

**Learning (PSY 432.01)**  
**3 credit hours**  
**Fall 2008**

Department: Department of Psychology and Philosophy

Course Number/Title: PSY 432/Learning

Instructor: Gaylynn Ratliff, MA

Required Textbook: Chance, Paul (2008), *Learning and Behavior* (6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth.

Course/Time/Location: 432.01/TuTh 9:30-10:50/AB4 #205

432.02/TuTh 12:30-1:50/AB4 #205

Office Location/Hours: Kirkley #333/Tuesday & Thursday 11:00-12:00 & 2:00-3:00,  
Monday & Wednesday 10:30-11:30, or by appointment

Office phone: 936-294-3051

E-mail: ratliff@shsu.edu

Fax #: 936-294-3798

Department office phone #: 936-294-1174

**Course Description:**

This course includes study of the major theories of learning and their historical backgrounds; experimental procedures in the study of learning are discussed.

Prerequisite: 6 semester hours in Psychology

**Course Objectives:**

- Provide relevance of learning principles to everyday experience and practical applications.
- Highlight the use of learning principles in explaining behavior.
- Emphasize the evolutionary nature of learning.

**Course Goals:**

- To understand the major theories of learning.
- To understand the significance of the historical background of learning.
- To gain knowledge of the experimental procedures used in investigating the learning process.

**Attendance policy:** Attendance is mandatory. In accordance with SHSU policy, attendance will be recorded each class period. However, grades will be based on student performance on the exams and other graded assignments. The university's full attendance policy can be found at the following website:

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#attend>

**Assignments:** There will be various in-class assignments throughout the semester. The assignments will be an opportunity to apply what you have learned, receive feedback and to prepare for the exams. **You must be in class to participate. Make-up opportunities will not be available.** The total number of points available for in-class assignments will be 100 points.

**Exams:** There will be **three regular exams** worth 100 points each. The exams will be comprised of multiple choice, true false and essay/short answer questions. The **final exam** will be the same format as the regular exams. It will be valued at 100 points. The final exam must be taken at the time designated by the University or **prior** arrangements must be made with the instructor. **Make up exams will be in essay format.**  
**Arrangements to take make-up exams must be made with the instructor within one week of the original testing date.**

**Grading Plan:** The overall grading scale is comprised of a total of 400 points. Students will be given an opportunity to **replace one regular exam score** with the in-class assignment points, if desired. Otherwise the in-class assignment points will not impact the student's grade. **All students are required to take the final exam.** Grades will be primarily based on exam performance. Please be advised that exam performance is usually greatly affected by attendance. If an opportunity is given for extra credit the student **must** be in class that day to participate.

**Study tips:** Reading the assigned chapters and class attendance are crucial to academic success in this class. The instructor is available to assist students that may need additional guidance. The SAM center is located in AB 4 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and it is an excellent resource for students wishing to receive tutoring. Students that fail the first exam will have their names submitted to the First Alert Program. Someone from the SAM Center will contact the student and advise him/her of the programs available and will offer assistance.

**Academic Dishonesty:** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Students should be advised that when papers are required that they may be submitted to turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. For more detailed information see: <http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>.

**Students with Disabilities:** It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities that is located in the Counseling Center. Please note that no accommodations can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center. For more detailed information see: [http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf\\_www/aps/811006.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.html).

**Religious holidays:** A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to the instructor a written statement concerning the religious holy days. The instructor will work with the student to assure that the missed assignments and/or exams are completed. For more details: [http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf\\_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf](http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf) .

**Visitors in the classroom:** Generally visitors are not allowed in the classroom. Exceptions may be made by the instructor on a case-by-case basis.

**Classroom rules of conduct:** Please do not talk, send, or receive messages on cell phones or other electronic devices while in the classroom.

Tentative Class Calendar

Date	Chapters	Topics
<b>August</b>		
26, 28	Chapter 1	Learning to Change
<b>September</b>		
2, 4	Chapter 2	The Study of Learning & Behavior
9, 11	Chapter 3	Pavlovian Conditioning
<b>16</b>	<b>Exam I</b>	
18	Chapter 4	Pavlovian Applications
23, 25	Chapter 4	Pavlovian Applications
30	Chapter 5	Reinforcement
<b>October</b>		
2	Chapter 5	Reinforcement
7, 9	Chapter 6	Schedules of Reinforcement
<b>14</b>	<b>Exam II</b>	
16	Chapter 7	Punishment
21, 23	Chapter 7	Punishment
28, 30	Chapter 8	Operant Applications & Interpretations
<b>November</b>		
4, 6	Chapter 9	Observational Learning
<b>11</b>	<b>Exam III</b>	
13	Chapter 10	Generalization, Discrimination, & Stimulus Control
18, 20	Chapter 10	Generalization, Discrimination, & Stimulus Control
25	Chapter 11	Memory & Forgetting
<b>27</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	
<b>December</b>		
2, 4	Chapter 11	Memory & Forgetting
9, 11	Chapter 12	The Limits of Learning
<b>16</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Section 01 8:00-10:00</b> <b>Section 02 11:00-1:00</b>