

Applied Behavior Analysis Courses Descriptions

Core Behavior Analysis Courses

ABA 500: Principles of Learning and Behavior Analysis

This course provides a graduate-level introduction to the key concepts, theories and experimental paradigms for studying learning and behavior in both humans and animals. Students will be introduced to the scientific study of learning with an emphasis on how behavior changes as a function of experience. Historical and current perspectives on a range of topics, including (but not limited to) classical conditioning, operant conditioning, innate behavior, and philosophical assumptions about behavior will be examined. Finally, how the basic learning principles are relevant to everyday behavior will be discussed. *3 credits*

ABA 501: Measurement and Research Methods in Behavior Analysis

This course is designed to teach students the logic of single-subject and small-N designs, which are often used to evaluate the efficacy of a behavioral treatment for individual clients. Students will learn reliable procedures for measuring behavior, various methods of displaying (graphing) behavior, and how to visually analyze displayed data. In addition, students will learn how to identify and develop an applied research question, conduct a literature search, and design a single-subject research study to answer the research question. Issues related to evidenced-based practice and ethics in research will also be discussed. *3 credits*

ABA 503: Behavior Analysis and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

This course will provide an overview of intellectual and developmental disabilities and the relation to behavior analysis. Students will gain a perspective on the history and changing perspectives of these disabilities. Both causal and contributing genetic and environmental factors for various conditions will be discussed. Students will examine a variety of disorders in terms of physical characteristics, brain changes, growth patterns, life expectancy, communication issues, health concerns, behavioral concerns, and treatment. Disabilities examined will include Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and learning disabilities. In addition, students will discuss a variety of current issues related to intellectual and developmental disabilities, including early intervention, educational placement, transitioning between life stages, response to intervention, medication use, and fad therapies. Finally, students will examine the behavior-analytic literature related to assessment and intervention for individuals with developmental disabilities. *3 credits*

ABA 600: Behavioral and Functional Assessment

In this course, students will focus on best practices when assessing target behaviors to both increase and decrease. Students will learn indirect assessment and direct observation methods, experimental (functional) analysis, and methods to assess stimulus preference and adaptive, social, and communication skills. In addition, students will learn how to assimilate information derived from these methods to arrive at hypotheses of the function of a behavior and how to select an intervention method based on assessment results while using evidence-based practices in behavior analysis. Finally, ethical issues related to functional assessment and undesired side-effects of intervention strategies will be discussed. *Prerequisites: ABA 500 (may be taken concurrently) or permission of the Program Director; 3 credits*

ABA 601: Behavior-Analytic Interventions I

This course is the first in a two-part series focusing on the application of behavioral principles in

applied settings. There will be an emphasis on applications to behavior of social importance across multiple domains, including autism spectrum disorders, developmental and intellectual disabilities, clinical psychology, job effectiveness, education, exercise and health, business, criminology, and other areas. Students will learn to identify, implement, and maintain effective behavioral interventions based on behavioral principles of reinforcement, punishment, extinction, stimulus control, and motivating operations. In addition, students will learn specific behavior-change procedures, including interventions based on antecedents, contingency contracts, group contingencies, and quantitative analyses. *Prerequisites: ABA 500 and ABA 501 (may be taken concurrently) or permission of the Program Director; 3 credits*

ABA 602: Behavior-Analytic Interventions II

This course is the second in a two-part series focusing on the application of behavioral principles in applied settings. There will be an emphasis on applications to behavior of social importance across multiple domains, including autism spectrum disorders, developmental and intellectual disabilities, clinical psychology, job effectiveness, education, exercise and health, business, criminology, and other areas. Students will learn to identify, implement, and maintain effective behavioral interventions based on stimulus control, simple and complex discriminations, errorless teaching procedures, and stimulus equivalence. In addition, students will learn specific behavior-change procedures, including self-management strategies, token economies, direct instruction, precision teaching, personalized systems of instruction, incidental teaching, functional communication training, and augmentative communication systems. Finally, students will learn to design, evaluate, and supervise the implementation of behavioral programs. *Prerequisites: ABA 601; 3 credits*

ABA 603: Ethical, Legal and Professional Topics in Behavior Analysis

This course will provide students with an understanding of legal, professional, and ethical issues in the delivery of behavior-analytic services and the practice of behavior-analytic research. Students will develop the ability to correctly apply ethical principles under various conditions that represent ethical and/or legal challenges related to assessing behavior; selection of treatment protocols; evaluating behavior change; collaborating with other professionals; and relationships with clients, agencies, and colleagues. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board's® (BACB) Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts will be used as the basis for ethical discussions. In addition, students will review the licensure rules and regulations guiding the practice of applied behavior analysis in Massachusetts. *3 credits*

Advanced Behavior Analysis Courses

ABA 604: Conceptual Foundations of Behavior Analysis

This course will provide an introduction to the philosophy of behavioral science known as radical behaviorism. Students will learn how to distinguish between different forms of behaviorism and how to differentiate between behavioral and non-behavioral explanations of complex human behavior. In addition, the potential impact of radical behaviorism on society will be discussed. Topics will include private events (such as thinking and feeling emotions), verbal behavior, rule-governed behavior, culture, and society. *Prerequisites: ABA 500; 3 credits*

ABA 605: The Experimental Analysis of Behavior

This course will provide students with a survey of research areas in the experimental analysis of behavior. Students will be exposed to a variety of topics in the basic literature related to reinforcement, behavior in transition, aversive control, stimulus control, and derived relations.

There will be an emphasis on methodological and conceptual issues, and students will discuss the translation of these topics to solve social problems. *Prerequisites: ABA 500 and ABA 501; 3 credits*

ABA 700: Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis I

All students will complete three semesters of practicum to obtain experience implementing behavior-analytic interventions. In the first semester of practicum, students will accumulate their first 350 hours of approved practicum experience. This experience will take place at the student's work or volunteer site. Individual supervision will be provided weekly at the student's experience site and group supervision will be provided weekly on campus. Each student will be required to complete a minimum of 25 hours per week of applied work in behavior analysis, and each student will receive at least 7.5% of their hours supervised per week. All supervision will be provided by Board Certified Behavior Analysts. Students should expect to complete a variety of behavior-analytic activities, including conducting behavioral assessments, writing behavior-change programs, implementing and monitoring skill-acquisition and behavior-reduction programs, and staff training and management. *Prerequisites: ABA 500; permission of the Program Director; 3 credits*

ABA 701: Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis II

All students will complete three semesters of practicum to obtain experience implementing behavior-analytic interventions. In the second semester of practicum, students will accumulate their second 350 hours of approved practicum experience. This experience will take place at the student's work or volunteer site. Individual supervision will be provided weekly at the student's experience site and group supervision will be provided weekly on campus. Each student will be required to complete a minimum of 25 hours per week of applied work in behavior analysis, and each student will receive at least 7.5% of their hours supervised per week. All supervision will be provided by Board Certified Behavior Analysts. Students should expect to complete a variety of behavior-analytic activities, including conducting behavioral assessments, writing behavior-change programs, implementing and monitoring skill-acquisition and behavior-reduction programs, and staff training and management. *Prerequisites: ABA 603; ABA 700; permission of the Program Director; 3 credits*

ABA 702: Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis III

All students will complete three semesters of practicum to obtain experience implementing behavior-analytic interventions. In the third semester of practicum, students will accumulate their final 350 hours of approved practicum experience. This experience will take place at the student's work or volunteer site. Individual supervision will be provided weekly at the student's experience site and group supervision will be provided weekly on campus. Each student will be required to complete a minimum of 25 hours per week of applied work in behavior analysis, and each student will receive at least 7.5% of their hours supervised per week. All supervision will be provided by Board Certified Behavior Analysts. Students should expect to complete a variety of behavior-analytic activities, including conducting behavioral assessments, writing behavior-change programs, implementing and monitoring skill-acquisition and behavior-reduction programs, and staff training and management. *Prerequisites: ABA 701; permission of the Program Director; 3 credits*

ABA 710: Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis I Group Supervision

Practicum is designed to allow students to develop skills related to the BACB Task List. This course provides group supervision according to the BACB Experience Standards, and students who take this class must also be enrolled in ABA 700 (in which they will receive individual

supervision). Students will work or volunteer at a site in which they can engage behavior-analytic activities with multiple clients. During group supervision, students should expect to complete a variety of behavior-analytic activities, including peer review of class assignments, role-plays of skill acquisition and behavior reduction procedures, presentations to refine ability to speak behaviorally, and review of Task List items to achieve fluency. *Prerequisites: ABA 500; permission of the Program Director; must be co-enrolled in ABA 700.*

ABA 804: Integrative Seminar in ABA

This course is designed to integrate conceptual, basic and applied topics related to behavior analysis. Students will focus on case conceptualization, behavioral assessment in a variety of environments, and development and evaluation of treatment options. Students will be encouraged to develop sophisticated, fluent, and in-depth understanding of behavioral topics. In addition, students will explore professional issues related to the practice of applied behavior analysis. *Prerequisites: Permission of the Program Director; 3 credits*

Interdisciplinary Courses

RCP 530 Introduction to Counseling Theory and Practice

This course examines the fundamental principles and techniques of the major counseling theories, including Person-centered, Cognitive-Behavioral, Gestalt, Reality, Psychoanalytic, and Behavior and their applicability to the role of the rehabilitation counselor. Students will have an opportunity to develop and practice fundamental counseling skills. Students will also examine common ethical issues that arise in the counseling relationship and the nature and importance of supervision in counseling. *3 credits*

PSY 502 Psychology of Development*

An examination of human growth and development during infancy through adolescence. Emphasis is placed on the relationship between theory, research, and application of knowledge in child development through a consideration of different theoretical perspectives (psychoanalytic, behavioral, cognitive-developmental), current research on selected topics (e.g., prenatal influences, perceptual and cognitive development, cross cultural differences in child rearing), and intervention programs designed to stimulate cognitive and social development in infants and young children. *Prerequisites: Six undergraduate courses in psychology. 3 credits*

SCP 545 Human Growth and Development through the Life Span*

This course provides in-depth study of human growth and development in the physical, cognitive, language, and social and emotional domains with an emphasis on both typical and atypical development. The positive contributions and limitations of various developmental theories and conceptual frameworks are examined. Throughout the course, students consider the relationship between development and the selection of appropriate educational services and interventions for children and adolescents with special needs. *3 credits*

**Students may choose to take PSY 502 or SCP 545 depending on the semester the course is taken*

Optional Courses

ABA 800: Pre-thesis Seminar in ABA

The optional thesis in applied behavior analysis shall consist of six credits distributed across

four consecutive semesters in which one credit is earned during each of the first two semesters and two credits are earned during each of the second two semesters. During the first semester, students will choose a thesis advisor, identify at least two committee members, select an applied research topic, and conduct a literature search. In the second semester, students will write an introduction, develop a research design, and secure committee and IRB approvals. In the third and fourth semesters, students will collect and analyze their data, write their thesis manuscript and defend their thesis to their committee members. *Prerequisites: ABA 500; ABA 501; Permission of the Program Director; 1 credit*

ABA 801: MA Thesis in ABA I

The optional thesis in applied behavior analysis shall consist of six credits distributed across four consecutive semesters in which one credit is earned during each of the first two semesters and two credits are earned during each of the second two semesters. During the first semester, students will choose a thesis advisor, identify at least two committee members, select an applied research topic, and conduct a literature search. In the second semester, students will write an introduction, develop a research design, and secure committee and IRB approvals. In the third and fourth semesters, students will collect and analyze their data, write their thesis manuscript and defend their thesis to their committee members. *Prerequisites: ABA 800; Permission of the Program Director; 1 credit*

ABA 802: MA Thesis in ABA II

The optional thesis in applied behavior analysis shall consist of six credits distributed across four consecutive semesters in which one credit is earned during each of the first two semesters and two credits are earned during each of the second two semesters. During the first semester, students will choose a thesis advisor, identify at least two committee members, select an applied research topic, and conduct a literature search. In the second semester, students will write an introduction, develop a research design, and secure committee and IRB approvals. In the third and fourth semesters, students will collect and analyze their data, write their thesis manuscript and defend their thesis to their committee members. *Prerequisites: Permission of the Program Director; 2 credits*

ABA 803: MA Thesis in ABA III

The optional thesis in applied behavior analysis shall consist of six credits distributed across four consecutive semesters in which one credit is earned during each of the first two semesters and two credits are earned during each of the second two semesters. During the first semester, students will choose a thesis advisor, identify at least two committee members, select an applied research topic, and conduct a literature search. In the second semester, students will write an introduction, develop a research design, and secure committee and IRB approvals. In the third and fourth semesters, students will collect and analyze their data, write their thesis manuscript and defend their thesis to their committee members. *Prerequisites: Permission of the Program Director; 2 credits*