

The International Behaviorology Institute Syllabus for BEHG 54I Advanced Verbal Behavior

James O’Heare

This syllabus provides course-specific information for a course that The International Behaviorology Institute (TIBI) offers. For guidance on enrolling, procuring required materials, and working through courses, as well as general school related information, see “General parameters and procedures for courses from The International Behaviorology Institute” available online at www.behaviorology.org or in the Spring 2015 issue (Volume 18, Number 2) of *Journal of Behaviorology*. Ledoux (2015) provided the core material for the course description. Also, this TIBI course, number, and syllabus evolved from a previous iteration of this course (see Ledoux, 2005).

Course Title: BEHG 54I Advanced Verbal Behavior

Credits: 3 TIBI credits

Prerequisites: BEHG 340 Introduction to Verbal Behavior

Course Format: Distance (online and offline options)

Time Frame: Commences upon enrollment. Self-paced within specified limits (estimated 150 hours; 3–15 weeks)

Professor: Assigned upon enrollment, with contact information

Required Resources

Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal Behavior*. New York: Appleton–Century–Crofts. Reprinted, 1992, Cambridge, MA: The B. F. Skinner Foundation.

(In progress). *Study Questions for Skinner’s Verbal Behavior*. Ottawa, Canada: BehaveTech Publishing.

Chomsky, N. (1959). Review of B. F. Skinner’s *Verbal Behavior*. *Language*, 35, 26–58. Available at <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/1967----.htm> or https://chomsky.info/1967____/ or <http://cogprints.org/1148/1/chomsky.htm>

MacCorquodale, K. (1970). On Chomsky’s review of Skinner’s *Verbal Behavior*. *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 13 (1), 83–99. Available at <http://www.behavior.org/resources/324.pdf>

Course Description

BEHG 54I Advanced Verbal Behavior, based on the principles and practices of the natural science of behavior, takes students through the full range and depth of verbal behavior analysis especially as presented by B. F. Skinner in his original book on the topic. It also takes the student through the most notable critique of Skinner’s work on verbal behavior and through the most notable response to that critique, providing the student with a comprehensive exposure to the topic of verbal behavior, studied from a natural science perspective. With the textbook featuring extensive examples, applications to literature concerns, and detailed explanations of exceptions, ambiguities, controversies, and implications (all with further comprehensive sets of examples) this course covers five areas:

- ❧ The functional analysis of verbal behavior (including the unit of verbal behavior, vocal behavior, the listener, and the verbal episode);
- ❧ Basic variables controlling verbal behavior (including the audience relation and those that produce the elementary verbal operants of mands, tacts, etc.);
- ❧ Multiple variables controlling verbal behavior (including multiple audiences, contingencies, stimuli, formal and thematic variables, supplementary stimulation, fragments, and blends);
- ❧ The manipulation of verbal behavior (including autoclitics, grammar, syntax, and composition); and
- ❧ The production of verbal behavior (including self-editing, scientific and logical verbal behavior, and thinking).

Course Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to expand the student’s repertoire of behavior measurably in relevant areas of behaviorological course content. The student will:

- ❧ Compare the behaviorological perspective on behavior with the traditional perspective;
- ❧ Define verbal behavior and describe the scope of verbal behavior beyond simply vocal behavior;
- ❧ Describe the basic units of verbal behavior;
- ❧ Analyze independent variables and behavior-controlling processes;
- ❧ Analyze the difference between the role of the speaker (i.e., verbalizer) and the listener (i.e., mediator);
- ❧ Define and differentiate among the elementary verbal operant relations;

- ✦ Analyze contingencies involving simple and complex verbal behaviors;
- ✦ Define abstractions;
- ✦ Explain the problems of “meaning” and “referents”;
- ✦ Differentiate between overt and covert (i.e., “private”) behavior and explain how covert verbal behavior functions as verbal behavior;
- ✦ Discuss the role of the audience in verbal behavior including the speaker acting also as the audience;
- ✦ Define and differentiate between the six types of verbal operant relations;
- ✦ Discuss dynamic properties in operant verbal relations;
- ✦ Explain the role of emotional behaviors and other motivating operations in verbal operant relations;
- ✦ Describe the multiple causation of verbal behavior and analyze these complexities;
- ✦ Explain supplementary stimulation in complex behavioral episodes;
- ✦ Define and relate “understanding”;
- ✦ Explain fragmentary and distorted verbal responses in terms of operant processes including the multiple causation of the behavior and recombination;
- ✦ Analyze grammar and syntax as autoclitic processes;
- ✦ Describe composition and self-editing behaviors and their effects;
- ✦ Discuss instruction and knowledge in terms of the conditioning of verbal operant relations;
- ✦ Discuss logical and scientific verbal behaviors; and
- ✦ Define and discuss thinking as verbal behavior.

Written Assignment

The student will previously have covered the verbal behavior chapter (Chapter 20) of Ledoux, 2014, as well as all of Peterson and Ledoux, 2014. The student may also have already covered the verbal behavior chapter (Chapter 26) of Fraley, 2008. Now, having studied Skinner’s *Verbal Behavior* in depth, and having then read Chomsky’s critique and MacCorquodale’s reply, the student is well prepared, with careful consideration of their “debate,” to evaluate the relative merits of these two reviews.









Write an essay, summarizing and evaluating the relative merits of the differing positions of those two review authors. The paper should be no fewer than five pages and no more than ten pages, double spaced with one-inch margins, not including any front matter pages or references. This paper should follow all appropriate guidelines for graduate level papers, including being

consistent with the formatting, style, and usage guidelines followed in the *Journal of Behaviorology* (e.g., see the “submission” Guidelines in any recent issue).

Assignment Sequence & Time Management

The following checklist provides students with the sequence in which the assignments are to be completed with pacing to fit into the 15-week semester time frame. Progressing more slowly than this schedule, assignments could easily get backed up to the point where insufficient time remains to complete them in a satisfactory manner. Students may use this sample schedule to help ensure that they remain on track. We estimate that each weekly assignment load will take approximately 9–10 hours to work through, assuming it takes 150 hours to work through all of the material. Students should expect and plan to put in at least 10 hours per week and use that to gauge whether they will need more or less time in the weeks to come. Students may check the box next to each assignment as they complete and submit it.

Check	Week	Resource	Component
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<i>Verbal Behavior</i> and related Study Questions (SQs)	<i>Both Introductions & Preface</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<i>Verbal Behavior</i> and related SQs	<i>Chapters 1–2</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<i>Verbal Behavior</i> and related SQs	<i>Chapters 3–4</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<i>Verbal Behavior</i> and related SQs	<i>Chapter 5</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<i>Verbal Behavior</i> and related SQs	<i>Chapters 6–7</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<i>Verbal Behavior</i> and related SQs	<i>Chapters 8–9</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<i>Verbal Behavior</i> and related SQs	<i>Chapters 10–11</i>

	8	Verbal Behavior and related SQs	Chapters 12–13
	9	Verbal Behavior and related SQs	Chapters 14–15
	10	Verbal Behavior and related SQs	Chapters 16–17
	11	Verbal Behavior and related SQs	Chapters 18–19
	12	Verbal Behavior and related SQs	Epilogues & Appendix
	13	Chomsky article Written assignment	All Begin Outline
	14	MacCorquodale article Written assignment continued	All Organize & draft
	15	Written Assignment continued	Final Product

Please contact TIBI at www.behaviorology.org with any questions about the content of this syllabus or the *General Parameters & Procedures for Courses from The International Behaviorology Institute*.

References

- Fraley, L. E. (2008). *General Behaviorology: The Natural Science of Human Behavior*. Canton, NY: ABCs.
- Ledoux, S. F. (2005). TIBI online syllabus for BEHG 475 Verbal Behavior II. *Behaviorology Today*, 8 (1), 46–50.
- Ledoux, S. F. (2014). *Running Out of Time—Introducing Behaviorology to Help Solve Global Problems*. Ottawa, Canada: BehaveTech Publishing.
- Ledoux, S. F. (2015). Appendix 3 Addendum—Curricular courses and resources after 25 years (1990–2015). In S. F. Ledoux. *Origins and Components of Behaviorology—Third Edition* (pp. 314–326). Ottawa, Canada: BehaveTech Publishing.
- Peterson, N. & Ledoux, S. F. (2014). *An Introduction to Verbal Behavior—Second*. Canton, NY: ABCs. & &