



## Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis

Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP)  
Rutgers University, New Brunswick  
18:820:511:01, Fall 2024

- Instructor:** Cara L. Phillips, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA-MA (she/her)
- Contact Info:** Email: [cp1263@gsapp.rutgers.edu](mailto:cp1263@gsapp.rutgers.edu)  
Office Phone:
- Time/Place:** Wednesday 6:15-8:45 PM: [SMH-D340](#)
- Office/Hours:** Office: Nelson Biology Laboratories, D-311  
Hours: By appointment. The instructor will make every reasonable effort to meet with students whenever necessary. Meetings may be held over Zoom or in-person. Please email me to schedule.
- Course Description:** This course involves a supervised placement in a clinical and/or research setting for a minimum of 225 hours per semester (about 15 hours per week). The purpose of the practicum placement is to provide students with the opportunity to integrate professional knowledge with clinical and professional skills. Students complete activities in applied psychology under the direct supervision of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Students are required to document clinical and/or research hours, in accordance with the BACB requirements, throughout the semester and submit an evaluation of their work by their supervisor at the midpoint and end of the semester. Students will also present case reviews and practice basic procedures during class. Successful completion of this course is necessary to graduate.

*This practicum is not sufficient to fully meet the BACB's Fieldwork requirements. Please refer to the BACB's BCBA Handbook.*

- Objectives:** At the end of this course, you will be able to:
1. Describe the BACB experience requirements for certification and required documentation of the same.
  2. Identify the key clinical competencies for graduate training in ABA.
  3. Demonstrate competence in basic clinical procedures (e.g., preference assessment, reinforcer assessments, ABC data analysis).
  4. Learn to actively seek supervision and demonstrate availability to both receive and provide feedback, thus becoming an educated consumer of clinical supervision.

5. Demonstrate understanding of the critical role of ethical and legal principles in ABA practice.
6. Continue to develop skills in assessment and intervention.

**Text/Readings:**

Behavior Analyst Certification Board (2022). Board Certified Behavior Analyst Handbook. Littleton, CO: [BCBA Handbook \(bacb.com\)](https://www.bacb.com)

[Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc. \(2016\) 5<sup>th</sup> edition task list](#)

Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester and will be available on Canvas (See reading list at end of syllabus). These readings will facilitate discussion and allow further exploration of the topic.

**Assessments:**

**Attendance and Participation:** Students will earn 5 points per class period for 14 weeks for participating in discussions and activities. Class discussions/activities will vary each week (see calendar below). However, students are also encouraged to bring questions or issues from their sites to be discussed in class or on a 1:1 basis. Each student must contribute in a meaningful way (e.g., cannot simply agree) to class discussion twice to receive full credit.

**BACB Paperwork Requirements:** You will submit BACB required paperwork via Canvas throughout the semester. You will register for, or provide verification of, a BACB account. You will also upload your completed and signed supervision contract and monthly fieldwork verification forms. You are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns you may have with accruing and documenting hours. Each submission is worth 5 points.

**Case Review Presentation:** You will select an individual from your placement to present as a case review. Over the course of the semester, you will have the opportunity to practice basic procedures in class and then with this individual, as described immediately below. You will present a brief (i.e., 15 – 20 min) case review, focusing on a behavior targeted for increase or decrease. The review should include a brief review of demographics (please deidentify student/use a code name), presenting problem (including graphs), previous interventions, and the results of your indirect and descriptive assessments. You will upload your presentation to canvas prior to presenting. Your grade will be based on the following: inclusion of all required components, thoroughness, use of appropriate terminology, and strength of interpretations of data. This project is worth 45 points (5 pts/section, plus 5 pts for presentation style). We will build on this assignment in the spring practicum class.

**APA Citation Style:** All papers MUST be written using APA style (7 ed.).

**Important Note:** Plagiarism essentially means that you cannot use the words and ideas of another person without giving them credit. Therefore, “quotation marks” should be used to indicate the exact words of another. That said, exact quotes should be kept to a minimum. Rather, each time you paraphrase another author you will need to credit the source in the text. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or

plagiarism, please see me. Students who plagiarize any material will earn a grade of F for the course. Please see the section on “academic integrity” below.

***In-Class Activities:*** There will be several group activities and in-class opportunities to complete portions of the case review project. You are expected to actively participate in these activities and to upload permanent products for some of these, including: a self-assessment tool, operational definitions, graphs, and data sheets (amongst others). See the schedule below for more information. You will submit 8 activities, each worth 5 points as long as they are complete and on-time.

***Evaluation by Supervisor:*** At the mid- and end-points of the semester, your supervisor will be asked to complete an evaluation of your performance on-site. The instructor will send these evaluations out two weeks prior to the deadline. Please follow-up with your supervisor the week that they are due. Each evaluation is worth up to 10 pts.

**Grading:**

| <b>Assessment Tool (Category)</b>   | <b>Points</b> | <b>Percentage of final grade</b> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Attendance and Participation</b> | 70            | 35%                              |
| <b>BACB paperwork requirements</b>  | 25            | 12.5%                            |
| <b>(In-class) Activities</b>        | 40            | 20%                              |
| <b>Case Review</b>                  | 45            | 22.5%                            |
| <b>Supervisor Evaluation</b>        | 20            | 10%                              |
| <b>Total</b>                        | 200           | 100%                             |

The following grading standards will be used in this class.

| <b>Grade</b> | <b>Description</b>                                | <b>Numerical Equivalent</b> |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>A</b>     | Outstanding                                       | 89.5-100 (4.0)              |
| <b>B+</b>    | Intermediate grade                                | 86.5-89.4 (3.5)             |
| <b>B</b>     | Good  | 79.5-86.4 (3.0)             |
| <b>C</b>     | Grades of <u>C</u> do not count toward graduation | 69.5-79.4 (2.0)             |
| <b>F</b>     | Failing   | 69.4 or below (0.0)         |
| <b>INC</b>   | Incomplete  |                             |

- Standards:** All MAP and Graduate Certificate in ABA students must achieve a grade of B or better and maintain a GPA of 3.0, or academic remediation will be enforced.
- Attendance:** It is expected that each student attends every scheduled class. If you are unable to attend or will be late, please email me prior to class. Students are excused from class when observing religious holidays, in accordance with Rutgers University policy. Students will be responsible for all material covered during their absence.
- Timeliness:** Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines. Late work may be accepted with a serious and compelling reason and approval. However, assignments that are submitted after the due date may be subject to a 10% penalty per day (with a 24-hour grace period).
- Technology:** If students expect to send or receive urgent e-mails, texts, or calls during class, their needs should be communicated to and approved by the instructor prior to class. All cell phones should be turned off or placed in silent mode. All computing devices should be used only for the purpose of class-related activities.
- Email:** Prompt communication is essential. On weekdays I will try my best to respond to emails within 18 hours. Over the weekend, please allow 24-36 hours for a response.
- GSAPP Diversity:** The Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP) at Rutgers University-New Brunswick is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We view individuals from a variety of backgrounds, lived-experiences, identities, and perspectives across our community members as critical to our threefold mission of world-class education, scholarship, and public service. We aim to honor diversity through a variety of means, such as inclusive groups, events, initiatives, curricula, and our organizational composition. We strive to create and maintain a safe space in which all voices are heard and valued, consistent with Rutgers University's Beloved Community. GSAPP acknowledges the current, historical, and systemic practices that have been used to marginalize and oppress some identities and give power and privilege to others in and beyond the United States. Additionally, we are keenly aware of the destructive effects, including on mental health and personal well-being, of prejudice, stigma, microaggressions, and violence in all its forms. We engage in a critical examination of our own biases and behaviors, both past and present. We utilize evolving methods to address, incorporate, and celebrate DEI through our scholarship, service, and training of future health service professionals.
- Accessibility:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for

reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form (<https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>).

- Integrity:** Students who use ChatGPT and similar artificial intelligence tools on assignments without permission, or who use them in improper ways, are violating the academic integrity rules of the University. Students who use ChatGPT and similar programs improperly are seeking to gain an unfair advantage, which means they are committing academic dishonesty. <https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf>
- Safety:** As the semester goes on it will become darker earlier. If you need a safety escort: <https://ipo.rutgers.edu/publicsafety/rupt/escorts>
- Librarian:** Samantha Kannegiser, Liaison to Psychology  
Schedule meeting: <https://libcal.rutgers.edu/appointments/samantha>  
Phone number: (856) 225-2832 (leave a message)  
Email: [samantha.kannegiser@rutgers.edu](mailto:samantha.kannegiser@rutgers.edu)  
<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/ask>
- Freedom of Speech:** <https://www.rutgers.edu/president/academic-freedom-free-speech>
- Other Resources:** <https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/current-students/important-links>
- Title IX:** <http://compliance.rutgers.edu/resources/resources-for-facultystaff>
- Counseling:** Students often experience personal problems or difficulties during the term that may interfere with learning and their daily activities. If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone regarding such personal issues, the University provides free counseling services through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and their information can be found at <http://psychologicalservices.rutgers.edu>. They also offer several useful workshops for general stress management and techniques for promoting mental health. If you have any questions about CAPS or other services, I am happy to speak with you privately.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

| <b>Modules/<br/>Meetings</b> | <b>Topics/Readings</b>   | <b>Activities</b>  | <b>Assignments Due</b>  |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Week 1<br>9/4                | <b>Introductions</b><br><br><b>Course goals</b>  | Syllabus Review<br><br>Discussion: what do you hope to get out of this course?   | BACB Account Set-up   |
| Week2<br>9/11                | <b>A day in the life of a BCBA</b>   | Establish your baseline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBT exam and self-assessment tool</li> </ul> Discuss career pathways | By end of class:<br>RBT exam<br>Self-assessment tool<br><br>By 9/13: Upload signed supervision contract |
| Week 3<br>9/18               | <b>All things data:<br/>Selecting measures of interest</b>                                     | Discussion: identifying the (real) problem<br><br>Small group: test out operational definitions                                      | By end of class: Turn in operational definition of behavior of interest for Case Review                 |
| Week 4<br>9/25               | <b>All things data:<br/>Selecting collection method</b>  | Discussion: barriers in practice<br>Small group: choose/develop a data sheet (or other)  | By end of class: upload data sheet for case review  |
| Week 5<br>10/2               | <b>All things data:<br/>Graphing</b><br><i>*bring data to graph</i>                            | Guest presenter: graphing tips and tricks<br><br>Small group: practice making graphs   |   |
| Week 6<br>10/9               | <b>All things data:<br/>Visual analysis of data</b><br><i>*bring completed graphs to class</i> | Discussion: interpretation of data<br><br>Small group: review practice data and discuss interpretation                               | By 10/15: Upload September M-FVF  |
| Week 7<br>10/16              | <b>Stimulus Preference Assessments (SPA)</b>   | Review and practice single/paired/multiple stimulus<br>Graph results   | By end of class: submit graph of PSA and MSWO results from practice                                     |
| Week 8<br>10/23              | <b>Alternative strategies to identify potential reinforcers</b>                                | Review alternative methods. Determine type to try at site. Practice chosen method and graph.   | By end of class: Upload practice graph of chosen SPA  |
| Week 9<br>10/30              | <b>Reinforcer Assessments</b>  | Discussion – why your SPA results don't “work”   | Prior to class: upload IRL SPA graphs and   |

|                  |  |   |   |
|------------------|--|---|---|
| Still 10/30      |  | Review and practice reinforcer assessment (candy will be provided)  | summary (1-2 paragraphs)  |
| Week 10<br>11/6  | <b>Indirect Assessment</b>   | Discuss methods of indirect assessment.<br>Groups: Research available indirect measures. Try them out within groups.  | By end of class: Upload an example of an indirect measure that you will use for your case review    |
| Week 11<br>11/13 | <b>Descriptive Assessment</b>                                      | Discuss options for descriptive assessment (e.g., ABC data, scatterplot, structured DA)<br>Small group: develop ABC data sheet & research other tools for completing indirect assessments | By end of class: Upload your version of an ABC data sheet<br>By 11:15 Upload October M-FVF          |
| Week 12<br>11/20 | <b>Depicting and interpreting indirect and descriptive results</b> | Discussion of barriers encountered and what we can learn from incomplete data<br><br>Groups: review data and discuss interpretation   | By 11/16: upload graphic depiction of ABC data or other indirect assessment results for case review |
| Week 13<br>11/27 | <b>No Class – Happy day before Thanksgiving!</b>                   |   |   |
| Week 14<br>12/4  | <b>Presentation of Case Review</b>                                 |   |   |
| Week 15<br>12/11 | <b>Presentation of Case Review</b>                                 |   | By 12/15: Upload November M-FVF   |
| Week 16<br>12/18 | <b>Presentation of Case Review</b>                                 |   |   |

**NOTE:** The dates, readings, and assignment are subject to change. Any changes will be announced in canvas with as much lead time as possible.

### **Rutgers University Mission**

As the premier comprehensive public research university in the state's system of higher education, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, has the threefold mission of:

- providing for the instructional needs of New Jersey's citizens through its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs,
- conducting the cutting-edge research that contributes to the medical, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of the state, as well as aiding the economy and the state's businesses and industries, and
- performing public service in support of the needs of the citizens of the state and its local, county, and state governments.

Each component of the university's mission reinforces and supports the other two. As the University of New Jersey®, Rutgers is dedicated to teaching that meets the highest standards of excellence, to conducting research that breaks new ground, and to provide services, solutions, and clinical care that help individuals and the local, national, and global communities where they live.

### **GSAPP Mission**

The mission of GSAPP is threefold: education, research/scholarship, and public service. Its goal is to prepare well-educated, qualified, and competent direct-service psychologists who have a special commitment to direct community involvement and to underserved populations-- professionals who can integrate scientific knowledge with innovation in the delivery of psychological services to individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Professionals receiving a doctoral degree in psychology should be capable of extending psychological knowledge and exhibiting the high level of analytic skills and theoretical understanding needed to use existing and emerging psychological knowledge.

Core Values. We are guided by four core values that are apparent in our learning environment, centers, and clinics:

1. **Academic excellence** in preparing students for careers in clinical and school psychology.
2. Commitment to **social justice** and helping **underserved populations**.
3. **Diversity** of students trained, approaches used, theoretical orientations followed, and populations served.
4. **Knowledge generation and dissemination** using contemporary research approaches.

### **MAP Statement**

The program embraces the mission of the school by offering instruction that has an emphasis on civic and global citizenship, social justice, and cultural diversity. This course of study provides students with the knowledge needed to understand individual and collective behaviors; develop quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis and research design needed to analyze the corresponding physical and environmental contributors to human behavior; and a beginning understanding of the analysis and treatment of behavior problems and disorders.

The MAP degree will prepare students with the requisite theoretical knowledge; critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to successfully participate in employment or scholastic activities. Students will have opportunities to pursue scholarly activities that prepare them to successfully compete for admissions into doctoral-level psychology and related academic programs and pursue master's level career pathways through available concentration and certificate programs (see examples of concentration areas listed below). In addition to completing the required coursework (36 credits), completion of the MAP degree will be marked by a culminating academic experience—Capstone project (either a research project/presentation (3 credits) and experiential learning activity (6-credit practicum training). In general, students will acquire a knowledge base grounded in psychological theory and experiential learning (research or practicum) designed to further advance their personal and professional career development.