the course website, and then take a test by trying to rewrite your answers with your book closed and without your notes in front of you. Once this is complete, check to see if you wrote the answers correctly on your self-test. Taking the self-test will also help you to complete the application exercises.

## **4. Prepare answers to the designated assignment questions to submit for grading**

Some of the Questions for Learning throughout each chapter will be used for grading purposes, and are referred to as **assignment questions**. After you have completed the above learning activities, you will be ready to prepare answers to assignment questions for submission as part of an assignment. As your answers to these questions are worth points towards your final grade, you should try to provide what you think is a complete answer. Your answers will indicate to the instructor the extent to which you have completed the previous learning activities for that unit, and whether or not you adequately understood the material.

## **5. Complete the application exercises**

At the end of each chapter in the text, you will find application exercises. These require you to analyze, interpret, and/or develop programs for your own behavior and/or the behavior of others. They require you to demonstrate that you can accurately follow steps in developing behavior modification programs to change behavior. This further demonstrates to the instructor that you will have completed the necessary prerequisite study and that you are acquiring competencies in behavior modification. The specific application exercises that are assigned are to be completed and submitted as part of your assignment for each unit. These are also worth points towards your final grade.

**Note:** The answers to the assignment questions and assigned application exercises for each unit are therefore the two parts of assignments that you will be graded on.

Detailed information on this will be provided in the Evaluation and grading section.

## Evaluation and grading

Your learning in this course will be evaluated out of 100 points based on your completion of 4 assignments and a final examination.

### Distribution of marks

Evaluation	Percentage
Assignments 1 to 4: Part 1: Answers to assignment questions	42%
Assignments 1 to 4: Part 2: Answers to application exercises	8%
Final exam	<u>50%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grading scale

Letter grade	Percentage	Qualitative description
A+	95 - 100	Exceptional
A	85 - 94	Excellent
B+	79 - 84	Very good
B	72 - 78	Good
C+	66 - 71	Satisfactory
C	60 - 65	Adequate
D	50 - 59	Pass
F	0 - 49	Failure

## Plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation

You should acquaint yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar*. Note: These policies are also located in your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook* or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>. Also see the "Important Note About Plagiarism" in the Course Overview.

## Assignments

Each of the four assignments will be comprised of two parts:

### ***Part 1: Answers to the assignment questions for specified units***

Answers to assignment questions for each unit will be graded out of 42 points. Your average score for the answers to the questions across all 15 units will then be used to determine the total number of points out of 42 that you will receive.

## ***Part 2: Answers to the assignment application exercises for specified units***

Answers to the assigned application exercises for a unit will be graded out of 8 points. The average of your scores on application exercises across all 15 units will determine the total number of points that you will receive out of 8.

## **Assignment due dates**

The due dates of assignments have been planned to help you pace your work and provide for timely feedback on work submitted. The instructor will grade your assignments and comment on your answers and they will then be returned to you on the course website.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Sept. – Dec.</b>	<b>Jan. – April</b>	<b>May - Aug.</b>
1	September 25	January 25	May 25
2	October 19	February 15	June 20
3	November 8	March 8	July 8
4	November 28	March 28	July 28

**Note:** If the assignment due date falls during the Mid-term Break in February, it will be due on the Monday following the Mid-term Break. If you are unable to submit an assignment on time, contact your instructor well in advance of the due date, for we cannot guarantee that the instructor will accept late assignments.

## **Final examination**

**Note:** The final exam will be conducted at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus or at an alternate location off-campus. **All students must declare** an exam location. The Registrar's Office is responsible for scheduling the final exam. Once finalized, the exam date and time information will be posted on the University of Manitoba Exam site.

Your final exam will be worth a total of 50 points.

### **Combination of assignments and final exam**

Your average score (out of 42) from assignment questions and your average score (out of 8) from assigned application exercises will then be added to your score on the final exam (out of 50) to yield the total number of points achieved in the course (maximum of 100).

## **A word of caution about the assignments and the final examination**

Some students find that they do very well on the assignments, but they do not do nearly as well on the final examination. While your grades on the assignments will give you some idea of how well you are mastering the material, they may not indicate how well you will do on the examination, because the examination is written under very different circumstances.

Because the assignments are open book, they do not require the amount of memorization that a closed-book examination requires nor are they limited to a specific time period. Some students have told us that, based on the high marks they received on the assignments, they were overconfident and underestimated the time and effort needed to prepare for the final examination.

Please keep all this in mind as you prepare for the examination. Pay careful attention to the description of the type of questions that will be on your final examination. You will be preparing to write a final exam comprised of short-answer questions, not multiple-choice questions. Don't underestimate the preparation time needed for writing a time-limited examination that contains only short-answer questions for which the answers vary in length from 2 or 3 sentences to a paragraph.

# Distance and Online Education (DE) Student Resources

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contact Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

## Acknowledgments

### Content specialist:

Garry L. Martin, Ph.D.  
Distinguished Professor Emeritus  
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A native of Manitoba, Dr. Martin attended the Colorado College on a hockey scholarship, where he received his B.A. degree. After receiving his Masters and Doctoral degrees in Psychology at Arizona State University, he began teaching at the University of Manitoba in 1966, where he currently is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus. Dr. Martin is internationally known for his work in behavioral psychology. His scholarly achievements include eight co-authored books, numerous scientific papers in psychology and educational journals, and many invited presentations at international conferences in North and South America. Although much of his research during the past 48 years has focused on behavior modification for improving skills of persons with developmental disabilities and children with autism, he has also worked in sport psychology, and has applied behavioral psychology to help individuals in everyday life. One of his books, *Curl in the Zone*, focuses on such topics as helping curlers control nervousness and tension, and using their attitudes and emotions to improve their curling game.

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