WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE TITLE: Psychology of Learning
COURSE NUMBER: PSY 407

I. RATIONALE:

This course helps students develop their understanding of how people learn and what motivates them to do so. An understanding of learning can be applied to numerous fields and occupations including education, counseling, business, law, marketing, and technology.

As Psychology professionals, we recognize that reactions to trauma come in many forms. The content of this course, and discussions about trauma from different perspectives, may bring about unexpected and unsettling reactions. Responses to trauma are often strategies that survivors have developed to keep themselves safe, and therefore really reflect strength and resiliency. Recognizing how trauma impacts anyone is an important part of skill building for creating trauma-informed services and systems. Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor at any time during the course if you would like to discuss, privately, your reactions to the content we are reviewing and/or the discussions we are having.

II. MAJOR INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS:

GOAL A: Students will demonstrate an understanding of learning.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

1. Define learning and explain when it occurs.
2. Compare and contrast human and non-human learning.
3. Differentiate between principles of learning and theories of learning.
4. Describe how theories of learning have evolved over time.

GOAL B: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the role the brain plays in learning.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

1. Describe the central and peripheral nervous system.
2. Explain research methods used to study the brain.
3. Identify parts of the brain and their functions
4. Describe parts of the brain and their functions.
5. Deconstruct the myth of “right brain” and “left brain” thinking.
7. Describe the critical period and apply the critical period to language learning.
8. Examine the implications of brain research to the education setting.

GOAL C: Students will demonstrate an understanding of behaviorism.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

1. Describe assumptions behind behaviorism and argue against one of them.
2. Explain classical conditioning.
3. Apply classical conditioning to real world situations.
4. Discuss phenomena related to classical conditioning (e.g., associative bias, extinction, generalization, discrimination, etc.)
5. Explain operant conditioning.
6. Apply operant conditioning to real world learning situations.
7. Differentiate between a reinforcer and a punishment.
8. Distinguish between a positive and a negative reinforcer.
9. Contrast classical conditioning and operant conditioning.
10. Discuss phenomena related to operant conditioning (e.g., shaping, extinction, schedules of reinforcement.)
11. Use operant conditioning to explain learning in real life settings.

GOAL D: Students will demonstrate an understanding of social learning theory.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

1. Explain social learning theory and the principles that underlie it.
2. Compare the definition of learning in social learning theory to the definition of learning in behaviorism.
3. Examine reciprocal causation and modeling.
5. Apply social learning theory to real world learning.
6. Analyze research done on social learning.

GOAL E: Students will demonstrate an understanding of cognitive views of learning.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

1. Define Cognitivism and the assumptions that underlie it.
2. Compare Cognitive Psychology to Behaviorism.
3. Explain Information Processing Theory and the basic components of memory.
4. Describe the implications of Information Processing Theory to human learning and memory.
5. Explain how information is encoded in, stored in, and retrieved from long-term memory.
6. Apply the concepts of encoding, retrieval, and forgetting to real world contexts.
7. Explain the Cognitive-Developmental perspective.
8. Apply the Cognitive-Developmental perspective to how children learn.

**GOAL F:** Students will apply their knowledge of contextual views of learning.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will be able to:

1. Explain sociocultural theory.
2. Discuss the key components of Vygotsky’s theory.
3. Apply Vygotsky’s theory to real world learning.
4. Differentiate between Piaget’s theory and Vygotsky’s theory.

**GOAL G:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of complex learning.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will be able to:

2. Identify effective learning strategies.
3. Explain why particular learning strategies are effective.
4. Devise a plan for using effective learning strategies.
5. Explain transfer and the factors that influence it.
6. Discuss problem solving, the different perspectives of problem solving, and problem solving strategies.
7. Explain critical thinking and ways to promote it.

**GOAL H:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of motivation.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will be able to:

1. Explain motivation and the effects it has on learning.
2. Discuss the needs perspective and how it relates to motivation.
3. Explain the concepts of self-worth, self-efficacy, self-handicapping, and self-determination and the role they play in motivation.
4. Discuss individual differences in motivation.
5. Analyze the role affect plays in learning and motivation.
6. Analyze the cognitive factors (interest, goals, value, expectancies) and provide examples of how they influence learning.
7. Create an explanation of his/her motivation using motivational theories, concepts, and perspectives.

**GOAL I:** Students will demonstrate appropriate written and oral communication skills.
**Learning Outcomes:** Students will be able to:

1. Analyze the learning theories in writing.
2. Analyze the design of this course.
3. Evaluate the design of this course.
4. Offer recommendations to improve this course based on learning theories and concepts.
5. Communicate information orally in a logical and grammatically correct manner.
6. Present written information in a grammatically correct manner.
7. Present written information in correct APA style.
8. Support written information with appropriate evidence.