

**San José State University
Department of Psychology
PSYC 155.80, Human Learning
Spring 2025**

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Steven Del Chiaro
Office Location:	DMH 352
Email:	steven.delchiaro@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Monday/Wednesday 12:00pm – 1:00pm and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Asynchronous
Classroom:	Online/Canvas

Course Format

This course will be instructed asynchronously.

Course Website

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. ALL assignments are assigned and turned into Canvas. You must be able to upload .doc or pdf. documents. Students are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any updates.

Logging Into Canvas

Canvas Login URL: <https://sjsu.instructure.com/>. Please note that it should NOT have the "www" at the start of the URL like many other websites. All students must first set up their SJSUOne account before accessing Canvas. To do so, go to <http://its.sjsu.edu/services/sjsuone/>. The **Username for Canvas** then is your 9 digit SID or Employee ID and your PW is the one you chose when you established your SJSUOne account. You will see the courses you taking (assuming the instructor is using Canvas).

Further Assistance with Canvas

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

Course Description

Through learning, humans and animals share a capacity to adapt to ever changing demands in the environment. Attempts to understand these processes form a cornerstone of experimental psychology. Theories from this basic research have contributed to applications and further theory development in many other areas of psychology (e.g. clinical, social and education). PSYC 155 is an introduction to the study of learning and behavior and focuses on the Behavioral Perspective as a way of improving our understanding of human behavior and how it is shaped.

The course will focus on two types of learning: Classical and Operant conditioning. Students can have a life-changing experience in this course, because it provides the basis for new ways of approaching common life challenges such as disciplining children, maintaining positive marriages and other relationships, and procrastination (to name just a

few). The material is intellectually challenging at times, but well worth the effort required to learn to think like a Behaviorist!

Learning Outcomes

The primary goal of this course will be to help you develop an understanding of the major themes, issues, and methods recognized within the psychology of learning. The aim of this course is to provide an understanding of the basic principles of the learning process. You will discover the learning processes that allow us to know how and when to act in order to obtain desired pleasurable aspects of our environment and to avoid unwanted unpleasant ones.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

The primary goal of this course will be to help you develop an understanding of the major themes, issues, and methods recognized within the psychology of learning. The aim of this course is to provide an understanding of the basic principles of the learning process. You will discover the learning processes that allow us to know how and when to act in order to obtain desired pleasurable aspects of our environment and to avoid unwanted unpleasant ones.

Competencies and Performance Indicators

The competencies listed below shall be demonstrated and assessed through class discussion, exams (comprised of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions) and simulation lab reports.

1. Understand the science of learning.
 - a. Demonstrate an appreciation of the empirical foundation of the study of learning.
 - b. Be familiar with research techniques and findings that illustrate fundamental learning concepts.
2. Differentiate between various theories of learning and memory.
 - a. Be able to understand and differentiate between theories.
 - b. Be able to cite evidence supporting the views of major theorists.
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply the concepts learned in the course to concrete examples:
 - a. Be able to differentiate and explain learning concepts using your self-change project.
 - b. Be able to apply learning principles to real world phenomena.

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. (test, quizzes, paper)

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. (paper)

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. (paper)

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

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

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

The LMS comes with the electronic textbook. The LMS cannot be purchased separately. I will go over purchasing the book on the first class meeting.

Option 1: MindTap + eBook: Powell/Honey for Introduction to Learning and Behavior, 5e

Library Liaison

Bailey, Christa
Phone: 408-808-2422
Email: christa.bailey@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Exams:

Exams will be multiple-choice and short answer. The tests will have questions from the text, lectures and videos. The first two exams will be in the classroom at the day and time posted on the syllabus. The final exam will be given on canvas during the lecture period, and you will have 60 minutes to complete the exam.

**** Make-up exams will be given ONLY when there is a documented excuse that must be approved by the professor (medical notes, etc.). A make-up exam will not be the same multiple-choice exam that is given in class. The make-up exam will consist of 5 to 8 essay questions on topics covered in the textbook and lecture, and it will be worth the same point value as the original exam. ****

LMS Completion:

Complete the assigned LMS (Learning Management System) assignments through **Canvas**. From there click the **Cengage** tab under the class, this will link you to the appropriate website to complete the LMS. There is no time-limit. The assignments are graded based on completion and mastery of the chapter. You must complete an assignment for each of the assigned chapters on the syllabus. There are **NO MAKE-UPS on LMS assignments (NO EXCEPTIONS)**. You must do them during the time period they are assigned. You will complete 10 assignments throughout the semester. Each assignment is worth 5 points for a total of 100 points for the semester.

WRITING PROJECTS:

Assignments are listed on Canvas.

Behavioral TED Talk Analysis and Reflection

There will be 5 videos to watch and reflect. This assignment aims to enhance students' critical thinking, listening, and analytical skills by engaging with a TED Talk selected by the instructor. Students will analyze the key messages, evaluate the speaker's effectiveness, and reflect on how the talk connects to the course material or broader societal issues.

Instructions are found on canvas.

Self- Change Project

Nobody is perfect. Some of us drive too fast, or too carelessly. Some of us want to recycle our newspapers, but never get around to it. We want to eat less and exercise more, but it just does not happen for us. We know some of our habits are bad for us (smoking, drinking) but we cannot cut back.

Principles of learning offer a solution. B. F. Skinner's behaviorism, although developed through carefully controlled scientific laboratory research, can be used to help people increase behaviors that they desire and decrease behaviors they wish to avoid. Use self-change principles to change some aspect of your behavior. Focus on some specific type of behavior that you would like to perform more (exercise, studying, being polite) or a behavior you would like to do less (partying, eating, drinking, being rude). Some other examples of things students have tried to change are listed at the bottom of this handout. Record the behavior on the provided behavioral checklist for one week, without attempting any change. Please note:

Please know that self-monitoring your behavior is difficult, but a task that can (and will) be completed.

Step 1: Behavior Decision.

- Decide on the behavior you will increase or decrease
- Write a paragraph description of the behavior, being as behaviorally specific as possible; express the goal of your project in observable, quantifiable terms.
- These goals must be very specific, and include both long and short range (daily) goals--but most important, they must be measurable;
- You can select those behaviors which you wish to do away with, non-desired goals as well as desired behaviors--but it would be best if you described behaviors that you want to increase (focus on creating behaviors that are incompatible with the behaviors you want to remove)

Step 2: Baseline 1.

- Establish the baseline, the operant level: measure the frequency of both the good and the bad behavior before you try to create any changes:

*Measurement is critical in self-change projects, so begin by recording your behavior on the checklist. Please note what is happening before during and after the selected behavior.

*Include the information about baseline in your report

- The length of your baseline recording will be over a three-week period.

Step 3: Design Behavioral Change

- Select SR (Reinforcing Stimulus) and design the contingencies.
- Make a list of the reinforcers that you have decided are potent and controllable for and by you.
- List these reinforcers in your report and note which one you plan to use to control the behavior.
- You can also identify punishers: aversive stimuli that you would rather avoid. You will be using these to reduce behavior.

Types of reinforcers to consider:

- Physical rewards: such as candy, food, drinks, etc.: things you want;
- Social rewards: arrange for someone else to give you praise, attention, and so on if you perform the target behavior;
- Activities: things you like to do (such as watching TV, socializing, etc.) that you cannot do if you don't perform the behavior;
- Note: It is often advisable to use a variety of reinforcers, so you will not "burn out" on one.

Name the Contingencies:

- State the exact conditions under which these consequences are applied (e.g., If I study for 1 hour I will get 5 M&M candies).
- If you plan to use punishment, then state those criteria as well (e.g., I did not meet my goal of studying for 3 hours and so the following day I did not permit myself to listen to any music).

Step 4: Intervention Stage.

- Institute the Program of Behavior Modification. Begin controlling the behavior through judicious use of reinforcers and punishment. This period should last one week (use another self-monitoring check list for recording behavior).
- Keep good records: record the behavior and the reinforcers/punishments constantly.
- Control the "stimulus environment". It is essential that you can administer the reinforcers immediately after the behavior, and that you can reduce interference from reinforcers that you do not control. That means you should make changes in your routine to avoid temptations (e.g., tell other people about the project and ask them not to interfere).
- If appropriate, post cues in your environment that will trigger your response: if you are supposed to be exercising more, then put up a sign in bedroom that says "Today you must exercise for 1 hour." (Describe your use of such a sign in your report).

- The length of your intervention recording will be over a three-week period.

Step 5: Follow up.

Because of time constraints, this step is optional, but would be used in any professional behavior modification project. Once the behavior has been created, you would return to baseline by stopping the rewards or punishments. This step is not necessary for this report. However, should you decide to complete this step, record your behavior on the checklist for one week.

Step 6: Write up the report

- Please type the report. There are no length restrictions. Use the length that you feel is appropriate to exactly specify what you did. The paper will have five sections:
 1. Introduction. (1-2 pages)
 2. Literature review. (2 pages)
 3. Methodology. (1 page)
 4. Results. (1 page)
 5. Discussion. (4-6 pages)
 6. Conclusion (1 page)
- The report will include charts and graphs of the behavior rates, but it should be a well-written narrative (with sentences and paragraphs).
- Use appropriate terms from the lectures and text.

Structure for Assignments

1. ALL OF YOUR WORK NEEDS TO BE UPLOADED ON CANVAS IN PDF. OR DOC. NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED IN ANY OTHER MEDIUM.
2. Your papers need be organized - you should be developing a central idea in each section and the reader should be able to follow the logic of your argument. Each paragraph should have a coherent theme and paragraphs should follow each other in an organized manner. Read over your papers to be sure that there is a logical order to them.
3. Watch for grammatical errors, particularly sentence fragments and run-on sentences. **You will be marked down for these errors.**
4. Your papers will be typewritten, double-spaced, one-inch margins, using Times New Roman font. (APA Format) <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/18/>
5. References included in your paper are to be done according to APA style as described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition, which is available in the library, the campus bookstore, and on-line. You should have at least 2 references for every paper and they will be listed on a separate page on the back of your assignment.

Grading Policy

Grades are updated on Canvas:

1. Three (3) exams covering lectures, films, guest speakers, outside readings and the text are worth 100 points each (300).
2. 13 LMS quizzes will be worth 5 points each (65).
3. Behavioral TED Talk Analysis and Reflection (50).
4. Self-Change project will be worth 100 points (100): See Rubrics for Assignment.
5. Self-Change project rough drafts will be worth (15 points)
6. Video Sheet worth 5 points.

Total Points = 535

Letter grades will be assigned according to the grading table:

Table 1 - Grading Table

	A: 100 - 94	A-: 93-90
B+: 89-87	B: 86-83	B-: 82-80
C+: 79-77	C: 76-73	C-: 72-70
D+: 69-67	D: 66-63	D-: 62-60
F: < 60		

Classroom Protocol

Syllabus Policy:

The course syllabus presented in this document will be followed as closely as possible. However, the course syllabus, schedule, policies, and procedures are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor or in the event of extenuating circumstances. This includes the tentative dates listed. The instructor will announce possible changes of the syllabus in advance. Since such announcements are typically made during class, it is the student's responsibility to clarify any of these changes that may have been made when the student is absent.

Although you will be responsible for all of the material in the assigned readings, some of the information may not be covered in class. Therefore, if there is material that is unclear to you it is highly recommended that you discuss this material with me at an appropriate time (e.g., during office hours). It is your responsibility to read the syllabus and ask questions about it so that you have a clear understanding of the expectations. If you are unclear about any of the requirements/expectations, then please set up a time to speak with me. I will be grading as though you have a clear understanding of the course requirements and material.

University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU's policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See [University Policy S90-5](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the [SJSU catalog](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html), at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html>. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights 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.”

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR



Reader to scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

University Resources

SJSU offers many recourses to students for basic needs. Talk to me, or visit the website: <https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/>

Schedule on next page.

PSYC 155.80 Human Learning, Spring 2025
Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines	Assignments, Deadlines See Canvas Homepage
1	Jan 27	Classical and Operant Video	
2	Feb 3	Introduction, Chapter 1	LMS Chapter 1 Video Sheet Due Behavioral Checklist
3	Feb 10	Research Methods, Chapter 2	LMS Chapter 2 TED Talk 1 Due
4	Feb 17	Elicited Behaviors and Classical Conditioning, Chapter 3	LMS Chapter 3 Write Introduction*
5	Feb 24	Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena and Various Complexities, Chapter 4	LMS Chapter 4 Behavioral Checklist TED Talk 2 Due
6	Mar 3	Classical Conditioning: Underlying Processes and Practical Applications, Chapter 5	LMS Chapter 5 Write Lit Review* Rough Draft 1 Due
7	Mar 10	Exam 1 (Chapters 1-5)	TED Talk 3 Due
8	Mar 17	Operant Conditioning: Introduction, Chapter 6 Cont.	LMS Chapter 6 Write Methods/Results Rough Draft 2 Due
9	Mar 24	Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement, Chapter 7	LMS Chapter 7 TED Talk 4 Due
10	Mar 31	Spring Break – No Class	
11	April 7	Extinction and Stimulus Control, Chapter 8	LMS Chapter 8 Write Discussion and Conclusion TED Talk 5 Due
12	April 14	Escape, Avoidance and Punishment, Chapter 9 Self-Change Paper Draft Due April 14 11:59 pm. Complete Peer reviews by April 21.	LMS Chapter 9

13	April 21	Exam 2 (Chapters 6-9)	
14	April 28	Choice, Matching, and Self-Control, Chapter 10	Self-Change Paper Due LMS Chapter 10
15	May 5	Observational Learning and Rule-Governed Behavior, Chapter 11 Biological Dispositions in Learning, Chapter 12	LMS Chapter 11 and 12
16	May 12	Comparative Cognition., Chapter 13	LMS Chapter 13
17	Finals Week	https://www.sjsu.edu/classes/final-exam-schedule/spring-2025.php	