Learning Theory and Cognitive Behavioral Foundations
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Fall 2023

Instructor
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Course time and location:
Monday 5pm – 7:45pm
Room A317, GSAPP, Busch Campus

Course Objectives

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to the concepts, principles, and strategies of cognitive-behavioral and learning theories, especially as they apply to psychotherapy. This course provides the theoretical background and didactic material needed to begin to become proficient at CBT. The specific learning goals are listed below:

- To become familiar with several theories, techniques, and strategies that form the basis of most CBT approaches.
- To become fluent in generating, from a learning theory perspective and a cognitive theory perspective, explanations of human behaviors, through modeling, rehearsal, and shaping.
- To learn the prerequisite skills for learning how to conceptualize a clinical case formulation from a CBT standpoint.
- To learn the prerequisite skills for incorporating tools into therapy in order to evaluate clinical outcomes and progress, including the use of psychometrically valid measures.

Required Readings

Other required readings, in the form of journal or media articles, will be made available via Canvas, or searchable though Google Scholar or through the university library.

Recommended Reading (especially if content pertains to your cases)


*Treatments that Work* Series for specific disorder/problem: Oxford University Press [may be available for free at GSAPP]

**Grades**
Grading will be based on:

- 50% four written assignments (due 10/2; 10/16; 10/30; 11/20)
- 25% attendance and participation in class discussions
- 25% final paper (due 12/11)

**Course Requirements**
Attendance is important and refers to on-time presence in the classroom as well as “mindful” attention to the course (i.e., no cell phones or computer use). However, there may be some computer use for in-class activities. Grades will be affected and credit may not be given if more than two classes are missed (other than for observance of religious holidays). Please contact the instructor before class if you must be absent.

The final paper is a CBT case conceptualization and treatment plan for a CBT client whose details will be provided to you. The paper is due 12/11.

**Class Schedule of Required Readings and Activities (subject to change)**

**September 11th**  Course Overview and Introduction to Cognitive Behavioral Foundations
- Tolin, ch. 1

**September 18th** Learning Theory: Behavioral Foundations & Respondent Conditioning
- Tolin, ch. 2 and ch. 4
- Persons, ch. 3

**September 25th** Learning Theory: Operant Conditioning; Stimulus Control
- Tolin, ch. 8 and ch. 9
- Pryor, ch. 4 (available on Canvas)

**October 2nd** Behavioral Assessment
- Tolin, Chapter 6

**Assignment #1 Due**

**October 9th**  
**CBT Supervision & Cultural Competency**  

**October 16th**  
**Cognitive Foundations**  
- Tolin, Chapter 3  
- Persons, Chapter 2

**Assignment #2 Due**

**October 23th**  
**From Foundations to Practice: Getting Started in CBT Treatment**  
- Tolin, Part II intro and ch. 7

**October 30th**  
**From Foundations to Practice: Beginning Case Formulation**  
- Persons, ch. 1 – ch. 4 [skim]  
- Tolin, Chapter 5  


**Assignment #3 Due**

**November 6th**  
**CBT Treatment Planning: Identifying goals, targets, and developing treatment plan**  
- Persons, ch. 5 – ch. 7  

**November 13th**  
**Psychological Measurement of Outcomes: Ongoing Assessment Strategies**  
- Persons, ch. 9

PLUS: Listen to interview with Michael Lambert www.sscpweb.org/SciPrac

**November 20th**  
**Introduction to Cognitive Restructuring**
Assignment #4 Due

November 27th  Exposure Therapy
- Tolin, ch. 13

PLUS: Listen to interview with Michelle Craske www.sscpweb.org/SciPrac

December 4th  Transdiagnostic CBT: Unified Protocol for Emotional Disorders I
- Barlow et al., ch. 1- ch. 8

December 11th  Transdiagnostic CBT: Unified Protocol for Emotional Disorders II
- Barlow et al., ch. 13 – ch. 17

Final Paper Due

December 18th  Introduction to “Third Wave CBT”: Theoretical Foundations

IF TIME: Cognitive and behavior theory applications: Review/Special Topic/Make-up

Additional Resources in CBT and Evidence Based Treatments

Websites:
- [www.psychologicaltreatments.org](http://www.psychologicaltreatments.org)
- [https://effectivechildtherapy.org/](https://effectivechildtherapy.org/)

Up-to-date information, provided by the Society of Clinical Psychology and the Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, respectively, on evidence-based psychological treatments, including reference lists.

I strongly suggest you consider joining one more of these organizations.

Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)
Despite the name of the organization, it is much more than a group enthusiastic about cognitive behavior therapy. Rather, it is an organization of empirically minded scientist-professionals who have, for over 50 years, been concerned with establishing a science-based clinical psychology (and psychiatry, social work, and counseling psychology). Furthermore, ABCT is as concerned with the scientific study of psychopathology and assessment as it is with intervention, and as will quickly become evident in our course, behavior therapy...
encompasses much more than classical and operant conditioning. ABCT is a very student friendly organization, and the conference is a great mix of clinically oriented workshop and scientific presentations. Information on student membership in ABCT is available on the organization’s website, www.abct.org. Special Interest Groups are also listed and membership for SIGs is often very affordable.

It is easy and inexpensive to join the following groups as a student member and you do not need to be a member of APA. There is a listserv for all members and a separate one for students.

**Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology (SSCP) Section III of APA’s Division 12**
The general listserv has for several years been a forum for lively debate among both senior clinical/counseling psychologists and graduate students, though most of the exchanges tend to be among senior scientists. The opportunity to eavesdrop on the current thinking of some people whose names you will be encountering this semester and throughout your graduate career and thereafter is an incredible opportunity. Go to their website for more info: www.sscpweb.org/

**Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, APA Division 53**
The purpose of SCCAP is to encourage the development and advancement of clinical child and adolescent psychology through integration of its scientific and professional aspects. SCCAP promotes scientific inquiry, training, professional practice, and public policy in clinical child and adolescent psychology as a means of improving the welfare and mental health of children, youth, and families in the context of a diverse society. In the service of these goals, SCCAP promotes the general objectives of the American Psychological Association. [https://sccap53.org/](https://sccap53.org/)

**Grading Policy**

**Grading Policies:** Please use APA Style (7th Edition) for all written assignments. [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html)

Written assignments are due at the end of the due date and submitted via Canvas. Any assignment that is not submitted on its due date will be considered one day late, and one day will be added for each additional 24 hours until the assignment is submitted. A grade reduction of 10% per day will be given for late assignments. The quality of student writing, adherence to page requirements, and conformity with APA style guidelines will be considered in the grade. Please write in a formal (rather than conversational) manner. This is a professional sample of your writing, and your professional writing will be assessed in your grade. Review all written assignments to correct/address grammatical errors. In the case of a documented emergency, deadlines may be adjusted at the discretion of the instructor. Course grading follows criteria established by Rutgers University:

- **A = 90 - 100**
- **B+ = 85 – 89**
- **B = 80 – 84**
- **C = 70 – 79**
- **F = 0 – 59**

**Classroom Culture**

**Statement on Disabilities:** 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 to share with me. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

Statement on Academic Integrity: The University’s academic integrity policy, to which this class will adhere, can be reviewed at: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/. All suspected infractions of academic integrity will be referred to the GSAPP Deans Office who will consult with the Rutgers Office of Student Conduct regarding disciplinary action.

Names and Pronouns: Class rosters are provided with student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Person-First Language: Please use “Person first” language when writing and speaking about individuals with disabilities and/or special needs (see Disability Language and Etiquette website for further guidance. https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Disability Etiquette Guide.pdf).

Respect for Diversity: It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class is viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Competencies Addressed in the Course

Profession-Wide Competencies (PWC)

1.3: Critically interprets and applies empirical findings to address problems, make decisions, and enhance the social, behavioral, and/or academic functioning of children and youth.
2.3: Conducts self in an ethical manner across professional activities.
3.1: Displays an awareness of how personal bias and cultural history, attitudes, and biases affect understanding and interactions with people different from themselves.
3.2: Demonstrates knowledge of current theoretical and empirical models to support human diversity across core professional roles.
3.3: Demonstrates the ability to consider and integrate cultural and diversity concepts in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs, products, and services.
4.1: Behaves in ways that reflect the values and attitudes of psychology, including integrity, deportment, professional identity, accountability, lifelong learning, and concern for the welfare of others.
4.3: Engages in self-reflection and professional and personal growth activities to maintain and improve performance and professional effectiveness
5.1: Develops and maintains effective relationships with students, teachers, parents, other health service professionals, and other stakeholders in the provision of psychological services.
6.1: Selects and conducts psychological assessments that are multi-method and multisource, technically adequate, and relevant to service recipient needs and the goals of the assessment.
6.2: Interprets and uses assessment results that guide case conceptualization, classification, and recommendations while recognizing the multiple systems impacting student functioning.
6.4: Demonstrates current knowledge of diagnostic classification systems, adaptive and maladaptive behaviors, and the impact of client behaviors on functioning.

6.5: Demonstrates the ability to apply knowledge of functional and maladaptive behaviors to the assessment and/or diagnostic process.

7.2: Identifies and develops evidence-based interventions in classrooms, schools, and other service settings that are informed by the current scientific literature, assessment findings, diversity characteristics, and contextual variables.

7.3: Applies relevant literature and empirically-based principles to clinical decision making.

7.4: Modifies evidence-based approaches effectively when empirical data is lacking for a particular population, problem, or context.

7.5: Evaluates intervention effectiveness and adapts intervention goals and methods consistent with ongoing evaluation.

10.1: Demonstrates an understanding of the impact of multiple systems on student development and functioning.

10.3: Utilizes knowledge of systems to design, implement, and evaluate assessment, intervention, consultation and/or other professional services.

**Discipline-Specific Knowledge (DSK)**

**Advanced Integrative Knowledge of Basic Discipline-Specific Content Areas**, including affective, social, and developmental aspects of behavior.

**Research Methods**, including topics such as strengths, limitations, interpretation, and technical aspects of quantitative research designs, meta-analysis, and quasi-experimentation.