

General Parameters and Procedures for Courses from The International Behaviorology Institute

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Abstract: To ensure the effective dissemination of the natural science of behavior, The International Behaviorology Institute (TIBI) provides a wide range of courses in behaviorology. Since many new behaviorology textbooks have become available in recent years (see the books page of www.behaviorology.org), an effort is underway to update all of the TIBI syllabi. Past iterations of the syllabi for the courses that TIBI offers (e.g., see Ledoux, 2005) incorporated essentially the same parameters and procedures into each course syllabus repetitively. (See the Syllabus Directory, in the latest issue of *Journal of Behaviorology*, to find the latest syllabus for each course.) For this update effort, all of the parameters and procedures—applicable to each course—appear together in this one article, so that the syllabus for each course will only contain course-specific information. Some syllabi in this update have course numbers that differ from those used in past versions of their syllabi. These changes make the course numbers consistent with the numbers that appeared in the summary of 25 years of experience in behaviorology curricular courses and resources that Stephen Ledoux published (Ledoux, 2015).

Courses for TIBI maintain high standards in behaviorological content and grade requirements. These courses have been developed to be equivalent to or exceed corresponding university courses of study in depth, breadth, and grading standards.

Anyone under contingencies to participate in an uncompromised, high-standard, and discipline-comprehensive education in behaviorology is invited to partake in the educational opportunities provided directly through TIBI.

Three Repertoire—Expanding Methods

Students can work their way through TIBI courses under three different sets of contingencies.

Option 1. Self-Directed Study

On their own schedule, students may follow the most recently published course syllabus, along with the required course materials, working through the coursework without an assigned professor, or evaluation, or any formal

academic credit. This option, which leaves the student to complete the coursework outlined in the syllabus, and is free, would be suitable for anyone who lacks a need for formal academic credit (TIBI or university) but who is under contingencies to expand their repertoire on a course topic. Access to a professor and formal evaluation allows for a much fuller assurance of proficiency with course contents and, where this is sufficiently reinforcing, option 2 or 3 is available to the student.

Option 2. TIBI Academic Credit

In this option, students earn TIBI academic credit for their study of course topics. After receiving the appropriate tuition fee, TIBI assigns the student a professor to provide guidance, feedback, and an assessment of their coursework efforts and products.

This objectively ensures proficiency with respect to the course content. Visit www.behaviorology.org or contact TIBI for available courses, tuition costs, and syllabi. For

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students that require university academic credit, option 3 is appropriate.

Option 3. University Academic Credit

Students may also study TIBI courses for university academic credit. Students following this option would work through an accredited institution of higher education that offers courses equivalent to TIBI courses. The International Behaviorology Institute accepts university academic credit, for an equivalent course, toward TIBI academic credit for TIBI certificates; TIBI accepts A and B level grades from equivalent university courses. C and D grades obtained in university courses can be remediated through TIBI for TIBI academic credit (a possibility about which TIBI can provide more information, on an individual basis, as the need arises).

The Shaping Model of Education

Effective education requires appropriately arranged interaction between the student and an appropriate set of contingencies associated with the course content. Courses and programs make these contingencies available to students; TIBI courses are grounded in the “shaping model of education,” which is informed by behaviorological science (rather than the “presentation model of education” which is informed by psychology).

In the presentation model of education, teaching involves mostly talking and “learning” is seen mostly as listening. In the shaping model of education, teaching is the scientifically grounded design, arrangement, and application of educational content, methods, and contingencies presented in ways that generate and maintain incrementally small, but continuously accumulating behaviors, the short and long range consequences of which are successful in producing an ever wider range of effective responding by the student.

Distance Format

The International Behaviorology Institute endeavors to eliminate as many barriers to effective, high-quality education as possible by

designing and providing its courses in a flexible distance format, thereby making behaviorology courses available to a wide range of people in a wide range of circumstances. The expansion of one’s repertoire of behavior with respect to course content does not require face-to-face contact between students and their professor in a classroom environment. Effective conditioning requires specific kinds of interaction between the student and the course content. The course material and the instruction parameters prompt and reinforce appropriate responding in an accumulating expansion of the student’s repertoire as per the shaping model of education. The distance format provides the student with the appropriate course content, as well as the appropriate instructions for interacting with that content in a manner that ensures effective conditioning and demonstration of the appropriate proficiencies. Interaction between the student and professor is also established in a manner that allows a wide range of students to partake of the courses.

Student–Professor Interaction

Interaction between students and their professor is flexible, ensuring the most effective and widely available education in behaviorology. Student–professor interaction may take place via phone or email, or in some cases, by regular postal mail. Each student’s coursework is submitted to their professor, and returned to them with their professor’s feedback via any written method that provides a hardcopy or electronic record.

Evaluation and Grading Policy

Each student’s work is reviewed and grades are assigned according to the quality of the work. Each student is required to produce academic products that (a) demonstrate fluency with respect to the course content and ensures (b) that all of the course objectives have been met. Within a given coursework project, an “A” grade indicates that at least 90% of the component coursework was achieved with fluency; a “B” grade indicates that

between 80% and 89% of the component coursework was achieved with fluency. The student's final grade for a course is the average of all of the student's completed coursework project grades.

Each student is required to earn an A or B level grade ($\geq 80\%$) on *every* assigned "coursework project." For example, completing a set of study questions for a course text is considered a "coursework project" as would be each of any essay projects assigned to the student. The student is not required to earn an A or B on every chapter or every study question, but must earn this minimum grade level in the component of the course referred to as a "coursework project" as a whole. Should any inadequacies become apparent, as reflected by a grade lower than B, the professor may require resubmission of certain coursework as part of the fluency shaping and remediation process, but they may also provide tests or quizzes, either orally or in writing, or further assignment tasks until the products of the remediation demonstrate the student's comprehension of and fluency with respect to that content. The ultimate requirement of evaluation is to ensure that the student has objectively demonstrated fluency with respect to each course objective. Professors typically provide up to three remediation approximations before the grade is finalized for the student's work product. Students receiving an inadequate final grade at this time will be deemed to have failed the course as a whole. Students must complete all assigned course projects within the course and all components of each project.

Technical Requirements

Student can complete most TIBI courses without access to a computer by completing the assignments in writing and mailing them to their professor through the postal service. However, students with access to a computer and the internet may communicate with their professor via email or videocalling, and with a scanner, submit handwritten assignments in PDF format.

Obtaining Required Materials

Many of the required materials for TIBI courses are available through the TIBI website at www.behaviorology.org. Many are also available from the following sources:

- Direct Book Services at: www.dogwise.com
- Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies at: www.behavior.org/store.php
- B. F. Skinner Foundation at: www.bfskinner.org
- P & T Ink at: www.parentrx.com

Alternatively, many of the materials are available from major book retailers such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

If students have any questions or concerns about obtaining a particular resource, they should contact TIBI through www.behaviorology.org for guidance.

Using Study-Question Books

Many courses require the student to work through study-question books. Most study-question books start with a section entitled "To the Student and Teacher." *Students must read this section first!* It explains how to complete the study questions successfully.

Unless specifically instructed otherwise, students are required to write out their answers in longhand. This requirement is due to the fact that this type of verbal response usually brings about more effective conditioning than merely saying or typing the answer. As taught in another, advanced behaviorology class on verbal behavior, writing the answer in longhand involves both point-to-point correspondence and formal similarity between the stimuli and the response products of the answer.

Since students must write out their answers directly in their study question books, each student must have their own study question books. To ensure that all students meet this requirement, students are required to fill out the original ownership form provided at the back of each study questions book and send it to their professor by regular postal mail. Students may send in their ownership form upon beginning their course or send it along

with the first set of coursework documents they submit for evaluation. Students may send photocopies of their work to their professor by regular postal mail or as scanned attachments to emails. If the scanning option is chosen, the student must scan all of the pages of their coursework into a single document formatted as a PDF file. Each scanned submission must be less than 10 MB. If a document exceeds 10 MB, then it can be separated into parts that meet the 10 MB restriction. Only the PDF format is acceptable. It is vitally important that the student writes legibly and includes their full name on each submission. In order to ensure against loss, students should retain all originals of their work. By retaining the originals and providing their professors with exact copies of their work, students and professors are easily able to communicate about the student's coursework. The specific course assignments are described in each specific course syllabus. Once enrolled, the student's assigned professor will provide the required mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.

Pace and Time Management

The usual higher education workload expectation for a course is about 150 hours. (The typical face-to-face course features about 50 in-class contact hours with the university expecting about 100 more hours of additional study at an average rate of about two hours out of class for each hour in class.) This can be accomplished at rates ranging from about 50 hours per week over three weeks to about 10 hours per week over the typical 15 weeks of a semester. Of course, some students may take a little less than 150 hours, while others may take more than 150 hours to complete the work to the same acceptable and required standard. Students are encouraged to work through the assignments as rapidly as their schedules allow. In order to be successful, students must exercise self-management skills by starting immediately and keeping up an appropriate, reasonable and steady pace.

Students should work their way through the course by reading and studying the texts

and/or audiovisual materials and sending in their completed coursework for each chapter or assignment *as they complete it* (i.e., not all at once after many weeks of silence). Because all of the coursework is set forth in the course syllabus calendar, due dates are automatically assigned. Professors will *not* remind students of their coursework due dates. Students are respected as adult professionals and so are required to manage their time and follow through independently. Students need to set an appropriate pace for themselves and adhere to it so that they can complete and submit their assignments to their professor in a timely manner. This guideline will help facilitate success. Students generally have 15 weeks, from the time they receive their professor assignment, to complete and submit their coursework to their professor. Coursework mailed through the postal service must be postmarked before the due date. If unforeseen and sufficiently important circumstances take the student away from their studies, students may request an extension from their professor *before* the due date. At the professor's discretion, students may be offered extra time (e.g., one extra week) to complete and submit their assigned coursework.

These general parameters and procedures apply to all of the courses that TIBI offers. As such they constitute a part of the syllabus for each TIBI course.

References

- Ledoux, S. F. (2005). TIBI online syllabus for BEHG 425: Non-Coercive Classroom Management and Preventing School Violence. *Behaviorology Today*, 8 (1), 41-46.
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