



San Jose State University
Department of Psychology
PSYC 155-03 Human Learning
Fall 2025

Instructor:	Jill H. Citron, Ph.D.
Office Location:	DHM 352
Email:	Jill.citron@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday & Thursday, 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM & by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday & Thursday, 3 PM – 4:15 PM
Classrooms:	DMH 356

Course Format:

This course will meet in person on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 pm to 4:15 pm.

Course Website:

Course materials, including the syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions, can be found on Canvas. All assignments will be submitted through Canvas. You must have the ability to upload .doc, .docx, and pdf documents for submission. Students are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas. It is essential to sign up to receive announcements through Canvas so that you do not miss any important updates.

Further Assistance with Canvas:

Students should first visit <http://guides.instructure.com/m/4212> for issues and then go to the University Help Desk for Canvas problems, including login issues (<http://www.sjsu.edu/helpdesk/>).

Course Description

Through learning, humans and animals share the ability to adapt to constantly changing environmental demands. Efforts to understand these processes form the foundation of experimental psychology. Theories from this basic research have contributed to applications and further development of theories across many areas of psychology, such as clinical, social, and educational fields. PSYC 155 introduces the study of learning and behavior, emphasizing the Behavioral Perspective to enhance our understanding of human behavior and its influences. The course focuses on two types of learning: Classical and Operant conditioning. Students may experience transformative changes, as it provides the basis for new approaches to common life challenges like disciplining children, maintaining positive relationships, and overcoming procrastination (to name just a few). The material can be intellectually challenging at times, but it is well worth the effort required to learn to think like a Behaviorist!

Learning Outcomes

The main goal of this course is to help you understand the key themes, issues, and methods in the psychology of learning. It aims to provide a clear understanding of the basic principles behind the learning process. You will

learn about the processes that enable us to know when and how to act to gain the pleasurable outcomes we want and to avoid undesirable ones.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Master Core Content

CLO1: Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts of learning and memory

CLO2: Identify processes by which we encode, store, and retrieve information 1

CLO3: Explain research methodologies used in the study of learning and memory, primarily in humans, but also in other animals.

•Demonstrate critical and applied thinking

CLO4: Compare and contrast major theories of learning and memory and evaluate evidence for and against these theories.

CLO5: Apply concepts in learning and memory to real-world problems and events.

Communicate course concepts

CLO6: Communicate how memory failures impact your own life and the factors that contribute to these failures. All of the course learning outcomes will be met by completing reading reactions, participating in class activities, and completion of the deep learning project.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements...

PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2 – Research Methods in Psychology – Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

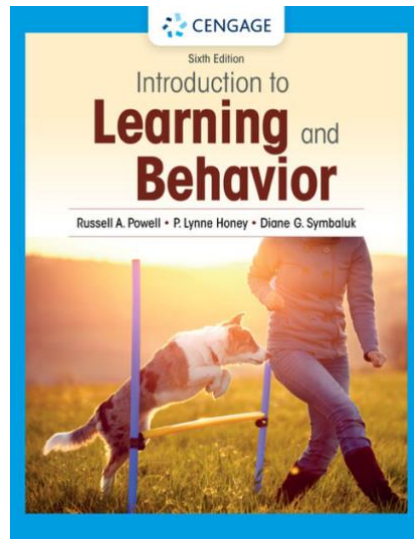
PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology – Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

PLO4 – Application of Psychology – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a members of society.

We will utilize some of the latest evidence-based practices from the science of learning in class. This means that sometimes we will approach learning very differently, and it is okay not to like it. That is part of the learning about the learning experience.

Required Textbook:



by Russell A. Powell, P. Lynne Honey, Diane G. Symbaluk | 6th Edition | Copyright 2023

eBook BOOK ISBN-13: 9780357658529

Paperback BOOK ISBN-13: 9780357658475

Here is the e-book link from:

[Introduction to Learning and Behavior, 6th Edition - 9780357658475 - Cengage](#)

Important Information

You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used only for your private study purposes. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you do not have the right to reproduce or distribute the material. "Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor-generated material for this course, such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions, without instructor consent." Regarding academic integrity, your commitment to learning as a student is demonstrated by your enrollment at San Jose State University.

Faculty members are obligated to report any violations to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The link to the website is located below. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need course adaptations or accommodations due to a disability or need special arrangements for evacuation, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible or see me during office hours.

Students wishing to observe religious holidays and needing to be absent from class must inform the instructor in writing before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If the holiday occurs before the deadline, notice must be given at least three days in advance. My hope is to capture the class, so you can comfortably know that you haven't missed anything. There is more information available in the link below.

For student technology resources, computer labs are available at the Academic Success Center (<http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/>) on the first floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the second floor of the Student Union. Additional labs may be available within your department or college. Computers are also accessible at the Martin Luther King Library. Media Services at IRC 112 offers a variety of audiovisual

equipment for checkout, including digital and HD camcorders, digital still cameras, projectors, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens, and monitors.

Peer Connections, a campus-wide mentoring and tutoring resource, encourages students to explore their potential as independent learners while successfully navigating university life. Their services include course-focused tutoring, study and time management skills, critical thinking, decision making, problem-solving, and referrals to campus resources. They offer small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for many courses, as well as mentor consultations by appointment or drop-in. Peer Connections has locations in the SSC Room 600 (at the 10th Street Garage corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), the first-floor entrance of Clark Hall, and the Living Learning Center in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit their website at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

SJSU Writing Center The SJSU Writing Center is in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists go through a thorough hiring process and are well-trained to help students at any level across all disciplines improve their writing. In addition to one-on-one tutoring, the Writing Center offers workshops each semester on various writing topics. To schedule an appointment or access the many online resources available through the Writing Center, visit their website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For more resources and updates, follow the Writing Center on various social media.

SJSU Counseling Services.

The SJSU Counseling Services is located at the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201 of the Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to offer consultations on issues related to student mental health, campus climate, or psychological and academic concerns on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit the Counseling Services website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>. SJSU offers numerous resources to support students' basic needs. Talk to me, or visit the website: <https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/>

The following [LINK](#) contains relevant information for all courses.

- [General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Accommodation for Students' Religious Holidays](#)
- [Adding and Dropping Classes](#)
- [Attendance and Participation](#)
- [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material](#)
- [Timely Feedback on Class Assignments](#)
- [Workload and Credit Hour Requirements](#)

This course uses a grading contract.

You will receive a B+ if you pass the following Core Course Requirements.

1. (4 out of 6) Reading Reactions
2. (7 out of 10) Homework Assignments
3. Full Participation In the Three Major Sections of the Deep Learning Assignment
 - a. Collaborative building of curriculum.
 - b. Small group instruction of the curriculum
 - c. Evaluation of the curriculum presented during final learning group

For participation in class activities and homework assignments, each additional missed assignment will result in a deduction from your final grade. Full participation in the Deep Learning Assignment is required.

1. How do I earn an A? You can easily earn a grade higher than a B+ by focusing on the quality and depth of your Deep Learning Assignment and by completing all the class activities and homework assignments. Core requirements include your specific grade, which will be based on the completion of the Deep Learning Assignment.
 - “Satisfactory” on the Deep Learning Assignment = A- in the course
 - “Above Expectations” on the Deep Learning Assignment = A in the course
 - “Outstanding” on the Deep Learning Assignment = A+ in the course

Major Assignments.

Deep Dive Learning

This project advances through coordinated phases and depends on continuous teamwork: you'll first brainstorm topics as a class and form groups, then collaborate to gather and annotate peer-reviewed sources, develop a concept map linking past, present, and future perspectives, and draft measurable learning objectives; next, your group designs a research-based teaching module (including key vocabulary, a timeline of the field, and an active-learning plan with retrieval practice), delivers a brief jigsaw-style lesson to peers, and finally reflects and offers constructive peer feedback, ensuring that each stage is shared, iterative, and clearly connected to the next. The assignment will be completed with learner evaluations and educator reflections.

Reading Reaction (6 total):

Throughout the semester, you will submit six short, chapter-based essays that deepen your understanding of human learning. For each Reading Reaction, start with a brief, memory-based recall (no notes) of the chapter's main ideas to practice retrieving information. Then, briefly analyze one specific learning theme (e.g., attention, memory systems, metacognition, motivation, transfer, or practice design). Incorporate one additional resource provided to you, such as a peer-reviewed article, data visualization, or podcast episode, to expand or challenge the chapter's ideas. Explain how these combined insights inform effective learning strategies you can apply. Strong submissions are clear, evidence-based, and reflective: they show what you remembered first, how your understanding changed after reviewing the text, and how you expanded your learning with an additional resource. Deadlines are spaced throughout the semester; each essay stands alone but contributes to your overall expertise.

Homework (6 total):

These are brief homework assignments designed to prepare you for class or extend in-class work at home, focusing on retrieval practice and mind-mapping. During a homework week, you will: (1) complete a no-notes “Recall First” warm-up to retrieve key ideas from memory; (2) build or revise a mind map that organizes concepts, mechanisms, and examples; (3) add one concrete application or case to test the transfer of ideas; (4) note one confusion or question to address in class; (5) identify a connection to a previous week's node to reinforce spaced retrieval; and (6) draft a two- to three-sentence “teach-back” you could use with a peer. Bring a printed copy to class for discussion and submit the same work on Canvas before class begins. Strong submissions demonstrate honest recall, clear structure in the evolving mind map, and concise, evidence-based explanations. More information will be provided in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to modification (with fair warning, no surprises, promise) as necessary to accommodate flexibility in our class schedule.

Week	Date	Topic Covered in Class	Reading Due Before Class	Assignment
1	Th- 8/21	Course Introduction Pace of class.	You are not expected to have the text for our first class meeting.	
2	Tu- 8/26 Th- 8/28	Introduction to Learning-Historical Background	Chapter 1	
3	T- 9/02 Th- 9/04	Research Methods	Chapter 2	Name Coach Idea Dump
4	T- 9/09 Th- 9/11	Elicited Behaviors and Classical Conditioning	Chapter 3	
5	T- 9/16 Th- 9/18	Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena and Various Complexities	Chapter 4	<i>#1 RR Chapter 3</i>
6	T- 9/23 Th- 9/25	No Class- Classical Conditioning: Underlying Processes and Practical Applications	Chapter 5	<i>#2 RR Chapter 4</i>
7	T- 9/29 Th-10/02	Operant Conditioning No Class-	Chapter 6	<i>#3 RR Chapter 5</i>
8	T- 10/07 Th-10/09	Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement	Chapter 7	
9	T- 10/14 Th-10/16	Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement	Chapter 7	<i>#4 RR Chapter 7</i>
10	T- 10/21 Th-10/23	Extinction and Stimulus Control	Chapter 8	
11	T- 10/28 Th-10/30	Escape Avoidance and Punishment	Chapter 9	
12	T- 11/04 Th-11/06	Class Time for Deep Dive Work		<i>#5 RR Chapter 9</i>
13	T- 11/11 Th-11/13	Veteran's Day- No Class Choice Matching and Self Control	Chapter 10	

14	T- 11/18 Th-11/20	Observational Learning	Chapter 11	<i>#6 RR Chapter 10</i>
15	T- 11/25 Th-11/27	Learning EVENT! Thanksgiving- No Class	Chapter 15	
16	T- 12/02 Th-12/04	Learning EVENT! Learning EVENT!		

