



Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis

Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP)

Rutgers University, New Brunswick

18:820:511:01, Spring 2025

Instructor: Cara L. Phillips, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA-MA (she/her)

Contact Info: Email: cara.phillips@rutgers.edu

Office Phone: 848.445.9347

Time/Place: Wednesday 6:15 – 8:45 PM/ Nelson, Rm. D340

Office/Hours: Office: Nelson Biology Laboratories, D-311

Hours: The instructor will make every reasonable effort to meet with students (zoom/in-person) whenever necessary. Please email me to schedule.

Course Description: The purpose of the practicum course is to provide students with the opportunity to integrate course knowledge with clinical and professional skills. Practicum II aims to continue to build clinical judgment through analysis of data, with an increased focus on functional analysis, treatment evaluation, skill acquisition, and professional skills. **Students must be involved in the practice of or research in ABA for a minimum of 225 hours per semester** (about 15 hours per week). These hours must be **at an approved ABA practicum placement**, in which all programming and/or research is designed and monitored by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). All students are required to document their hours on a practicum experience log. Some students will work under the direct supervision of a BCBA with at least one year experience and may be eligible to begin accruing supervised fieldwork hours. *However, this is not a requirement for the course and supervised fieldwork resulting in accruing hours toward your BCBA credential is not guaranteed as part of practicum enrollment.* Successful completion of this course is necessary to graduate.

Objectives: At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Gain increased competence with case conceptualization.
2. Be comfortable actively participating in case reviews.
3. Determine relevant variables for consideration in planning for assessment of behavior targeted for both decrease and increase.
4. Evaluate assessment results to determine treatment.
5. Monitor data to determine when to implement a change in treatment.

6. Develop a basic teaching protocol using shaping, chaining, and trial-based learning.
7. Be prepared to work collaboratively with stakeholders (e.g., caregivers, teachers, other professionals).
8. Describe a day in the life of a BCBA across settings (i.e., school, clinic, hospital, residential).

Text/Readings:

Behavior Analyst Certification Board (2022). Board Certified Behavior Analyst Handbook. Littleton, CO: BCBA Handbook (bacb.com)

https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BCBAHandbook_240426-a.pdf

Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc. (2016) 5th edition task list

Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester and will be available on Canvas (See reading list at end of syllabus).

Assignments and Assessments:

Attendance (20 pts): It is expected that students will attend every class. Full points for attendance will be provided to any student who does not miss class more than once. Starting with the second absence, the grade will drop by two points for each subsequent absence.

Syllabus Quiz (10 pts. x 2): There will be **two quizzes covering the syllabus**. The first quiz will be presented in class following the syllabus review. There will be a second quiz focusing on the syllabus/Canvas at the mid-way point of the semester.

Practicum Hours Log (5 pts. x 4): Students must accrue a **minimum of 225 experience hours** (about 15 hours per week) **at an approved ABA practicum placement**, in which all programming and/or research is designed and monitored by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). You will submit a log of your hours and activities for four months using either the practicum hours log provided in Canvas or the BACB Monthly Fieldwork Verification Form (MFVF), if applicable.

Case Review Lead (15 pts x 2): In addition to discussing individual cases in the context of class discussions regarding the assignments, each student will have at least two opportunities to present on an area of need for an individual with whom you work. Students should prepare a BRIEF presentation to include: (a) Introduction (individual, setting, etc), (b) presenting problem (c) previous interventions, and (d) question about or ideas for next steps. The class will then discuss the issue as a whole and generate suggestions. The presenting student will be responsible for responding to peers and leading the discussion. The purpose of the case review discussions is two-fold. First, it

provides students with practice with case conceptualization. Second, it allows students to engage in active problem solving with real world problems.

Participation in Class and Case Review Discussions (10 pts. x 6; lowest score of 7 classes dropped): Each class will include open discussions and opportunities to brainstorm regarding the assignments, in addition to more formal case reviews. The case review process is not complete without the problem-solving, so all students must be prepared to participate. Students will earn **10 points per class period** for participating in discussions and activities. Each student must contribute in a meaningful way (e.g., cannot simply agree) to case review at least twice per class to receive full credit.

Assessment and Treatment Protocols (15 pts x 4): There will be four assignments related to assessment and treatment. Two of these assignments will be focused on behavior targeted for reduction and two on behavior targeted for increase (i.e., skill acquisition). Each project will be developed based on the needs of an individual with whom you work at your practicum site. You are not required to implement these protocols at your practicum site, although you may do so ***with the approval and supervision of your fieldwork supervisor***. These are as follows:

a) Functional Analysis protocol with hypothetical data – Students will develop a functional analysis of a behavior of concern. The assessment could be a standard Functional Analysis (FA), any of its many modifications, or any other assessment designed to determine the function of the target behavior. Students must develop the assessment protocol from scratch. If the target behavior was already assessed and function identified by the supervising BCBA, a new behavior should be chosen.

(b) Treatment assessment protocol with hypothetical data – Students will develop a plan for treatment of the target behavior, based on the (real or hypothetical) results of the FA. The protocol must include a plan to assess treatment effects.

(c) Skills assessment – Students will complete at least part of a structured skills assessment (i.e., VB-MAPP, ABBLS, AFFLS, EFL) with an individual at their practicum site. Students will submit the raw data, in addition to a brief summary of the results.

(d) Teaching protocol(s) – Students will develop a teaching protocol to target an area of need identified by the skills assessment. The teaching strategies should match the skill being taught, the individual's learning style, and their baseline performance. Teaching might consist of: shaping, chaining, discrete trial, naturalistic teaching, etc.

Group presentation (30 pts): Students will work in small groups to create a presentation reflecting a day in the life of a BCBA. Each group will present on a different type of setting (i.e., clinic, in-home, school, hospital, residential). This project will require students to interview a minimum of three BCBA who work at the type of placement on which you are presenting. The presentation should include, at minimum: typical schedule of BCBA, population served, average case-load, role responsibilities (to

include an estimate of breakdown of time allocated to each), and opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

APA Citation Style: Written work and presentations should reflect 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.

Grading:

Assignment	Possible Points
Attendance (2 pt loss per absence starting at second absence)	20
Practicum Hours Log (5 pt) x 4	20
Case Review Participation (10 pt) x 6 highest of 7	60
Syllabus Quiz (10 pt) x 2	20
Case Review (15 pts) x 2	30
Assessment/Treatment Protocols (15 pts) x 4	60
Group Presentation (30 pts)	30
Total	240

The following grading standards will be used in this class. The final grade will be reported as Pass (A-B)/Fail (C or lower).

Grade	Description	Numerical Equivalent
A	Outstanding	89.5-100 (4.0)
B+	Intermediate grade	86.5-89.4 (3.5)
B	Good	79.5-86.4 (3.0)
C	Grades of <u>C</u> do not count toward graduation	69.5-79.4 (2.0)
F	Failing	69.4 or below (0.0)
INC	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. Computers should be put away during case review and discussion. 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 24 hours. Over the weekend, please allow 36-48 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>).

- AI/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:** If you need a safety escort to your transportation: <https://ipo.rutgers.edu/publicsafety/rupd/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
<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

Meetings	Topics	Readings/Activities	Assignments Due
A+B: 1/22/25	Introductions Course expectations	Syllabus Review and Quiz Review FA assignment Determine Case Review schedule	Quiz Selection of case client for next assignment
A: 1/29/25, B: 2/5/25	Functional Analysis	Reading for Discussion: Kranak & Briggs, 2024 (article and objectives on Canvas) Develop FA for behavior of interest Case Review: Alex M. , Nicole P. / Xinyue W. , Sindhu C.	FA protocol with hypothetical data: Cohort A: 2/5/25 Cohort B: 2/12/25
A: 2/12/25, B: 2/19/25	From FA to Treatment	Discussion: Proactive vs Reactive Interventions Treatment complexity Case Review: Sarisha C. , Amisha P. / McKenna D. , Shuangyu Z.	Treatment protocol with hypothetical data: Cohort A: 2/19/25 Cohort B: 2/26/25
A: 2/26/25, B: 3/5/25	Evaluating Treatment: You've gotta know when to hold em...	Discussion: data-based decisions in treatment of challenging behavior Case Review: Kaneisha J. , Tiara P. / Katie C. , Shreya S.	
A + B: 3/12/25	Professional Skills: Communication with stakeholders	Syllabus Quiz 2 Discussion and Role Plays: Effective communication with common topics (e.g., assessment results, treatment, concerns, etc)	
3/19/25	<i>Spring Break No class!</i>		
A: 3/26/25, B: 4/2/25	Skill Acquisition: Assessment	Discussion: VB-MAPP, ABLLS, AFFLS, EFL – when to use and why they always take longer than you think (i.e., preparation is critical) Case Review: Jennifer P. , Sheyla S. / Paige S. , Lingxuan Q.	Completed (partial or full) section of skill assessment tool: Cohort A: 4/2/25 Cohort B: 4/9/25

A: 4/9/25, B: 4/16/25	Skill Acquisition: Teaching methods	Discussion: Shaping, Chaining, Trials. Practice: Prompting and Fading in the context of errorless discrimination training, teaching using shaping, teaching using chaining Case Review: Alexis D., Husaina C.. / Brian B., Jackie S.	Protocol for teaching a specific skill: Cohort A: 4/16/25 Cohort B: 4/23/25
A: 4/23/25, B: 4/30/25	Professional Skills: Navigating conflict	Discussion and role plays: what to do when you disagree, handling emotional responding, effective communication when things are hard Case Review: Erin K., Lauren P. / Jasi M., Mery G.	
A + B: 5/7/25	Day in the life of a BCBA	Group presentations: what does a BCBA do in your setting?	Turn in prior to class: Presentation

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.