



Applied Behavior Analysis

## Applied Behavior Analysis Course Descriptions

### **Applied 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. *Credits: 3*

#### **ABA 501: Measurement and Research Methods in Behavior Analysis**

This course is designed to teach students the logic of single-subject/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 graphing data, and how to visually analyze displayed data. In addition, students will learn how to critically evaluate applied, behavior-analytic research studies. Finally, students will learn to conduct a literature search, synthesize information across studies, and write a literature review. Issues related to evidenced-based practice and ethics in research will also be discussed. *Credits: 3*

#### **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; Credits: 3*

#### **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, education, exercise and health, organizational behavior, and

other areas. Students will learn to identify, create, and implement evidence-based, behavioral interventions. There will be an emphasis on aligning interventions with assessment data and the behavior-analytic literature within the framework of the field's ethics code. *Prerequisites: ABA 500 and ABA 501 (may be taken concurrently) or permission of the Program Director; Credits: 3*

### **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, education, exercise and health, organizational behavior, and other areas. Students will learn to identify, create, and implement evidence-based, behavioral interventions, including those based on stimulus control, errorless teaching procedures, communication, and self-management within the framework of the field's ethics code. There will be an emphasis on issues related to case management, intervention monitoring and efficacy, performance management, and development of supervision skills. *Prerequisites: ABA 601; Credits: 3*

### **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, as well as a framework for cultural responsiveness and cultural humility with respect to clients and colleagues. 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® current ethics code 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. *Credits: 3*

### **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; Credits: 3*

### **ABA 605: Experimental Analysis of Behavior**

This course will provide students with a survey of research areas in basic and translational behavior analysis. Students will be exposed to a variety of topics in the literature, including topics in Pavlovian learning, reinforcement, choice, treatment relapse, 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*

**ABA 700, ABA 701, and ABA 702 (Practicum)**

Practicum is designed to provide guidance to students as they work on developing skills related to behavior-analytic service delivery. This course provides supervision according to the BACB Experience Standards. Students will work or volunteer at a site in which they can engage behavior-analytic activities with multiple clients and at which a site supervisor is identified. During supervision meetings, students should expect to complete a variety of behavior-analytic activities, including behavioral case conceptualization; review and feedback on written behavior plans, data sheets, and reports; feedback on procedures implemented with clients; and role-plays of skill acquisition and behavior reduction procedures. Outside of supervision meetings, students should expect to spend a substantial amount of time working on unrestricted activities related to BACB fieldwork requirements in order to achieve competency. *Prerequisites: ABA 500; permission of the Program Director. Credits: 3*

**ABA 800: Thesis and Capstone Proposal Seminar**

This course provides graduate students with structured guidance to develop a behavior-analytic research-thesis or capstone-project proposal. Students will explore the distinction between the thesis and capstone pathways, select a project topic, secure a thesis advisor and project committee, and develop a formal project proposal. Emphasis is placed on identifying research questions derived from the behavior-analytic literature through a comprehensive literature review, designing methods based on behavior analysis, and crafting a clear, actionable plan. By the end of the course, students will have a completed proposal, and they will have secured approval from their committee to implement the project. *Prerequisites: ABA 500; ABA 501; Permission of the Program Director; Credits: 1*

**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 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; Credits: 3*

**Capstone Path Specific Courses****ABA 805: Capstone Seminar**

This course serves as a culminating experience for behavior analysis students completing a capstone project. Under the guidance of their research mentor, students will implement the project they proposed in ABA 800. Emphasis will be placed on application of behavior-analytic research methods, experimental design, and data analysis. By the end of the course, students will have produced a comprehensive final report and presentation that reflects their ability to synthesize and apply the behavior-analytic literature to answer a research question. All final projects must be approved by the student's project committee. *Prerequisites: ABA 800; Permission of the Program Director; Credits: 3*

## **Research Thesis Path Specific Courses**

### **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; Credits: 1*

### **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; Credits: 2*

### **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; Credits: 2*

## **Elective Options (pick 1):**

### **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. *Credits: 3*

### **ASD 600: Foundations and Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder**

This course focuses on the unique characteristics of autism spectrum disorders as related to communication, social/ emotional development, behavior, sensory processing, cognition and learning, as well as the comorbid conditions associated with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). It also provides an understanding of the differences between an educational and medical diagnosis of ASD and the definition under state and federal special education laws. *Credits: 3*

### **ASD 640: Collaboration and Coordination: Autism Spectrum Disorders**

This course focuses on building collaborative services for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) during school years. The collaborative services include developing an understanding and supporting the roles of other disciplines and professionals involved in the education of students with ASD and facilitating coordination and collaboration of these professionals. The course also highlights the importance of successful partnership with parents or caregiver, related service providers, and medical professionals to meet the unique needs of students with ASD in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. This course also discusses community partnerships and collaborative transition planning for students with ASD. *Credits: 3*

### **MOL 615: Leader as Communicator**

Leaders, whether formal or informal, use communication to carry out the work of an organization - often without realizing the nuances of their choices. This course addresses such complexities and presents how leaders can use effective communication to positively influence an organization. Students will examine foundational and modern theories of organizational communication and address relevant challenges facing leaders, such as workplace diversity, globalization, and technological developments. *Credits: 3*

### **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. Credits: 3*

### **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. *Credits: 3*

### **RES 850: Resonant Leadership and Supervision**

This course focuses on the development of emotionally intelligent, effective leadership skills for professionals in the helping fields. The course highlights the theoretical underpinnings of emotional intelligence and integrates these principles into the leadership role. The course will cover the practical application of self-awareness assessments and exercises to enhance leadership capacities and to foster the development of leadership ability. Skilled helping professionals often find themselves in leadership and supervisory roles with limited experience and training. This course will build upon the professionals' core set of helping skills with strategies that produce a self-aware, composed, focused, energized, empathic, motivated and collaborative leadership style. *Credits: 3*

### **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. *Credits: 3*

### **SED 563: Developmental Pathways and Challenges**

This course provides a comprehensive examination of human growth and development of children and adolescents in the physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional domains with an emphasis on both typical and atypical development. This course assists graduate students to better understand the relationships between developmental challenges and their effects on learning, thereby enabling them to examine and implement effective instructional approaches and interventions with critical appreciation for children and adolescents with special needs. *Credits: 3*

### **SED 568: Behavioral Assessment and Interventions**

Students in this course will learn the effective use of behavioral assessment and intervention in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner in inclusive and special education classrooms. Students will learn to administer and interpret the results of a functional behavioral assessment. They will also learn to use these results to identify, design, implement, and evaluate interventions (i.e. behavior support plans), including monitoring progress and ensuring maintenance and generalization across settings. Emphasis will be placed on individualized behavior support systems and the use of behavior management principles through the frameworks of applied behavior analysis (ABA), positive behavior supports (PBS), and practices with an evidence-base from peer-reviewed research. Additionally, students will understand the supporting roles of other disciplines and professionals, including the importance of collaboration with parents to meet the unique needs of the student in the least restrictive environment. *Credits: 3*