

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change at any time. Any changes will be announced in class and sent via e-mail. Contact Professor to ensure you have latest version.

Fall 2025
COURSE SYLLABUS
PSYS 332 – Laboratory in Principles of Human & Animal Learning (1 credit)

COURSE DAYS AND TIMES: Web / Online

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Matthew Shake, Ph.D.

OFFICE LOCATION: KTH 1002

OFFICE NUMBER: 270-745-2440

E-Mail: matthew.shake@wku.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:45-1:45 PM;

I'm also available to meet other times; sign-up for meetings on Calendly:

<https://calendly.com/drshake/30minute>

Course Prerequisites:

- 1) Students MUST either be concurrently taking PSYS 331 (Principles of Human & Animal Learning) or have passed PSYS 331 in a previous semester.

Course Overview & Objectives

Welcome to PSYS 332! This is a laboratory course emphasizing the practice of experimental design and data collection when analyzing the behavioral elements of animal learning. Since this is a lab course, hands-on experiential learning is the focus. Each class, your instructor will guide you through a discovery process that will boost your comprehension of learning mechanisms. We will take theories, concepts and phenomena that you learn about in PSYS 331 (e.g., classical conditioning, operant conditioning etc.) and translate them to real-world experiments and scenarios. You will observe, analyze, and report behavior. We will practice implementing various research designs and collecting scientific data. For each topic, we will introduce and practice a new experimental technique, design an experiment to investigate a particular learning phenomenon, and then generate and analyze the resulting data. In essence, *we will "learn about learning" by doing!*

Below are the learning outcomes for this course:

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of how to design and execute a learning experiment.
- 2) Evaluate and test learning theories that explain elements of classical conditioning.
- 3) Evaluate and test learning theories that explain elements of operant conditioning.
- 4) Critically examine and write about data collected from learning experiments.
- 5) Apply principles of learning to real-world scenarios or problems.

Course Materials: Please Read!

There is no required textbook; however, students will need to purchase some software (at a cost of \$20) to install on their own computer. A link to the website to purchase this software will be provided on the Blackboard site for this class. Please note that this software is not included in the Big Red Backpack program, it must be purchased

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separately. Lastly, note that the software *does not* run on Chromebooks, only Windows or Mac computers. If you do not have a windows or macintosh computer, please discuss with me alternative options that WKU makes available for students.

Class Policies & Attendance Expectations

Regular and active participation are mandatory in this class. Exercises and assignments will be given weekly, and you will not do well in the course if you are not actively engaged in the course material. Be aware that if you stop attending the course after the first half of the semester, you may receive a failing grade due to non-attendance (F/N). Grades of Incomplete (X) are only given in extreme emergencies where students have finished more than 50% of the class but can no longer attend class and participate in coursework.

Academic Integrity

Enrollment at Western Kentucky University requires adherence to the University's standards of academic integrity. Student work may be checked by plagiarism detection software. **Usage of AI-generated responses (including but not limited to ChatGPT) to complete coursework in this course is prohibited.** All infractions of academic integrity are serious offenses and are grounds for disciplinary action, including a failing grade, withdrawal from the course, and/or recommendation of suspension from the University. See the university's student handbook for definitions of academic dishonesty, including: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, aiding/abetting academic dishonesty, falsification of records/documents, and unauthorized access. **ANY INFRACTIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN THIS CLASS MAY RESULT IN A GRADE OF "F" FOR THE COURSE ON THE FIRST OCCURRENCE.**

Class Evaluations

Lab Assignments

There will be numerous exercises & assignments that take place in the lab during the semester, all centered around investigating learning. These exercises/assignments will be assigned weekly and are self-paced. The exercises will require you to think about material presented to you either in corresponding readings, videos, or other materials. **Assignments/reports submitted late will be penalized by 10% for each 24-hour period they are late.**

Lab Reflection

At the end of the semester you will write a reflection that describes a few of the most critical lessons learned from lab and how you can implement them in your own life. Details on this assignment will be distributed during the semester.

Course Grading

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Lab Assignments & Reports	90%
Lab Reflection	10%
TOTAL	100%

Here is an example of how the above grading works. Suppose that your lab assignment grades were 75, 85, and 95, for an average of 85. That average is then “weighted” to be 80% of the grade by multiplying it by 0.80 (=68). Suppose your lab participation grades were 100, 95, and 90, for an average of 95. That average is then “weighted” to be 20% of the grade by multiplying it by 0.20 (=19). Add the two values together to get the final grade (68+19=87). I round to the closest tenth of a percentile in all circumstances (e.g., an 89.5% is a 90%; an 89.49% is a 89%). Please note that I cannot raise your grade just because you are close to a better grade; doing so would be unfair to your fellow classmates. If you are not performing well in the class, please see me as soon as possible (the earlier in the semester the better), so we can discuss effective study strategies.

Tentative Class Schedule

NOTE: This schedule is tentative and may change. Your professor reserves the right to change the schedule and it is your responsibility to keep track of announced changes.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
Week 1	Preparation for First Lab Exercise; Overview of Software
Week 2	Acquisition & Extinction
Week 3	Spontaneous Recovery, Varying Strength of CS & US
Week 4	Varying Strength of CS & US
Week 5	Compound Conditioning, Blocking
Week 6	Sensory Pre-Conditioning
Week 7	Higher-Order Conditioning
Week 8	No Class – Fall Break
Week 9	Operant Conditioning: Magazine Training & Shaping
Week 10	Operant Conditioning: Extinction, Secondary Reinforcement
Week 11	Effects of Aversive Stimuli
Week 12	Schedules of Reinforcement
Week 13	Partial-Reinforcement Extinction Effects
Weeks 14/15	Shaping Diverse Behaviors
Week 16	Lab Reflection Due by 9:30 AM on Designated Finals Week Date

Special Requirements/Accommodations

ADA Accommodation:

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room

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1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Title IX Information:

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's [Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) (#0.070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators or Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.

Pregnancy & Parenting Students:

Western Kentucky University does not discriminate against any student or exclude any student from its educational programs or activities, including classes or extracurricular activities, on the basis of pregnancy and/or pregnancy-related conditions such as, but not limited to, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom. Students who seek pregnancy or pregnancy-related accommodations should make their requests as soon as possible via WKU's Title IX Website at www.wku.edu/titleix/ under the heading, "Pregnancy or Pregnancy-Related Conditions." Students can also contact the Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, via email at ena.demir@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-6867 to request accommodations or seek assistance. We encourage students and faculty to work together to establish a plan that allows the student to complete the class and coursework without jeopardizing academic integrity and course standards. The Title IX Coordinator can help facilitate conversations between students and faculty regarding appropriate and reasonable accommodations. If you are a WKU student and believe that you have experienced an incident(s) of discrimination or harassment based on pregnancy (or pregnancy related conditions or issues), please report it to the Title IX Coordinator via email at ena.demir@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-6867. Additional resources for pregnant and parenting students can be found on WKU's Title IX Website at www.wku.edu/titleix/.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

The history of our community and land gives us the opportunity to recognize, respect, and appreciate our place within that history. Western Kentucky University (WKU) honors and acknowledges the Indigenous peoples' land on which this University was built. All land in the state of Kentucky was once Indigenous territory, which is why it is our duty to acknowledge that WKU exists on Native land. This particular region of Kentucky was

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home to both the Shawnee (Shawandasse Tula) and Cherokee East (GWJᎦᎵᎩ TsalaguwetiᎦ) tribes.

We also honor and acknowledge the former residents of Jonesville. According to the [Jonesville History Project](#), “Jonesville was a predominantly African American community in Bowling Green, Kentucky, that was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the expansion of the WKU campus. This incident echoed a pattern across the country where the power of eminent domain was utilized to seize property from minority communities for large public works projects under the guise of urban revitalization.”