DEPARTMENT: PSYCHOLOGY  PREPARED BY: PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
DATE: FALL 2018

COURSE TITLE: Behavior Analysis/Modification

COURSE CODE: PSY 340

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:
An analysis of the general principles, theories and application of conditioning and learning in humans. The application of the theories of behavioral analysis to human problems will be explored. Behavioral interventions using the principles of classical conditioning, operant conditioning and modeling will be presented. Particular emphasis will be placed on behavioral analysis and intervention in settings such as mental health institutions, education, business organizations and families. Prerequisite(s): PSY 101. Credits: 3 (3,0)

PREREQUISITES: PSY 101, PSY 130 OR PSY 131 and PSY301 (Learning), or permission of the department chairperson.

REQUIRED FOR: Applied Psychology Program, Human Services Concentration

GENERAL EDUCATION: This course does not fulfill any general education requirements.

ELECTIVE FOR: All curricula with upper level social science electives.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students will learn the general principles, theories and application of conditioning and learning in humans. Students will learn the application of behavior analysis to human behavior problems. Students will develop the knowledge required to apply behavior modification principles for populations in settings such as mental health institutions, education, business organizations and families. Topics will include classical conditioning, operant learning, modeling, behavioral assessment and intervention techniques.

COURSE OUTLINE

The following represents an overview of the topics to be covered in this course.

Unit 1: Overview and history of behavioral assessment and behavior modification:
The history of the field of applied behaviorism will be covered. The theoretical and research origins of the field (learning, animal studies, etc,) will be presented. Students will be exposed to the works of important historical figures such as Thorndike, Watson, Skinner, Eysenck, and others. The influence of laboratory findings, animal models and early theorists on modern behavioral assessment and intervention techniques will be presented.

Unit 2: Operant learning:
The operant model of behavior will be presented. The role of reinforcement, extinction and punishment will be explored in terms of human behavior. Concepts of antecedents stimulus generalization and discrimination, shaping and stimulus control will be covered.

Unit 3: Classical conditioning:
The classical conditioning model will be presented from an experimental and applied perspective. The role of classical conditioning in the development and analysis of human behavioral problems will be discussed. The use of classical conditioning as a treatment model (systematic desensitization) will be introduced.

Unit 4: Modeling:
The theory and research of human learning through modeling will be presented. Experimental findings regarding modeling and human behavior will be discussed. Implications for behavioral assessment and treatment of behavioral problems will be introduced.

Unit 5: Behavioral assessment:
The theory of behavioral assessment/analysis will be presented. Behavioral assessment concepts such as baseline, frequency, intensity and duration will be described. Assessment strategies such as behavioral interviewing, behavioral observation, cognitive assessment and psychophysiological assessment will be covered from a theoretical and applied perspective. The use of specific assessment techniques such as structured interviews, behavioral observation scales and psychophysiological measurement devices will be presented.
Unit 6: Behavioral analysis:
The theories of operant conditioning, classical conditioning and modeling will be presented in terms of influences on human behavior and human behavior problems. Behavioral analysis of the acquisition, shaping and maintenance of common human behavior problems will be presented. Techniques for the analysis of behavior (functional assessment) in terms of the stimuli that serve as behavioral triggers and consequences that maintain behavior will be reviewed.

Unit 7: Behavior modification - use of reinforcement, extinction and punishment:
The principles and application of the use of managing consequences of behavior will be presented. Types of consequences (positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement punishers, etc.), schedules of reinforcement and response patterns associated with each type and pattern of consequences will be discussed. Use of extinction and typical behavior patterns associated with removal of reinforcement (response bursts) will be presented. The concept of response cost and the use of punishers will be presented. Problems associated with the use of punishers and response cost will be discussed.

Unit 8: The token economy:
The use of a token economy will be presented. The theoretical underpinnings and methods for developing and maintaining a token economy will be covered. The use of the token economy in special populations (children, educational, correctional and mental health institutions) will be described.

Unit 9: Cognitive behavior modification:
The extension of the principles of behavior analysis and modifications to human thoughts and emotions will be presented. An overview of the models of theorists such as Beck and Ellis will be presented.

Unit 10: Behavior modification - ethics:
The ethical issues raised by the management of human behavior will be discussed. The concept of human free-will and the apparent conflicts with the principles of radical behaviorism will be explored. Particular emphasis will be placed on the ethical issues of use of punishment and the use of behavior modification with institutionalized populations.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the history of the field and early behavioral theorists/researchers.
2. Demonstrate understanding of the operant and classical conditioning models of human learning.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the role of modeling in human learning and behavior.
4. Demonstrate understanding and ability to apply the concepts of behavioral assessment including use of behavioral observation methods and behavioral interviewing.

5. Demonstrate ability to conduct a basic functional analysis of common human behavior problems. Correctly identify the factors (antecedents and consequences) that lead to and maintain typical human behavior problems.

6. Demonstrate understanding of the use of reinforcers, response cost and extinction in the modification of behavior. Apply the concepts of reinforcement, response cost and extinction to the modification of human behavior problems presented in case-study format.

7. Demonstrate understanding of the theoretical basis and application of the development of a basic token economy system.

8. Demonstrate understanding of the application of behavioral principles to human thought and emotion (cognitive behavioral model).

9. Demonstrate understanding of the ethical issues raised through the use of behavior modification in humans.