

Pediatric Feeding Disorders

18:820:524:01

Level: Graduate, Credits: 3

Thursdays, 6:15-8:45 pm SMH 200

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. ****

Course Description

Through weekly reading assignments, group discussions, and lectures, students will learn the behavior-analytic principles and techniques to effectively assess and treat pediatric feeding disorders.

Course Overview

This is a course on research methods and applications in behavior analysis with a focus on the assessment and treatment of pediatric feeding disorders. As a result, the course content will embed research in progress as it relates to weekly topics. We will cover a wide range of topics like the observation of human behavior in applied settings, data collection, graphing and analysis, reinforcer assessment and selection, functional analysis methodology, and intervention strategies. Although most of the assigned readings focus on pediatric feeding disorders, most of the skills and topics will provide you with a strong empirical background for clinical research and practice that is generalizable to different areas of behavior analysis (e.g., severe problem behavior, skill acquisition).

Objectives for the course:

The student will:

- Identify and describe key features of applied behavior analysis (ABA), particularly as they apply to intervention for children with feeding disorders;
- Acquire critical knowledge required for effective implementation of assessment and treatment of pediatric feeding disorders;
- Discuss and identify current standards of practice and evidence-based treatment for pediatric feeding disorders;
- Be prepared for practicum-based experiences in a pediatric feeding disorders program.

Lecture quizzes (110 total points, 11 quizzes at 10 points each): Students will take a short quiz at the end of every class period. Each quiz will be worth 10 points. The quiz at the end of the class period will cover the content reviewed in the class that night and from the assigned articles. I will drop the lowest quiz score at the end of the semester. Each quiz is made up of 5 questions and will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and True/False questions. They will be posted to Canvas at the end of the class period (at 8:45 pm on Thursday nights) and available for 24 hours (until 8:45 pm on Friday nights).

Article Presentation (60 total points, one 10 to 15-minute presentation): Throughout the course beginning at week 5, you will be responsible for selecting one feeding research article to read, review, and present to the class. This will provide you with an opportunity to practice reviewing critical components of research articles and summarizing the outcomes and implications for future research.

- Two or three students will present each week (beginning on Week 5 of the semester) either at the beginning or the end of the class period. I will give you an opportunity to sign up for a timeslot that is most preferred. Once you sign up for a date, you must also enter the name of the article that you will be presenting.
- You cannot present the same article as another student.
- You cannot present an article that is already included in the syllabus or as an assigned reading for class, as those will be covered in class.
- You must select an empirical study in pediatric feeding disorders that focuses on behavior-analytic assessment and/or treatment. I will provide you with a list of empirical studies from the literature to choose from during the first week of class, or you can identify one on your own.

Midterm Exams (150 points): I will present one exam midway through the semester on the date shown in the course schedule below. The exam is worth 150 points. The exam is made up of a combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions. There will be 3-4 short-answer/essay questions in each exam. The mid-term exam will cover content from the first half of the semester.

In most cases, I will limit makeup exams to special circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, death in immediate family, subpoenaed court appearance). If you think you are eligible for a makeup, check with me as soon as possible. If you know in advance (e.g., athletic participation, religious holiday, previously scheduled surgery), it is best for you to arrange to take the makeup exam before the scheduled exam date.

Final Paper (150 points): Rather than a final exam, you will have a final paper due at the end of the semester. This paper will be on a topic we covered in class and you selected. I will have you select a topic with me by a certain date. I will provide additional details later in the semester.

Point of Discussion 110 total points; 11 PODs at 10 points each): Each week you will be assigned to read 1-2 articles. From the assigned articles for that specific week, you will either need to submit one point of discussion (POD). See below for the details for how to write POD and how we will grade these submissions.

- 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 Wednesday 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 the full 10 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.
 - Be specific. Once you have stated your basic idea/question, tell us why you think this. Are there some data in the article that led you to your idea/question? If so, tell us about it in concrete terms.

Attendance (65 points): 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 and to advance your knowledge on the assessment and treatment of pediatric feeding disorders. 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. I will not permit any students to attend class remotely. Attendance points will only be given for in-person attendance.

Points and Due Dates:

Assignment	Total Points	Point Break Down	Due Dates
Attendance	65	13 classes; 5 points per class (can miss one class)	Every class
Lecture Quizzes	100	11 quizzes; 10 points per quiz (will drop the lowest grade)	End of each class; Open for 24 hours: Thursdays 8:45pm- Fridays 8:45pm
Point of Discussion (POD)	100	11 PODs; 10 points each (will drop lowest grade)	Weekly: Wednesdays by 6:15pm
Final Paper	150	One final paper	End of semester

Article Presentation	60	10-15-minute presentation	Your selected date
Mid-semester exam	150	One mid-semester exam	See below dates for exam date
Total	625	Allows: Dropping one missed class	See Above

Grades and Grading Policy

Grade	Description	Numerical Equivalent
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)
F	Failure	69 or below (0.0)
INC	Incomplete	
S	Satisfactory	
U	Unsatisfactory	
PA	Pass	
NC	No credit given	

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.

Tentative Class Schedule

The instructor has the right to make changes at any time

	Date	Topic	Class Objectives	Readings	Assignment Due
1	09.4.25	Introductions Syllabus Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss article presentations Introduction to Pediatric Feeding Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the major due dates and components of the course syllabus State the criteria for diagnosis of Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) and Pediatric Feeding Disorders (PFD) State the limitations of diagnostic nosology such as the DSM-V 	None	None
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the steps in oral phase of swallowing for 		

09.11.24
Guest Lecturer

Introduction to
Pediatric Feeding
Disorders (*Continued*)

Interdisciplinary team
and Intake Evaluation

Safety

Design and
Measurement

- liquids and solids
- Identify professionals who might participate in an interdisciplinary feeding evaluation and describe their primary role(s); understand the rationale for the intake evaluation
- Identify at least 5 key strategies to maintain child safety during feeding assessment and treatment
- Describe the primary characteristics of single-case design
- Describe the secondary characteristics of single-case design
- Identify important features of a

- Kirkwood and Piazza (2021)

Suggested (not required) readings

- Auten & Peterson (2025) updated chapter
- Cooper Chapter 6
- Horner et al. (2005)

Lecture quiz
POD

graph (IV, DV,
etc.)

- Identify three commonly used single-case designs in feeding research and describe the primary features of each design
- Explain importance of direct observation and provide example of three important observable behaviors during the mealtime
- Name two conditions of home baseline and purpose of each
- Name two conditions of standard outcome baseline for liquids and purpose of each

09.18.25

Clinical Assessment

- Home Baseline
- Mealtime Structure
- Operational Definitions
- Standard Outcome Baseline
- Preference Assessment

- Name three conditions of standard outcome baseline for solids and purpose of each
- State the purpose of a preference assessment and identify the procedures
- Identify components that represent mealtime structure (e.g., bolus size)
- Describe at least one example for different components of mealtime structure (e.g., texture of food)
- Identify how dependent variables (e.g., acceptance) are measured during structured mealtime sessions

- Peterson et al. (2018)
- Borrero et al. (2010)

Suggested (not required) readings

- Fisher, Piazza, et al. (1992)

POD

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand operational definitions of challenging and appropriate feeding behavior 		
4	09.25.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review article presentation, critically analyzing studies Dr. Auten to provide example of article presentation Goal-setting Physical Setting Intensive program overview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand common goals that are targeted for children with feeding disorders and how to set objective and measurable goals Describe the setting that is necessary to conduct safe feeding services Identify the primary components that are necessary for the article presentation assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peterson & Ibañez (2017) 	POD

5	10.2.25	<p>Functional Analysis Of Inappropriate Mealtime Behavior</p> <p>How to take data and graph for feeding</p> <p>Practice data collection</p> <p>2 Article Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the purpose of a functional analysis • Identify the four conditions of a functional analysis of inappropriate mealtime behavior • Identify the feeding procedures of each condition of the functional analysis • Identify the function of inappropriate mealtime behavior from a graph of a functional analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piazza, Fisher et al. (2003) • Kirkwood et al. (2021) <p><i>Suggested (not required) readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachmeyer et al. (2009) 	<p>Article Presentation <i>(if it is your selected date)</i></p> <p>Lecture quiz</p> <p>POD</p>
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6	10.9.25	<p>Function-Based Feeding Interventions: Extinction and differential reinforcement</p> <p>2 Article Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the results of a functional analysis, identify function-based treatments Define extinction Identify and explain components of escape extinction Identify and explain components of attention extinction Identify and explain how differential reinforcement can be applied in feeding contexts Understand the conditions in which differential reinforcement is effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larue et al. (2011) Patel et al. (2002) <p><i>Suggested (not required) readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reed et al. (2004) 	<p>Article Presentation <i>(if it is your selected date)</i></p> <p>Lecture quiz</p> <p>POD</p>
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7	10.16.25	<p>Antecedent-Based Feeding Interventions and Noncontingent Reinforcement</p> <p>2 Article Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what is manipulated in the 3-term contingency when conducting an antecedent-based intervention Understand that all antecedent-based interventions begin with an evaluation Explain how the evaluation for an antecedent-based intervention determines the plan for that intervention Identify and explain the procedures for blending Identify and explain the procedures for fading (utensil or distance), and simultaneous presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mueller et al. (2004) Groff et al. (2014) <p><i>Suggested (not required) readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahearn (2003) 	<p>Article Presentation <i>(if it is your selected date)</i></p> <p>Lecture quiz</p> <p>POD</p>
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8		10.23.25		Midterm Exam	
9	10.30.25	<p>Treatment for Other Challenging Mealtime Behavior: Expulsion & Packing</p> <p>2 Article Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and define different types of bolus-placement methods Be able to describe how expulsion and packing affects mouth clean Identify and define different types of expels Identify and define different types of packing Understand how skill and motivation can contribute to expulsion and packing Be able to describe Nuk at presentation, Nuk redistribution, modified chin prompt, and reclined seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milnes et al. (2018) Ibañez et al. (2021) <p><i>Suggested (not required) readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubio et al. (2019) Wilkins et al. (2014) 	<p>Article Presentation <i>(if it is your selected date)</i></p> <p>Lecture quiz</p> <p>POD</p>

10	11.6.25	<p>Ethical Considerations and Alternative Feeding Treatment Approaches (e.g., mSOS)</p> <p>2 Article Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe why it is important to use function-based treatments Identify other commonly used approaches for treatment of feeding disorders Identify and describe the treatment for pediatric feeding disorders with the most empirical support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peterson et al. (2016) Tereshko et al. (2021) <p><i>Suggested (not required) readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addison et al. (2012) 	<p>Article Presentation <i>(if it is your selected date)</i></p> <p>Lecture quiz</p> <p>POD</p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define procedural fidelity Understand how procedural fidelity can impact treatment effects Understand how procedural fidelity impacts clinical evaluation of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachmeyer- Tee et al. 	

11	11.13.25	<p>Procedural Fidelity</p> <p>Caregiver Training</p> <p>Cultural Sensitivity</p> <p>2 Article Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> treatment protocols Understand how to measure procedural fidelity Understand why procedural fidelity and consistency are important when implementing behavioral protocols Identify and explain behavioral skills training (BST) Identify the importance of conducting parent training when treating feeding disorders 	<p>Lee et al. (2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beaulieu et al. (2019) <p><i>Suggested (not required) readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beaulieu & Jimenez-Gomez (2022) Tereshko et al. (2022) Bergmann et al. (2023) 	<p>Article Presentation <i>(if it is your selected date)</i></p> <p>Lecture quiz</p> <p>POD</p>
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12	11.20.25	Age-Typical Feeding Goals and progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to describe the typical progression of self-feeding and chewing (e.g., immature chewing by 6 months of age) • Identify and describe the main dependent variables for self-feeding and chewing protocols • Describe future directions for research in the areas of self-feeding and chewing • Understand the process involved with age-typical feeding (e.g., portion-based meal consumption, nutrition, generalization, maintenance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volkert et al. (2014) • Phipps et al. (2022) tongue lat. <p><i>Suggested (not required) readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivas et al. (2014) • 	<p>Article Presentation <i>(if it is your selected date)</i></p> <p>Lecture quiz</p> <p>POD</p>
		11.27.25	No Class- Thanksgiving Break		

13	12.4.25	Social validity 2 Article Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the primary components of social validity as it pertains to the assessment and treatment of pediatric feeding disorders Identify at least 2 ways to assess social validity during feeding treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phipps et al. (2022) Indices of happiness and unhappiness Taylor & Taylor (2022a) <p><i>Suggested (not required) reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taylor & Taylor (2022b) 	Lecture quiz POD Cultural Sensitivity Assignment (Activity 2) due in Canvas
14	12.11.24	Exam Prep and Review Cover any topics that are left to finalize 2 Article Presentations			Article Presentation <i>(if it is your selected date)</i>
			FINAL PAPER DUE ON CANVAS BY 12/21		

References for required and suggested readings:

- Bachmeyer, M. H., Piazza, C. C., Fredrick, L. D., Reed, G. K., Rivas, K. D., & Kadey, H. J. (2009). Functional analysis and treatment of multiply controlled inappropriate mealtime behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 42, 641-658.
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- Bachmeyer, M. H., Kirkwood, C. A., Criscito, A. B., Mauzy, C. R., & Berth, D. P. (2019). A comparison of functional analysis methods of inappropriate mealtime behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 52(3), 603-621. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.556>
- Kirkwood, C. K., Piazza, C. C., & Peterson, K. M. (2021). A comparison of function- and nonfunction-based extinction for inappropriate

mealtime behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 54(3). 928-945.

- Piazza, C. C., Patel, M. R., Gulotta, C. S., Sevin, B. M., & Layer, S. A. (2003). On the relative contributions of positive reinforcement and escape extinction in the treatment of food refusal. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 36, 309-324.
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- Peterson, K. M., Volkert, V. M., & Zeleny, J. (2015). Increasing self-drinking for children with feeding disorders. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.
- Addison, L. R., Piazza, C. C., Patel, M. R., Bachmeyer, M. H., Rivas, K. M., & Milnes, S. M. (2012). A comparison of sensory integrative and ABA therapies as treatment for pediatric feeding disorders. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 45, 455-471.
- Peterson, K. M., Piazza, C. C., & Volkert, V. M. (2016). Comparison of a modified-Sequential Oral Sensory approach to an applied behavior-analytic approach in the treatment of food selectivity in children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 49, 485-511.
- Tereshko, L., Weiss, M. J., & Olive, M. L. (2021). Ethical considerations of behavioral feeding interventions. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 14(1), 1157-1168. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-021-00559-7>
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children with feeding disorders. *Behavior Modification*, 38, 1-2

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Final Paper Topics

1. Etiology and Treatment of Feeding Difficulties Utilizing Behavior Analysis
2. A Comparison of Behavior Analytic Strategies to Treat Feeding Difficulties to Alternative Strategies
3. Training Strategies for Teaching Others Behavior Analytic Interventions
4. Teaching Independent Eating and Drinking
5. A Review of Antecedent Based Strategies for Treating Feeding Difficulties
6. The Role of Assessments for Treating Feeding Difficulties
7. Diagnoses of Feeding Difficulties Among Children and Adolescents
8. The Role of Nutrition in Treating Feeding Difficulties
9. A Review of Consequence Based Interventions for Treating Feeding Difficulties
10. The Role of the Multidisciplinary Team for Treating Feeding Difficulties
11. Behavior Analytic Treatments to Target Skill Based Behaviors