San José State University
Department of Psychology
PSYC 155.80 Human Learning
Spring, 2026

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Steven Del Chiaro
Office Location:	Zoom
Email:	Use canvas email
Office Hours:	Mondays, 6:00pm -7:00pm Other office hours will be announced soon. Also, make appointment via canvas email
Class Days/Time:	Asynchronous
Classroom:	Online/Canvas
Teaching Assistant:	Carlos Castaneda

Course Format

This course will be instructed in asynchronous format. We will be online for course orientation and drop-in hours Wednesday evenings.

Course Website

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. ALL assignments are assigned and turned into Canvas. You must be able to upload .doc or pdf. documents. Students are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any updates.

Logging Into Canvas

Canvas Login URL: https://sjsu.instructure.com/ . Please note that it should NOT have the "www" at the start of the URL like many other websites. All students must first set up their SJSUOne account before accessing Canvas. To do so, go to http://its.sjsu.edu/services/sjsuone/ . The **Username for Canvas** then is your 9 digit SID or Employee ID and your PW is the one you chose when you established your SJSUOne account. You will see the courses you taking (assuming the instructor is using Canvas).

Further Assistance with Canvas
Students should go first to http://guides.instructure.com/m/4212 with problems and then to the University Help Desk for Canvas problems, including logging in (http://www.sjsu.edu/helpdesk/).

Course Description
Through learning, humans and animals share a capacity to adapt to ever changing demands in the environment. Attempts to understand these processes form a cornerstone of experimental psychology. Theories from this basic research have contributed to applications and further theory development in many other areas of psychology (e.g. clinical, social and education). PSYC 155 is an introduction to the study of learning and behavior and focuses on the Behavioral Perspective as a way of improving our understanding of human behavior and how it is shaped.

The course will focus on two types of learning: Classical and Operant conditioning. Students can have a life-changing experience in this course, because it provides the basis for new ways of approaching common life challenges such as

disciplining children, maintaining positive marriages and other relationships, and procrastination (to name just a few). The material is intellectually challenging at times, but well worth the effort required to learn to think like a Behaviorist!

Learning Outcomes
The primary goal of this course will be to help you develop an understanding of the major themes, issues, and methods recognized within the psychology of learning. The aim of this course is to provide an understanding of the basic principles of the learning process. You will discover the learning processes that allow us to know how and when to act to obtain desired pleasurable aspects of our environment and to avoid unwanted unpleasant ones.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)
The primary goal of this course will be to help you develop an understanding of the major themes, issues, and methods recognized within the psychology of learning. The aim of this course is to provide an understanding of the basic principles of the learning process. You will discover the learning processes that allow us to know how and when to act in order to obtain desired pleasurable aspects of our environment and to avoid unwanted unpleasant ones.

Competencies and Performance Indicators
The competencies listed below shall be demonstrated and assessed through class discussion, exams (comprised of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions) and simulation lab reports.
1. Understand the science of learning.
    a. Demonstrate an appreciation of the empirical foundation of the study of learning.
    b. Be familiar with research techniques and findings that illustrate fundamental learning concepts.
2. Differentiate between various theories of learning and memory.
    a. Be able to understand and differentiate between theories.
    b. Be able to cite evidence supporting the views of major theorists.
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply the concepts learned in the course to concrete examples:
    a. Be able to differentiate and explain learning concepts using your self-change project.
    b. Be able to apply learning principles to real world phenomena.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)
Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements…

PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology. (test, quizzes, paper)

PLO2 – Research Methods in Psychology – Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations. (paper)

PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology – Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes. (paper)

PLO4 – Application of Psychology – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues. (tests, paper)

PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society. (paper)

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Will go over textbook in the posted video on how to get the book. You must get the book through Cengage because we need the Learning Management System (LMS). It is not possible to get the LMS without the eBook.

Library Liaison

Bailey, Christa
Phone: 408-808-2422
Email: christa.bailey@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments - Use Canvas Homepage to see assignments and due/dates times
San José State University courses are designed with the expectation that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit, including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and studying. Additional information on student workload expectations can be found in University Policy S12-3. See Canvas Assignments for all course assignments, instructions, due dates, and grading details.

Syllabus Quiz (1 point)
This short quiz checks your understanding of key course policies, expectations, deadlines, and procedures outlined in the PSYC 155 syllabus. It also serves to verify active participation at the start of the semester. The quiz is open note, based directly on the syllabus, and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete in one sitting. All instructions and due dates are posted in Canvas. Students who do not complete the quiz by the Canvas due date may be dropped from the course.

Respondus LockDown Browser Practice Quiz (1 point)
This required practice quiz ensures that you can successfully access and use Respondus LockDown Browser before taking a graded exam. The quiz is low-stakes, worth 1 point, and is intended only to verify technical readiness. Completion is required prior to the first exam. Instructions and access details are posted in Canvas.

Classical and Operant Conditioning Video Worksheet (10 points)
You are required to watch the Classical and Operant Conditioning video located in the Modules section of Canvas and complete the accompanying worksheet. This assignment reinforces core learning principles and prepares you for later quizzes and exams. The worksheet must be completed individually and submitted as instructed in Canvas.

Classical Conditioning Exercise (10 points)
This assignment assesses your understanding of classical conditioning concepts from Chapter 3. Review the chapter video and supporting materials in the module before beginning. You will identify the components of classical conditioning and describe the three phases of learning using complete sentences, clearly distinguishing between conditioned and unconditioned elements. The completed assignment must be submitted in its entirety as a single PDF. See Canvas for full instructions and due dates.

Operant Conditioning Quiz (10 points)
This quiz evaluates your ability to apply operant conditioning principles from Chapter 6. Before completing the quiz, review the chapter videos and the Box of Contingent Events provided in the module. For each scenario, you will determine whether a stimulus is applied or removed, whether the behavior increases or decreases, and identify the correct type of operant conditioning. Access details and due dates are available in Canvas.

Behavioral TED Talk Analysis and Reflection (10 points each)
You will watch and analyze five instructor-selected TED Talks related to behavior, learning, and applied psychology. These reflections are designed to build critical thinking, listening, and analytic skills by connecting course concepts to real-world examples. Assignment prompts, submission instructions, and grading criteria are posted in Canvas.

Exams (3 exams, 100 points each)
There are three exams administered through Canvas using Respondus LockDown Browser. Exams are multiple-choice and draw from the textbook, lectures, videos, and course materials. Each exam is available during a designated time window listed in the Canvas syllabus, and you will have 50 minutes to complete the exam once you begin. No make-up exams are offered.

LMS Chapter Assignments (5 points per chapter, 13 chapters)
You are required to complete assigned Learning Management System (LMS) chapter assignments through Canvas by accessing the Cengage link in the course navigation. These assignments are graded based on completion and mastery of chapter content. There are no time limits, but assignments must be completed during the assigned window. No make-ups are allowed under any circumstances. You will complete LMS assignments for the chapters listed in the syllabus.

Self-Change Project (90 points total)
The Self-Change Project is a semester-long applied assignment in which you use principles of learning and behavior change to modify a real, everyday behavior of your own. Using operant conditioning and behaviorist theory, you will identify a specific behavior to increase or decrease, systematically measure it, design and implement a behavior change plan, and evaluate the results.

You will begin by defining a measurable target behavior and collecting a one-week baseline without attempting change. You will then design a behavior modification intervention using reinforcement, and when appropriate punishment, grounded in course concepts such as the Premack Principle, stimulus control, and contingency management. After implementing the intervention for one week, you will analyze behavioral data, graph your results, and reflect on outcomes, confounds, and limitations.

The final product is a formal APA-style paper that includes an introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion, supported by peer-reviewed research and behavioral data. The emphasis is on careful measurement, thoughtful application of theory, and clear scientific writing rather than perfect behavior change outcomes.

The Self-Change Project is worth 90 total points. You will submit two required low-stakes components to support your progress: Self-Change Draft 1 (5 points) and the Final Paper Rough Draft (5 points). Full instructions, rubrics, and timelines are available in the Behavior Change Project module on Canvas.

All assignments submitted on Canvas MUST be in PDF format.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the grading table:

Syllabus Quiz: 1 point
Respondus LockDown Browser Practice Quiz: 1 point
Classical and Operant Conditioning Video Worksheet: 10 points
Classical Conditioning Exercise: 10 points
Operant Conditioning Quiz: 10 points
Behavioral TED Talk Analyses (5 total, 10 points each):   50 points
LMS Chapter Assignments (13 chapters, 5 points each):   65 points
Exams (3 total, 100 points each):   300 points
Self-Change Draft 1:   5 points
Self-Change Final Paper Rough Draft: 5 points
Self-Change Project Final Paper: 90 points

   Total Possible Points: 532 points

Grading Scale
A: 100–94

A-: 93–90
B+: 89–87
B: 86–83
B-: 82–80
C+: 79–77
C: 76–73
C-: 72–70
D+: 69–67
D: 66–63
D-: 62–60
F: below 60

Class Policies – See Canvas Class Policies Module

Syllabus Policy
The course syllabus presented in this document will be followed as closely as possible. However, the course syllabus, schedule, policies, and procedures are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor or in the event of extenuating circumstances. This includes the tentative dates listed. The instructor will announce possible changes of the syllabus in advance on Announcements on the canvas site. It is the student's responsibility to clarify any of these changes that may have been made and read announcements.

It is your responsibility to read the syllabus and ask questions about it so that you have a clear understanding of the expectations. If you are unclear about any of the requirements/expectations, then please set up a time to speak with the teaching assistant or me. I will be grading as though you have a clear understanding of the course requirements and material.

Academic Integrity - See Canvas Modules to see Class Policies, Plagiarism, AI Use, Late Policies
Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of their disability.

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See University Policy S14-7 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items

include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit Peer Connections website at http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling.

University Resources
SJSU offers many recourses to students for basic needs. Talk to me, or visit the website: https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/

Course Schedule – See Canvas homepage for due dates and times

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines	Assignments, Deadlines See Canvas Homepage for due dates and times
1	Jan 22 - Jan 25	Classical and Operant Video/Syllabus	**Get the Book** **Syllabus Quiz**
2	Jan 26 - Feb 1	Introduction, Chapter 1	**Video Sheet Due** **LMS Chapter 1**

3	Feb 2 - Feb 8	Research Methods, Chapter 2	**LMS Chapter 2** **TED Talk 1 Due**
4	Feb 9 - Feb 15	Elicited Behaviors and Classical Conditioning, Chapter 3	**LMS Chapter 3** **Classical Conditioning Exercise Due**
5	Feb 16 - Feb 22	Classical Conditioning: Basic Phenomena and Various Complexities, Chapter 4	**LMS Chapter 4** **TED Talk 2 Due**
6	Feb 23 - Mar 1	Classical Conditioning: Underlying Processes and Practical Applications, Chapter 5	**Lockdown Browser Practice Quiz** **LMS Chapter 5**
7	Mar 2 - Mar 8	**Exam 1 (Chapters 1-5) See Canvas for Test Days and Times**	**TED Talk 3 Due** **Rough Draft 1 Due** **(Intro, Lit and Methods only)**
8	Mar 9 - Mar 15	Operant Conditioning: Introduction, Chapter 6	**LMS Chapter 6** **Operant Conditioning Quiz**
9	Mar 16 - Mar 22	Schedules and Theories of Reinforcement, Chapter 7	**LMS Chapter 7** **TED Talk 4 Due**
10	Mar 23 - Mar 29	Extinction and Stimulus Control, Chapter 8	**LMS Chapter 8**
11	Mar 30 – April 5	**SPRING BREAK**	
12	April 6 – April 12	Escape, Avoidance and Punishment, Chapter 9 **Exam 2 (Chapters 6-9). See Canvas for Test Days and Times**	**LMS Chapter 9** **Self-Change Paper Draft Due Sunday, April 12 at 11:59 pm.** **Complete Peer reviews by, Wednesday, April 15 at 11:59pm.**
13	April 13 – April 19	Choice, Matching, and Self-Control, Chapter 10	**LMS Chapter 10** **TED Talk 5 Due** **Self-Change Paper Due**
14	April 20 - April 26	Observational Learning and Rule-Governed Behavior, Chapter 11	**LMS Chapter 11**
15	April 27 - May 3	Biological Dispositions in Learning, Chapter 12	**LMS Chapter 12**
16	May 4 - May 11	Comparative Cognition., Chapter 13	**LMS Chapter 13**
17	Finals Week	**Exam 3 (Chapters 10-13) See Canvas for Test Days and Times**	