

Advanced Topics in Applied Behavior Analysis: Teaching Children with Autism and Related Disorders 18:820:517:01
Credits: 3
Level: Graduate
Mondays, 6:15 pm - 8:45 pm
SHM 219

Instructor: Emma Auten, Ph.D., BCBA-D
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Office Hours: By appointment

**** Instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus on an as-needed basis throughout the term. Students will be notified by email or by announcement in class when revisions are made. ****

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 providing 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:

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

Applied Psychology Statement: The Department of Applied Psychology embraces the mission of the school by offering instruction that has an emphasis on civic and global citizenship, social justice, and cultural diversity. Our programs provide students with 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.

Our programs 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 prepares 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. 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.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course begins by introducing students to methods for identifying and evaluating evidence-based strategies for teaching children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), with a focus on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). This framework is used throughout the remainder of the course to evaluate state-of-the-art methods in teaching children with ASD. Specifically, the student will learn to identify different models of ABA instruction, including the use of the analysis of verbal behavior in the education of children with ASD and related disorders. The student will develop an understanding of additional teaching strategies such as visual supports, methods of teaching discrimination, and strategies for increasing social skills. Finally, the student will learn about the effective components of consultation in classrooms for children with ASD and collaboration with families of individuals with ASD across diverse settings. The goal of this course is to develop an understanding of the unique applications of a variety of ABA instructional techniques for learners with ASD, and to consider the influence of culture on choice of effective treatment for children with autism and their families. The students should be able to readily identify effective, evidence-based teaching strategies, and be able to apply specific methodologies to address specific skill deficits while taking into account the cultural context of the student, family, and/or school

Objectives for the course:

The student will be able to:

- understand the nature and relevance of evidence-based practice
- describe levels of evidence for interventions inside of ABA and outside of ABA
- compare and contrast naturalistic strategies with discrete trial instruction
- articulate the environmental variables responsible for language
- understand a behavioral analysis of language
- describe teaching procedures appropriate for given language-based skills, considering multilingual backgrounds
- understand the steps necessary to teach simple and conditional discriminations

- describe the use of visual supports, such as video modeling, activity schedules, and social stories, to promote independence
- describe a variety of strategies that can be used to build social skills
- describe the important elements in effective consultation across diverse school settings
- understand family experience and factors related to coping, and the impact of culture and diversity on family experience
- describe the important components of effective collaboration with families

Required Text:

No textbook is required. Students can access required readings for free through Canvas.

Academic Integrity

University Code of Student Conduct: It's important to realize that coming to the University brings you into a scholarly community, and as with all communities, there are principles and standards of behavior and action. Below, is the Preamble to the University Code of Student Conduct. (The full document can be found at <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/student-conduct-processes/university-code-of-student-conduct/>)

University Code of Student Conduct: Preamble: A university in a free society must be devoted to the pursuit of truth and knowledge through reason and open communication among its members. Its rules should be conceived for the purpose of furthering and protecting the rights of all members of the university community in achieving these ends.

All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to behave in an ethical and moral fashion, respecting the human dignity of all members of the community and resisting behavior that may cause danger or harm to others through violence, theft, or bigotry. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to adhere to the civil and criminal laws of the local community, state, and nation, and to regulations promulgated by the university. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to observe established standards of scholarship and academic freedom by respecting the intellectual property of others and by honoring the right of all students to pursue their education in an environment free from harassment and intimidation. (From the Preamble, University Code of Student Conduct, Policy on Academic Dishonesty)

I want to make it very clear to everyone that I will not tolerate cheating in any of my courses. If I believe someone is cheating on a quiz or exam or paper, I will report the incident directly to the Dean, who will take the matter from there. Examples of such cheating are copying answers from someone else's test onto your own, copying material from reference sources and representing them as your own ideas or writings, storing information in a calculator's memory and using it on the exam, using notes or such during the exam when not approved by me, working together on projects that are to be done on your own, etc. I urge all of you to become familiar with the University procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. It can be found at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-disciplinary-process/>

Accommodations for Special Needs

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at

the Office of Disability Services.

Attendance

I will offer 5 points per class for attendance for the full duration of the class period (6:15-8:45 pm). I have allotted 70 points for attendance, allowing for one absence from class without it affecting your final grade. If you can avoid missing class, that is ideal, as you will likely miss critical content that is important for mid- and final-semester exams. However, illness or unexpected events occur. If you know in advance that you cannot attend class (e.g., athletic participation, religious holidays, previously scheduled surgery), it is best to inform me as soon as possible. You will not earn attendance or participation points for that evening; however, I can arrange for possible options to earn back points if you miss more than one class. You could still earn partial points for attendance if you know you will arrive late or must leave early on a given class; but please let me know in advance. I will not permit any students to attend class remotely. Attendance points will only be given for in-person attendance.

Religious Holidays: Students who will miss class due to a religious holiday not observed by the University should notify me prior to their absence so we can arrange for alternative arrangements for missed content or assignments.

Computer/Cell Phone Use in Class: If students are expected to send or receive urgent e-mails, texts, or calls during class, their unanticipated and urgent needs should be communicated to and approved by the instructor prior to class. All cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode. All computing devices should be used only for the purpose of class-related activities.

Assignments and Evaluation

This course will be taught using lectures, class discussions, group activities, and individual activities. This is a graduate level course; therefore, I expect students to participate, keep up with the work from week to week, and be attentive during class time. The final grade will be determined and computed based on the following:

Activity	Due Date	Points
Class Participation	Ongoing	65
Attendance	Ongoing	70
Application Activities	Weekly	35 (5 pts each x 7 activities)
Points of Discussion	Bi-weekly	30 (5 points each x 6 PODs)
Exam 1	TBA	100
Exam 2	TBA	100
	Maximum Point Total	400

- **Class participation.** You are expected to actively contribute to discussions and participate during in-class activities. Sharing of perspectives, anecdotal experiences and asking questions is encouraged to promote engaging discussion and foster learning.

However, your contributions are also expected to reflect completion of assigned readings, supplemental readings and other sources. See *Participation Analysis* below. You will be given a participation grade at the end of the semester; however, I will take note of your participation each week. You may see me if you have questions about your participation in class throughout the semester.

Criteria/Grade	5/5 points	4/5 points	2/5	1/5
Participation	Actively participates, contributing appropriately to class discussions, shows evidence of reading texts, rarely leaves class. Turns in discussion questions on time.	Generally attentive and participatory, shows evidence of reading texts. Generally, remains throughout class – breaks, if used, are limited in time and number	Little participation or evidence of reading. Takes frequent or long breaks. Inattentive as evidenced by distracting behaviors.	Takes frequent or long breaks, engages in alternate activities in class, little or no participation or evidence of reading.
Group Participation	Fully actively engages in group work and discussion.	Generally attentive and participatory.	Poor participation, misses one or two experiential group activities.	No group participation.

- **Application activities.** Throughout the semester, application activities will be assigned that ask you to apply what you have read and learned in class to the development of a permanent product. These activities include an article review, the development of written skill acquisition programs, the creation of video models, and group essay responses related to consultation. Instructions for these application activities will be given in the modules for each week, and scoring rubrics will be provided. Group meetings will allow for peer feedback on application activities before submission/grading. Late work will not be accepted.
- **Exams.** Exams are non-cumulative.

4. Weekly Points of Discussion (POD): PODs provide an opportunity for us to have meaningful contributions and ongoing discussions about the material covered in class. The following is a list of requirements for the weekly POD:

- The POD should be uploaded to Canvas at least 24 hours before the start of class (i.e., 6:15 pm on the Sunday evening before class – **except for the first night of class and before exams**).
- Your POD can be about any or a combination of the assigned readings or a

- relevant topic to that week's class.
- You can pose a question about something you did not understand, comment on the articles, discuss some potential limitations of the research, or touch on something that was interesting or stood out to you.
- You will receive full points if you have at least one relevant question before or after at least one meaningful contribution related to your question (e.g., "Why did the researchers conduct caregiver training so early? Based on the data presented, it seemed like inappropriate mealtime behavior was on an increasing trend when they introduced caregivers into the treatment sessions. I wonder about the benefits and drawbacks associated with introducing the caregiver before inappropriate mealtime behavior has completely decreased to low and stable levels.").
- You will receive half of the 10 points (i.e., 5 points) if you have only a relevant question without a meaningful contribution (e.g., "Why did the researchers conduct caregiver training so early?").
- Be mindful to keep your POD brief (1-2, up to 5 sentences or points). Practice being concise with your language; length is not the goal.
- A subset of the PODs will be compiled and shared for group discussions on the day of class. All personal information will be removed. We will not have time to review every POD for every student, but I will try to rotate throughout the semester.
- Other General Tips in crafting your POD:
 - Please include the citation and page number of the reading with the content that informed your question, if applicable.
 - Please avoid asking, "What has been published since this paper was published?" simple yes/no questions (e.g., "Did the researchers obtain participant assent?"), or questions for which the answer is easily found in the article.
 - Ask questions that require discussion. Said another way, your question should make readers think and evaluate the evidence for or against a particular hypothesis, suggestion, theory, idea, etc.
 - Your questions may challenge the facts, concepts, and analyses in the readings or raise questions about the relation of the readings to other issues or topics.

Grades and Grading Policy

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Numerical Equivalent</u>
A	Outstanding	90-100 (4.0)
B+	Intermediate Grade	87-89 (3.5)
B	Good	80-86 (3.0)
C	Average	70-79 (2.0) *Grades of C or lower do not count toward graduation
F	Failure	69 or below (0.0)
INC	Incomplete	

Program requirement: 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.

Required Texts:

All readings will be posted and provided in Canvas. Readings (aside from Week 1) should be read *before* class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- - **Week 1**
 - **1/27**
 -
 - **Content:** Introduction to Course
 - Review of Syllabus
 - Review of Canvas
 - Expectations for Course
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- - **Week 2**
 - **2/3**
 -
 - **Content:** Evidence Based Treatment
 - Science, pseudoscience, antiscience
 - Evaluating ABA and non-ABA treatments
 - Impact of culture on diagnosis and treatment
 -
 - **Lectures:**
 - Evidence-Based Practice Introduction
 - Defining Evidence-Based Practice
 - Evaluating the Evidence
 -
 - **Application Activity #1 (Group Activity):** Group discussion related to evidence based practices
 -
 - **Required readings:** Leaf et al. (2016) and LeBlanc et al. (2012)
 -
 -
 - **In-Class Discussion:**
 - Small group discussion, identify non-evidence-based practices

Due 2/3: POD # 1

- **Week 3**
- **2/10**
-
- **Content:** Teaching in ABA
- Elements of discrete trial instruction
- Naturalistic teaching strategies
-
- **Lectures:**
- Models of ABA Instruction
-
- **Required readings: Reichow et al. (2007) and Walmsley and Baker (2019)**
-
- **Activity:**
- Identify and discuss the four tactics in Walmsley and Baker (2019) discussed in the article. Discuss as a group the section you are assigned
- DTT practice (use DTT materials)

Due 2/10: Upload Parent Letter (5 points) (**Application Activity #2**)

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- - **Week 4**
 - **2/17**
 -
 - **Content:** Designing Skill Acquisition Programs
 - Essential elements of skill acquisition programs
 - Common pitfalls in writing skill acquisition programs
 - Task analyses and chaining
 -
 - **Lectures:**
 - Designing Skill Acquisition Programs
 -
 - **Required readings: Stokes & Baer (1977) and Slocum & Tiger (2011)**
 -
 - **In-Class Discussion:**
 - Examples of skill acquisition goal writing
 - Task analyses
 -
 - **Due 2/17: POD # 2**
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 - **Week 5**
 - **2/24**
 -
 - **Content:** Assessing Verbal Behavior

- Review of verbal operants
- Assessing verbal behavior using ABLLS and VB-MAPP
-
- **Lectures:**
- Verbal Behavior Classification
- Assessment of Verbal Behavior
-
- **Activity: PODs in class**
-
- **In-Class Discussion:**
- Identify preliminary manding goals for teaching

Readings: Sundberg & Michael (2001) and Michael 1988

Due 2/24: POD # 3

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- - **Week 6**
 - **3/3**
 -
 - **Content:** Teaching Verbal Behavior
 - Language instruction
 - Selection-based v. topography based verbal behavior
 - Multilingualism in language instruction
 -
 - **Lectures:**
 - Cooperation and Mand Training
 - Imitation, Echoics, Receptive, & Tacting
 - RFFCs and Early Intraverbals
 -
 - **Activity:**
 - Draft DTI program and naturalistic teaching programs (**Application Activity # 3**) – DUE DATE CHANGED TO 3/24
 -
 - **In-class Discussion:**
 - Discuss draft programs

Due 3/3: POD # 4

Week 7
3/10

Content: Exam 1

- **Lectures:** None
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- **Readings:** None
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- **Due 3/10:**
- Exam will be taken in class

Spring Break NO CLASS Week of 3/20-3/24

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- **Week 8**
- **3/24**
-
- **Content:** Discrimination
- Simple discrimination
- Conditional discrimination
- Stimulus equivalence
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- **Lectures:**
- Intro and Simple Discrimination
- Conditional Discrimination
- Stimulus Equivalence
-
- **Readings:** Grow et al. (2011) and blog post by Kodak et al. (a practical framework)
-
- **Activity:**
- Discussion with TBD group activity (**Application Activity #4**)
-
- **Due 3/24:**
- POD # 5

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- -
 - **Week 9**
 - **3/31**
 -
 - **Content:** Teaching Discrimination
 - Optimizing stimulus control

- Auditory-visual discrimination
- **Lectures:**
- Troubleshooting Identity Matching
- Teaching Arbitrary Matching
- Learning for Free Activity Directions
-
- **Readings:**
- **Activity:**
- Draft a discrimination program and data sheet (**Application Activity # 5**)
-
- **In-Class Discussion:**
- Share draft of discrimination program and data sheet
- Offer positive and constructive feedback
-
- **Due 3/31:**
- None
-
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-
-
- **Week 10**
- **4/7**
-
-
- **Content:** Visual Cues in Instruction
- Activity Schedules
- Video Modeling
-
- **Lectures:**
- Activity Schedules
- Video Modeling
-
- **Activity:**
- Draft task analysis for activity schedule
-
- **In-Class Discussion**
- Record and upload video model
-
- **Due 4/7:** Read Thomas et al. (no POD due)
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- **Week 11**
- **4/14**
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- **Content:** Social Skills Instruction
- Social Stories
- Script Fading
- Cultural Views of Social Skills
-
- **Lectures:**
- Teaching Social Skills
- Methods for Social Skills Instruction
-
- **Activity:**
- Add to online group discussion.
-
- **Due 4/14:** Video modeling upload (**Application Activity #6**)
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- - **Week 12**
 - **4/21**
 -
 - **Content:** Effective Consultation and Collaboration
 - Building rapport with staff members and family members
 - Training
 - Considering family culture and diversity
 -
 - **Lectures:**
 - Early Classroom Consultation
 - Evidence-Based Training
 - Understanding Parents' Experiences
 - Compassion in ABA
 -
 -
 - **In-Class Discussion:**
 - Compassion in consultation and family collaboration

Due 4/21: None

Week 13

4/28

Content: Group contingencies and contingency contracts

- **Lectures:**
- Arranging group contingencies
- Writing contingency contracts
-
- **Activity:**
- Group discussion; arrange group contingency (**Application Activity # 7**)

Required readings: Gresham & Gresham (1982)

Due 4/13: POD # 6

Week 14

5/5

Content: Exam 2 Review and Wrap up (Final Exam)

Lectures: None

Readings: None

Activity: Study Exam 2 Content

In-Class Discussion: None

Due 4/28: None

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- - **Final Exam Week**
 -
 - **Content:** Exam 2 ONLINE on Canvas
 -
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