

SYLLABUS
EAB 4184
BEHAVIORISM AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY
SECTION 0935
SPRING, 2009

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Marc N. Branch
OFFICE: 323 PSY
OFFICE HOURS: Monday, 3rd period and by appointment
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WEB URL: www.psych.ufl.edu/~branch
Classroom: 151 .PSY
Time: T, periods 8-10.

Texts: *About Behaviorism*, B. F. Skinner [**AB**]; *Understanding Behaviorism*, W. M. Baum [**UB**]; *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, B. F. Skinner [**BF**].

Overview: EAB 4184 is an undergraduate seminar with several goals. One is to permit students to become familiar with modern behavioristic theory and philosophy, with an important side goal of correcting commonly held misconceptions about the approach (e.g., that it is a “black box” view, that it is a stimulus-response approach, or that it stands in opposition to neuroscientific inquiry). A second goal is to consider a behavioristic outlook as a philosophy of science, as a world view, and as an outgrowth of behavioral science itself. A third aim is to consider what the implications of such a view are for traditional views of behavior, for psychology as a science, and for the understanding of cultural practices.

Class structure: The course will be conducted as a seminar, with students responsible for leading the discussion. During a class period, two to three students, in succession, will lead a discussion, each over part of the week’s reading assignment. With a couple of exceptions, each student will be responsible for one chapter (see below). The student-led discussion will constitute the first part of each class. After a brief break, the second part of each class will be led by me, and the material discussed will be based on questions submitted by students. To accomplish that, each Monday by 4 PM each student will submit two questions, via email, to me about the weekly reading assignment.

Assignments and Grading: **1.** Each student will **lead the class discussion** one time during the term, and assigned reading and times will be determined by random draw at the beginning of the term. **2.** Each student will **prepare a term paper**, 10 to 15 pages in length, on a topic related to behavioristic practice or philosophy. The paper can focus on specific research based on a behavioristic outlook, on the application of behavioristic approaches to particular behavioral or societal issues, on critiques of a behavioristic view, or any other topic approved by the instructor. **Please get my approval of your intended topic before April 1.** I prefer that you do that via email correspondence as

soon as you decide. The **paper** itself **is due** at the beginning of the class period on **April 14**. **3.** Each student is expected to submit two questions, on the weekly reading assignment, to me, via email, by 4 PM the day before class (i.e., Monday). Grading will be weighted as follows: Paper (35%), Presentation (35%), Questions (20%), In-class participation (10%).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE. (Numbers in parentheses indicate number of presenters.)

- Jan. 6 Introduction to course; Draw assigned reading and presentation date.
- 13 AB chapters 1-3 (2) *1+2=1
- 20 AB chapters 4-6 (3)
- 27 AB chapters 7-10 (3)* 9+10=>1
- Feb. 3 AB chapters 11-13 (3)
- 10 AB chapter 14; UB chapters 1-2 (2)*1+2=>1
- 17 UB chapters 3-4 (2)
- 24 UB chapters 5-7 (3)
- Mar. 3 UB chapters 8-10 (3)
- 17 UB chapters 11-13 (3)
- 24 UB chapter 14; BF chapters 1-2 (3)
- 31 BF chapters 3-5 (3)
- Apr. 7 NO CLASS – TERM PAPER PREPARATION
- 14 BF chapters 6-7 (2): Term papers due at class onset.
- 21 BF chapters 8-9 (2)