Course Foundation, Overview, and Purpose

This is a 3-credit graduate level course designed to provide you with a thorough understanding of a variety of issues that affect the well being of children, particularly children in the USA. It is not a course in child development per se, at least not of the sort typically found in psychology programs. Instead, it is a course primarily intended to familiarize you with the extent and nature of behavioral approaches to promote the well being of children in the settings they frequent. Specifically, the course will acquaint you with:

- An array of conditions associated with both typical and atypical child development that applied behavior analysis has benefitted.
- Strategies for assessing the capacities of children both individually and in groups, and for designing constructive behavioral interventions in those settings.
- The vast array of “players” concerned with child welfare, what each brings to the table and how to work cooperatively with them for the benefit of children.
- “Hot issues” at the intersection of behavior analysis and child welfare beyond current notions of “behavioral parent training”.

You will master the subject by reading assigned texts and original source material (peer-reviewed journal articles), completing practical exercises, attending closely to my presentations of projects and experiences with the subject matter, and participating in classroom discussions.

Office Hours:

We will be meeting regularly in class, but I am happy to meet at other times outside of those opportunities. I will have office hours immediately before class on Wednesday from 10am to 1pm, then again from 4pm-5pm or simply drop me an e-mail to schedule another time.
Class will meet face-to-face for approximately 3 hrs each week over the course of a 15-week semester. At each meeting we will review the readings, exercises and other assignments that are due at the time. I may present various experiments and cases, and solicit your experiences pertinent to the topic. Your attentive participation is encouraged (and is the basis for a percentage of your final grade).

In addition, Desire 2 Learn (D2L) has been established for you to access certain reading material, assignments, and supplementary material.

**Quizzes**

At each class meeting you can expect a quiz over the week’s assignment. The quiz may be administered at any time, i.e., at the start of, during, or end of class. It will typically be no more than a couple of short answer questions designed to insure that you have read and thought about the material. If you have done so, the quiz will not be a stressful event. In some cases, the quiz may be a “take home”.

**Exercises**

A series of exercises is planned and described at each point when that exercise is due. You will be responsible for only ONE exercise and you may work in groups of varying sizes, but preferably no more than two or three members, to complete it. When exercises are due, always prepare a PowerPoint (or similar) presentation and a written description of it in APA format. Each group need only prepare one PowerPoint presentation and written description for all members of the group.

**Course Project**

**FINAL COURSE PROJECTS** will involve both an oral presentation in class and the submission of a permanent product. Together these will constitute 40% of your grade. The requirements of these projects will be described in class. To encourage your steady development of your final project, various APPROXIMATIONS toward it are scheduled for submission over the course of the semester. These approximations will be graded as quizzes.

**Grading**

All assignments are graded on a simple 10-pt scale (easily converted to a percentage, if you prefer, by multiplying that score by 10). However, some types of assignments have greater weight in determining your final grade. Thus, grading is a weighted average of your scores on quizzes (weight of .25 or 25%), exercises (weight of .25 or 25%), final project (weight of .4 or 40%) and participation in class
discussion (weight of .1 or 10%). The algebra to determine your overall score is simple:

\[
\text{Overall Score} = .25(\text{Quiz Average}) + .25(\text{Exercise Average}) + .4 (\text{Final Project}) + .1 (\text{Class Participation Score})
\]

Multiply the Overall Score by 10 to get a Percentage. Example:

Quiz Average = 8.7; Exercise Average = 9.2; Final Project = 8.9; Class Participation Score = 9

\[.25(8.7) + .25(9.2) + .4(8.9) + .1(9) = 8.93 \text{ (rounds to 8.9 or 89%) = Overall Score}\]

Your final grade is assigned according to the familiar rubric:

A = ≥ 90%
B = 80-89%
C = 70- 79%
Lower grades available upon request

Inasmuch as quizzes and class discussion are critical to your grade, faithful attendance is in your best interest. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped to accommodate catastrophes.

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### Texts & Readings

Reading assignments will primarily come from published studies, a compilation of material I have gathered in connection with my work in child welfare, and other pertinent material. We will read all of the following texts:


Additional readings of source material (e.g., peer reviewed journal articles) are listed throughout the course itinerary, below. This material will be available on D2L.
Tentative Course Itinerary & Assignments

Week 1 (1/20/16):

- Topics
  - Course Overview

Week 2 (1/27/16):

- Topics
  - Why Study the Behavior of Infants and Young Children

- Readings


Week 3 (2/3/16):

- Topics
  - Developmental Milestones of the Typical Child (handout/D2L)

  - The Piccolo: Administration and Interpretation
Readings

29 Things Parents Can Do. Available on D2L

**Recommend start reading Hart & Risely**

**Exercise 1:** Be prepared to score the Piccolo in class

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**Week 4 (2/10/16):**

**Topics**

Early Language Development and The Importance of Parental Behavior

**Readings**


**Recommend start reading White Textbook**

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**Week 5 (2/17/16):**

**Topics**

Early Social Development and The Importance of Parental Behavior

**Readings**


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**Week 6 (2/24/16):**

**Topics**

Selected Behavioral Pediatric Problems: In- and Out-patient Treatment

**Readings**


Week 7 (3/2/16):

Topics
Beyond the Family: Design of Child-Care Environments

Readings


Exercise 3: Visit 2 day care centers. Describe the staffing and activity arrangements. Measure the percentage of child participation during lunch and at least one other activity that lasts 20 or more minutes. Graph your data in a manner that might help someone plan, design and evaluate the impact of these activities. Present the data in class.

Week 8 (3/9/16):

Topics
Beyond Parent Training: Family Preservation, Reunification and the Role of Contextually Valid Family Training

Readings


Exercise 4: What is a mandated reporter? What are the obligations of mandated reporters in Illinois and what is involved in fulfilling their obligations?

Project:
Submit Title/Topic of Your Final Project

Week 9 (3/23/16):

Topics
Beyond Parent Training: Family Preservation, Reunification and the Role of Contextually Valid Family Training
Readings


Week 10 (3/30/16):

**Topics:**

Preparing Young Children to Function in Public Settings: Social Behavior and Self Preservation

**Readings**


Week 11 (4/6/16):

Topics:

Children & School: Direct Instruction & Precision Teaching

Readings


**Exercise 5:** Interview the superintendent of an elementary school district to determine how decisions are made regarding the selection of instructional material for teaching beginning reading, math & language.

Project

**Submit Outline of Final Project’s Main Ideas and Key References**
**Week 12 (4/13/16):**

**Topics:**

Mental Health in Schools

**Readings:**


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**Week 13 (4/20/16):**

**Topics**

Reform of Education: PBIS

**Readings:**


**Exercise 6:** Interview a school superintendent who employs PBIS. Report on its applications and findings at that school.

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**Week 14 (4/27/16):**

**Topics**

Behavioral Intervention in Delinquency

**Readings:**


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**Week 15 (5/4/16):**

**Topics:**

Large Scale Reform and Intervention into the Lives of Children and Families

**Readings:**

**Week 16 (5/11/16)**

**FINAL PROJECTS**

Prepare a brief (no more than 10 minutes) PowerPoint presentation to share with the class. Also, submit an APA formatted paper to me on D2L by the designated deadline.