REHB 535
Behavioral Observation Methods and Assessment
Syllabus, Fall 2014

Instructor: Joel E. Ringdahl, Ph.D.               Location: Lawson 121
Offices: 335A Rehn Hall; 195 EDC               Time: Thursdays 1:00-3:50
Phones: 453-8295 (Rehn); 453-2331 (EDC)        Office Hrs: M 1:00-3:00; W 8:00-10:00; 12:00-2:00

Email: joelringdahl@siu.edu

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will focus on behavioral definitions, observational recording techniques, and issues of validity and reliability of measurement. Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Specify the components of and philosophical orientation underlying behavioral assessment as contrasted with traditional psychological assessment.
- Understand different types of assessment techniques, conditions under which each would be used, and the strengths and limitations associated with each.
- Recognize reliability and validity issues in behavioral assessment and methods for ensuring high degrees of each.
- Understand the rationale underlying various single subject designs.
- Recognize the different methods for direct observation of behavior, when each would be used, and the challenges presented by each.
- Be capable of using several methods for identifying potential reinforcers for clients or consumers.
- Be familiar with functional assessment and functional analysis procedures for assessing challenging behaviors.
- Recognize common function-based interventions.
- Be familiar with ethical considerations related to assessment of behavior and subsequent intervention.

Text & Assigned Readings:


I strongly advise you to purchase the 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association as well.

Additional supplemental readings are required, and are indicated with an “*” on the attached calendar. These readings are available on the course’s website on Desire 2 Learn or made
available through the Morris Library’s electronic reserves, or will be emailed to class participants.

It is strongly encouraged that you keep up with the reading assignments and complete each assignment on the due date shown on the attached calendar.

Emergency Procedures.

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT's website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Class Sessions:

Class attendance is expected at all times. This class will be presented as both lecture and seminar. Class participation is expected. It is also expected that students will have completed the assigned readings on the date on which that topic will be discussed.

Cell phones must be turned off during class and any use of lap-top computers for activities other than taking notes will lead to immediate dismissal.

Evaluations:

1. Quizzes: There will be twelve (12) 5-point quizzes held weekly beginning the second week of the class. Each quiz will cover the reading material for that particular day of class. Quiz format will largely be short/medium length responses, and quiz duration will be approximately 10 minutes. Quizzes will not be held on exam days. There will be no makeup quizzes (60 points).

2. Assignments: There will be 2 assessment assignments, each of which will be worth 50 points. Assignments will be on the following topics: (a) conducting, scoring, and interpreting an interview-based functional assessment, and (b) conducting, scoring, and interpreting two types of stimulus- or activities-preference assessments. For each assignment, an assessment report will be written up and turned in along with the raw data, and is to follow the format specified in class. Further directions for the assignments will be distributed in class. The assignments are due at
4:00 PM Central Time on the dates shown on the attached calendar. In addition, there will be a behavior program assignment. The goal of this assignment is to provide students with practice writing programs for individuals with challenging behavior. The assignment will be due at the end of the semester and is worth 25 points. Late assignments will not be accepted. (125 points).

3. Assessment & Observation Project: This project will require the student to establish an operational definition for a chosen target behavior and design an appropriate indirect and direct assessment. The project will require the student to justify his or her selection of observation system, method for establishing reliability of the dependent measure, and approach to controlling reactivity. Further directions for the project will be distributed in class. The due date is shown on the attached calendar. Late projects will not be accepted. (100 points).

4. Critical Evaluations: Two reviews, 20 points each, of data-based articles assigned as part of the class readings will be turned in. The critical evaluation will include a description of the purpose of the study, the target response, measure, experimental design, and results. Further directions for the critical evaluations will be distributed in class. These reviews are due on 10/17/2012 and 11/14/2012. (40 points).

5. Exams: Three exams, 100 points each, will be held that will be primarily essay-based in format. Makeup exams will not be allowed. (300 points).

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

- A = 625 - 559
- B = 558 - 496
- C = 495 - 434

Academic Dishonesty

Each student is responsible for making himself or herself aware of the policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog (pp. 44-46) that pertain to Acts of Academic Dishonesty. These policies cover such acts as plagiarism, preparing work for another student, cheating by any method or means, falsifying or manufacturing data, furnishing false information to a university official relative to academic matters, and soliciting, aiding, concealing, or attempting conduct in violation of this code. The student is also responsible for making himself or herself aware of the procedures applicable to cases of academic dishonesty as outlined in the Graduate Catalog (pp. 49-54), including jurisdiction at the department or college level, informal resolution, and formal disciplinary measures. A student must consult with the instructor if he or she has questions pertaining to academic dishonesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.
If you wish to drop this course, you must do so after the date designated by the university. A grade of Incomplete will be given under the conditions specified in the university catalog.

*The instructor is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented disabilities. It is the responsibility of students with documented disabilities to contact the instructor during the first week of class to discuss appropriate accommodations to ensure equity in grading, classroom experiences, and outside assignments. Documentation is to be provided and accommodations are to be arranged with Disability Support Services.*

**Additional Readings:** The following readings are required for class. I will have them available via D2L OR they will be emailed to you in pdf form.


**CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO MINOR CHANGES)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/19/2014</td>
<td>Introduction and Syllabus</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/26/2014</td>
<td>Basic Concepts, Selecting and Defining Behavior</td>
<td>Cooper et al. Chapters 2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/2/2014</td>
<td>Improving Quality of Measure, Interobserver Agreement</td>
<td>Cooper et al. Chapter 5; Kazdin (1977); Mudford et al. (2009); Mudford et al. (2009b); Watkins and Pacheco (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/9/2014</td>
<td>Constructing Graphs and Analyzing Data</td>
<td>Cooper et al. Chapters 6-7; Dixon et al. (2009); Kahng et al. (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/16/2014</td>
<td>Experimental Design</td>
<td>Cooper et al. Chapters 8-9; Fisher et al. Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/23/2014</td>
<td>Planning and Evaluating Research Unit Review</td>
<td>Cooper et al. Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30/2014</td>
<td>Exam: Unit 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/7/2014</td>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Behavioral Interviews and Indirect Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/14/2014</td>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/21/2014</td>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/28/2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>Descriptive Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/4/2014</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Exam: Unit 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11/2014</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/18/2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment of Problem Behavior: Functional Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment of Problem Behavior: Functional Analysis-Variations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ASSESSMENT/OBSERVATION PROJECT DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ASSESSMENT DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/25/2014</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Function-Based Interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Assignment/Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/2/2014</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Ethics Behavior Program Writing Unit Review ASSIGNMENT 2 (PREFERENCE/ACTIVITY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/9/2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unit 3 Exam BEHAVIOR PROGRAM DUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>