

Grand Valley State University
ABA Graduate Certificate Program
Psy 522: Applied Behavior Analysis I - Foundational Concepts and Principles

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Meeting location: 1202 Au Sable Hall

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Office hours: Tuesdays 3-4PM (Zoom) and by appointment (MTWF on campus)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will study the foundational concepts, principles, and practices of applied behavior analysis. Students will gain an understanding of factors that govern behavior, processes for measuring behavior, and methods for minimizing behavioral problems and improving learning and performance.

Course Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of concepts and principles of behavior and define key behavior analytic terms.
2. Describe respondent and operant conditioning and their relationship to the practice of applied behavior analysis.
3. Define and provide examples of behavioral principles including reinforcement, punishment, extinction, stimulus control, and motivating operations.
4. Examine reinforcement schedules and how they apply to behavior analytic practice.
5. Demonstrate the use of measurement as it applies to the understanding of behavioral concepts and principles.

READING MATERIALS

Madden, G. J., Reed, D. D., & Reed, F. D. D. (2021). *An introduction to behavior analysis*. John Wiley & Sons.

**This text is available as an e-book via GVSU SAVE. This means your course material will be delivered to you via a link on our Blackboard Ultra page and that you have been automatically charged. If you prefer to opt out of GVSU SAVE and access materials via a different method, please see our course page for simple instructions to opt out and obtain a refund before the posted deadline.*

Lane, K., & Menzies, H. M. (2015). *Supporting behavior for school success: A step-by-step guide to key strategies* (1st ed.). New York: Guilford Press. Ch. 3

**This book is available as an e-book through [Pew Library](#). You will use this book in multiple classes.*

COURSE LOGISTICS

What do I need to know about my instructor?

It is the goal of your instructor to foster a learning environment that is welcoming, fair, and productive for each individual student. Toward this goal, students can expect the instructor to:

- Provide materials and activities to help you develop key understandings in each unit
- Answer your questions and partner with you to navigate any challenges that arise
- Model effective teaching practices and professional conduct
- Provide thoughtful feedback on your posts and assignments
- Check GVSU email daily (Monday-Friday) and respond to email within 48 hours
- Maintain the Blackboard page with accurate, accessible information and promptly address any errors detected and issues raised by students

What do I need to know about ABA I and ABA as a science?

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a behavioral science with a strong conceptual and empirical foundation that is used in a variety of settings to make a socially significant impact on peoples' lives. ABA I is the first course in a sequence of courses that leads to a deep understanding of environmental influences on the things people think, say, and do. In ABA I, we focus on basic principles of learning that will guide how you eventually develop and implement interventions. This course is a bit like what you might experience in an introductory class in healthcare, law, or engineering, all subjects that require a technical understanding of concepts before engaging in practices using those concepts. You cannot practice effectively without a strong foundation. Mastering the basics can be the most difficult part of launching into a new field. In this case, the prize for sticking with it will be insight into why some strategies work better than others for your students, collaborators, and even for yourself.

When you understand more about how circumstances influence human behavior, it may cause a shift in your perspective and actions across multiple contexts (i.e. work, school, home, and community). For most people, developing a working knowledge of the principles of learning is a continual process that will extend well beyond graduate school. This course is the first set of building blocks; you will keep adding layers when you take additional courses and begin to apply what you are learning. Challenge yourself to take what you are learning beyond the classroom or the workplace by noticing how the principles of learning are everywhere. Once you learn these principles, you may find they have practical value for you as well as for the people and causes you serve.

Required Equipment (owned or accessible)

- High-speed internet access
- Operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements (see below)
- Computer with a sound card and speakers
- Microphone (built in or external)

Blackboard is the Course Management System

To access Blackboard, go to <https://lms.gvsu.edu/> and enter your network login and password.

This course utilizes Blackboard, GVSU's online course management system. Take a look at the GVSU Online Learning pages to find numerous materials about using Blackboard and online learning <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/>.

Use of Blackboard is integral to this course and students must log on a few times each week in order to complete course requirements, receive important announcements and updates, and communicate with instructors and other students about course content.

Check the current [technical requirements](#) to use Blackboard and [preferred browser information](#).

Technical difficulties with Blackboard

If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, contact the help desk by email or phone - helpdesk@gvsu.edu or 616-331-3513. The help website is <http://www.gvsu.edu/it/learn/>

Accessing the Library

Many of GVSU's library resources can be accessed online [Distance and Off-Campus Learning Services](#) with many journal articles available on demand. You must have an active GVSU student account to take advantage of the library's resources and services. Some courses may have reading materials in [course reserve](#).

Graduate Writing Resources

The [Graduate Writing Resources](#) available to assist with all kinds of writing tasks and they will give feedback on writing assignments. It is not just for students who struggle with writing. They can help any student improve writing skills.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are in need of accommodations due to a learning, physical, or other disability you must present a memo to me from Disability Support Resources (DSR), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested reasonable accommodations. If you have not already done so, please contact the [Disability Support Resources](#) office (4015 JHZ) by calling 331-2490 or email to dsrcgvsu@gvsu.edu. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the DSR issued memo. All discussions will remain confidential.

COURSE ORGANIZATION and ASSIGNMENTS

The learning activities for this course take a few different forms, but the instructor has scheduled each activity in a predictable rhythm within each unit. Please contact the instructor early in the semester if you have questions about expectations for the course or how to

establish a work pattern that fits both our course calendar and your unique schedule and responsibilities.

Learning Units (2-week modules)

The learning units will be a foundational part of Psy 522. This is where you will find directions for each 2-week segment of the course including reading assignments, course content presentations, discussion boards, practice quizzes, and assignments. Units will open up every other Monday morning and all unit activities will be due before the end of the 2-week period at 11:59PM on Sunday evening. All previously completed units will remain open throughout the course so you can refer back to materials at any time.

Many units will have optional practice activities or supplemental resources. These are ungraded activities. Benefits of completing optional or supplemental activities include getting a little more comfortable with challenging material or learning about different perspectives on the current topic.

Class Meetings (participate in 3 meetings)

Class meetings will provide an opportunity to talk about course objectives and assignments. The dates, times, and formats for these meeting are discussed with the group at the beginning of the semester and listed on Blackboard as well as your final course schedule, below.

Readings (weekly)

You will have multiple book chapters and readings in each unit. It is critical to engage with the readings early in each unit and to create original notes and study resources based on those materials. Assigned readings address most of knowledge and skills you will need in this course including ABA terminology, which is cumulative throughout the ABA sequence. Most importantly, the ideas and strategies from your readings will be useful for your future work as a school-based practitioner.

Study Products (submitted bi-weekly, starting unit 2)

Active study and review strategies will help you to learn material faster, retain it longer, and apply it with greater ease in the future. You will earn a small number of points for turning in evidence of your study activities in each unit. More information about this recurring assignment is available in the Study Products folder on Blackboard.

Discussion Board (each learning unit)

Discussion board questions are posted with each unit to communicate with others about ABA terminology and applications, to collaborate on more precise or complete understandings, and to wrestle with essential questions or big ideas from each unit. More information about discussion board and a grading rubric are provided on the Blackboard site.

Practice Quizzes (each learning unit)

You will complete a practice quiz for each unit. These short quizzes are worth a small number of points and the grade is based on quiz completion, not the number of correct answers on your

initial quiz submission. Practice quizzes provide a quick way to assess whether you are grasping key information related to the big ideas, objectives, and terms in each unit.

Assignments – (each learning unit)

You will have an assignment associated with each unit of material. These will vary in type and length, but most will involve applying what you’ve learned to hypothetical scenarios. Assignments will constitute an important part of your learning and grade for the course. All written work should be prepared in a professional manner (typed, proofread, original). More information about each unit assignment will be provided on Blackboard.

Exams –

You will have 3 exams scheduled throughout the semester, each covering 4-6 weeks of course content and constituting a major portion of your final grade. Exams consist of both multiple-choice and short essay questions. Multiple choice questions are administered online. Short essays are administered as open-note activities. Students must work independently on all components of their exams.

Exams are posted at 5PM on Sundays and final submissions are due before 11:59PM on Tuesday evenings. This wide window is designed to give you the opportunity to take the exam when you are most prepared and available to do your best work. Your instructor reserves the right to shorten this testing window if student performance suggests the presence of academic integrity issues (e.g., students utilizing AI inappropriately, students discussing exam content before the final submission deadline).

POINTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Points	Total Points for Semester
Class meetings	5	15
Scavenger hunt	2	2
1-on-1 Check-In	5	5
Study Products (6)	3	18
Practice Quizzes (7)	5	35
Discussion Board (6)	8	48
Assignments (7)	20	140
Exams (3)	60/60/80	200
TOTAL POINTS		463

Final Grade Requirement

Students seeking the ABA Graduate Certificate must complete all courses with a B- or higher in each course and finish with a minimum 3.0 grade point average in the course sequence.

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	70-76%
D	61-69%
F	0-60%

COURSE POLICIES

[GVSU Student Code regarding Integrity of Scholarship and Grades:](#)

Section 223.00: Integrity of Scholarships and Grades

Truth and Honesty. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing protect the validity of University grades. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned without unauthorized aid of any kind. Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work, so that honest effort will be positively encouraged.

Section 223.01: Plagiarism

Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches or the writings of other students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment also is considered plagiarism. Any student who fails to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.

"This course is subject to GVSU's general requirements for courses. A full list with pointers to resources may be found at www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies."

Attendance Policy

In the event of an unavoidable absence from a meeting or exam window (e.g., illness, family emergency, weather-related disruption), students will have the opportunity to complete an alternative activity or to reschedule as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours. Please notify your instructor of any planned, non-emergency scheduling conflicts within the first week of the semester.

Makeup/Late Work Policy

With exceptions for personal illness or emergencies, students will not have the opportunity to make up points lost due to late or missing discussion posts, assignments, or practice quizzes. Please notify your instructor if you are aware of circumstances that could affect your timely completion of assigned work in this course.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Many faculty and students are exploring the ways that ChatGPT and other AI resources can facilitate their learning and communication. I welcome you to explore these options for my course, including the possibility of meeting with the Writing Center to learn more about best practices for leveraging AI in the development of your original work products. If you utilize ChatGPT for an assignment that you submit in my class, please follow [guidance from the American Psychological Association](#) for explaining the role of AI and citing any specific information from AI sources.

Religious Observances

Your instructor is dedicated to maintaining the rights of students to observe religious holidays. If you need to miss a class to observe a religious holiday, please contact your instructor a week in advance to discuss any arrangements.

Student Support

GVSU and your instructors are dedicated to helping you meet your academic and career goals. Please do not hesitate to contact your instructors if you wish to discuss your course performance or other academic issues. Additionally, if you would like to talk to a professional counselor about mental health concerns, phone the GVSU Counseling Center during normal business hours at 616-331-3266. If you are experiencing a crisis or are considering suicide you can call 1-800-273-TALK at any time.

Psy 522: Applied Behavior Analysis I (ABA): Foundational Principles

Session Dates	Learning Unit	Readings	Assignments
Unit 1 Aug 26- Sept 8	Foundational Concepts & Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABA and The Circumstance View • Respondent conditioning • Operant conditioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madden Ch. 1 & Ch. 4 • Daniels & Lattal (2017) 	F2F meeting Tues 9/3 Practice quiz Discussion board Assignment 1
Unit 2 Sept 9-22	Increasing Behavior, Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcers v. rewards • Positive reinforcement • Negative reinforcement • Conditioned reinforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madden Figure 5.5 (p. 129) • Madden Ch. 6 & Ch. 8 • Lane et al. (2015) – Ch. 3 	Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 2
Tues, Sept 24			Exam 1
Unit 3 Sept 23- Oct 6	Measuring Behavior Change Increasing Behavior, Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules of reinforcement (basic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madden Ch. 2 • Lee et al. (2011) • Madden Ch. 11 • Lee & Belfiore (1997) 	Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 3
Unit 4 Oct 7-20	Decreasing Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive punishment • Negative punishment • Extinction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madden Ch. 7 & Ch. 10 • Witt & Elliott (1982) 	F2F meeting Tues 10/15 Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 4
Unit 5 Oct 21- Nov 3	Supporting Independent Behavior: Stimulus Control and Schedule Thinning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination • Generalization • Schedules of reinforcement (compound) <p><i>Modified schedule for Fall Break (see Blackboard)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madden Ch. 12 • Miltenberger Ch. 19 • Cooper Table 13.1 	1-on-1 check-in meetings Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 5
Tues, Nov 5			Exam 2
Unit 6 Nov 4- Nov 17	Motivating Behavior Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivating operations • Preference assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madden Ch. 9 • Langthorne et al. (2009) - Table 1; Figures 2, 3, 4 • Graff & Karsten (2012) • Rispoli et al. (2011) 	Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 6
Unit 7 Nov 18- Dec 8	Behavior Analysis of Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker and listener behavior • Rule-governed behavior • Private events and mentalism <p>Putting ABA into Practice</p> <p><i>Extra week for Thanksgiving</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madden Ch. 14 • Mayer Ch. 3 	F2F meeting Tues 12/3 Practice quiz Study product Discussion board Assignment 7
Week of Dec 9			Exam 3

Thoughts on a Successful Online Learning Experience

Taking an online course is different from taking a traditional classroom course. For example, you will play a larger role in organizing your time and assessing your own learning. The role of the instructor becomes facilitator and guide to help you learn the course material and apply it in your personal and professional life. I (your instructor) am here to assist you by providing materials, activities, and feedback on your performance. You can help me customize my teaching to your needs by communicating early and often when you encounter challenges or barriers to your success in the course.

As an effective online learner, you will interact with the course materials regularly; manage your time; share thoughts and experiences with others; ask questions when something is unclear; critically reflect on material; and apply what you are learning. Active engagement and open communication with the instructor are great strategies for online learning AND for lifelong learning.

Much to the surprise of many students, online courses are not easier than traditional courses. Quite the contrary. You may have more flexibility and less time in a lecture hall, but the goals of the course are unchanged. Online courses like this one have all the essential features to support learning, but it's ultimately your choice whether to engage with those features – and to have meaningful interactions with me and your classmates – so we can maximize growth and enjoyment this semester.

Online Learning Tips Checklist

- Read the syllabus and all preparatory information on Blackboard
- Stay organized and track due dates
- Schedule weekly study and reading times early in each unit so we can address any questions before the assignment and practice quiz deadlines for that unit
- Log onto Blackboard at least 3 times per week to check announcements, discussion board, and to interact with course material
- Get to know the other students in the class and help each other practice terms and apply concepts
- Study the course terminology and monitor your progress (e.g., practice quizzes, flashcard practice)
- Post questions, comments, and ideas on discussion board (unit discussion board and open forum)
- Ask questions of the instructor. Not just questions about logistics or grades, but content questions and personalized questions that can help your instructor present content in a way that is relevant and engaging for you (e.g., related to your career goals, interests, values, and prior experience)

**Although these might seem obvious and simple, past students have found they make a tremendous difference in the online learning experience.*