

Applied Behavior Analysis Handbook 2025-2026

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Introduction

Webster University offers a comprehensive Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program designed for those seeking to make a significant impact in the field of behavioral science. Our curriculum includes a Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis, a Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis, and a specialized Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis with an emphasis in Organizational Behavior Management (OBM).

The Master's program is ideal for individuals aiming to deepen their knowledge and skills in ABA, preparing them for certification and practice in various settings, including clinical, educational, and organizational environments. The Graduate Certificate in ABA provides a focused pathway for professionals seeking to enhance their expertise and meet certification requirements without committing to a full degree program.

For those interested in the intersection of behavior analysis and organizational effectiveness, our Graduate Certificate with an emphasis in OBM equips students with the tools to apply behavioral principles in workplace settings, enhancing employee performance and organizational success.

All programs are delivered in a flexible online format, making them accessible to students across the globe. With a commitment to evidence-based practice and a strong emphasis on ethics, Webster University's ABA program empowers graduates to be leaders in the field and advocates for the principles of behavior analysis.

Program Mission

Webster University's Applied Behavior Analysis programs, our mission is to prepare students to become compassionate, ethical, and skilled behavior analysts who apply the science of behavior to improve lives and strengthen communities while disseminating the science of behavior analysis. Grounded in Webster University's commitment to nurturing knowledge, personal growth, and engaged citizenship, our program empowers students to deliver effective, evidence-based, and culturally responsive behavior analytic services. Through education and research in basic experimental, applied, and conceptual analysis, and community collaboration, we strive to cultivate professionals who create meaningful change within their local and global communities.

Program Objectives

- **Scientific and Analytical Competence:** Equip students with the scientific, analytical, and conceptual skills necessary to design, implement, and evaluate effective behavior analytic interventions.

- **Conceptual Understanding:** Develop a deep understanding of the theoretical and philosophical foundations of behavior analysis to promote sound, principle-driven practice across diverse settings.
- **Ethical and Culturally Responsive Practice:** Foster the ability to provide ethical, equitable, and culturally responsive behavior analytic services that respect and reflect the diversity of individuals and communities served.
- **Research and Scholarship:** Engage students in research and scholarly inquiry that contribute to the advancement of the science and practice of behavior analysis.
- **Leadership and Collaboration:** Cultivate leadership, advocacy, and collaborative skills that prepare students to be engaged citizens and professionals dedicated to positive social impact within the field and beyond.

Welcome

Dean of School of Education

On behalf of our faculty and staff in the School of Education, I want to welcome you to our community of dedicated learners, passionate faculty, and supportive staff. The Applied Behavior Analysis program is designed to equip you with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience necessary to become a proficient and ethical behavior analyst. You will learn to use data-driven methods and evidence-based practices to improve quality of life for individuals across diverse settings and backgrounds. This program offers comprehensive coursework delivered by experienced professionals, ensuring you are well-prepared to address real-world challenges with compassion and expertise.

As you embark on this educational journey, I encourage you to take full advantage of the resources and support available to you. Our faculty and staff are here to guide you, answer your questions, and support you every step of the way. Together, we will strive to foster an inclusive, engaging, and academically rigorous environment where you can thrive and make meaningful contributions to the field of behavior analysis.

I wish you well as you begin this exciting journey!

Dr. Stephanie Mahfood

Director of the Applied Behavior Analysis Programs

The programs include a Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis, a Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis, and a Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis Organizational Behavior Management.

We are thrilled to have you join our community of passionate learners and professionals who are committed to making meaningful changes in the lives of individuals through the science of behavior analysis. Whether you're pursuing your master's degree or a graduate certificate, you are embarking on a journey that will challenge you, inspire you, and prepare you to make a positive impact in various settings, from clinical to educational and organizational environments.

Our faculty and staff are here to support you every step of the way. We strive to create an inclusive and collaborative learning environment where students can grow both academically and professionally. You'll have opportunities to connect with experienced behavior analysts, engage in hands-on learning, and build lasting relationships with peers who share your dedication to improving the quality of life for others.

We are excited for you to begin this next chapter in your academic and professional career, and we look forward to seeing the difference you'll make as part of the ABA community.

Welcome to the program, and we are here to support you every step of the way!

Warm regards,
Dr. Dani Pizzella, BCBA-D, LBA
Director of the Applied Behavior Analysis Programs

General Policies

Academic Warning, Probation, and Dismissal Policy

Graduate students are expected to maintain a minimum B letter grade average to remain in good academic standing. The graduate student has a responsibility to demonstrate the ability to complete graduate-level coursework, including a demonstrated expertise to write clearly and succinctly. If the student receives letter grades of C, ZF, WF, or NC, then the conditions outlined in the university's Academic Warning, Probation, and Dismissal Policy in the Graduate Catalog will prevail.

Continuous Enrollment

Students who enter the program must complete all degree requirements within seven years after completion of their initial course. Students who apply but do not enroll within one year must submit a new application to both the university and the program.

Students are required to be continuously enrolled in the program. If a student does not register for any credit in a particular term or semester, they need approval from program director in writing. Only special circumstances with a strong rationale will be approved. Students who do not register for any credit in a term or semester will be prohibited from continuing in the program if an official approval form is not in place.

A student may apply to the Dean of the School of Education for a leave of absence for one year. If the absence is approved, the five-year program limit will be suspended for that year and will resume at the end of the leave of absence, whether the student enrolls in courses. Extensions are based on academic considerations and are limited. The student may be required to repeat preliminary examinations or take additional coursework, or both. If the program is not admitting students in the year that the student intends to return, the student will need to wait for an additional year to resume their academic work in the program.

Degree Conferral

Once a student passes the final thesis defense, they will be formally recommended to receive their graduate degree. The student must complete all degree requirements and submit a Petition to Graduate by the deadline specified in the academic calendar. See: Petition to Graduate.

Grading Criteria

The graduate programs at Webster University use two grading scales:

Letter grades for the four content courses (determined by the chosen emphasis) and core courses. Letter grades are based on the grading criteria in the Graduate Catalog.

The thesis committee would use CR or NC (Credit or No Credit) in grading thesis hours, starting from Fall 1, 2024, per Office of Academic Affairs' updated policy.

Grading Scale

A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	88-89%
B	83-87%
B-	80-82%
C	73-77%

Admission to the Program

Prospective students must apply and meet the admission criteria in order to be considered for the program. Admission criteria for the program is listed in the Graduate Catalog. Prospective students must complete and submit the Application for Admission online through Graduate Admissions.

After all materials have been submitted, the full admission packet will be reviewed. Should the Committee find weaknesses in certain academic areas, the applicant will be strongly advised to take additional coursework that will not count toward the degree requirements.

Transferring in Credits

Transferring into an ABA graduate program requires a careful review of your previous academic work to ensure that all required content areas mandated by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) and the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) are adequately covered. Because ABA programs must meet strict accreditation and certification standards, each course you wish to transfer must undergo a detailed evaluation.

Review of Prior Coursework

- When you request a transfer, the university will ask you to submit:
- Official transcripts
- Course syllabi for all courses you want considered for transfer

- Documentation of assignments or course products, if needed for clarification
- Program faculty will compare your previous coursework to current BACB requirements and ABAI accreditation standards. This evaluation ensures that each transferred course aligns with the required content hours, learning objectives, and competencies.

How Courses Are Evaluated

- Faculty reviewers examine each syllabus to determine:
 - Which BACB content areas are covered (e.g., measurement, assessment, behavior-change procedures, ethics, systems).
 - Whether the number of instructional hours matches BACB requirements.
 - How the content aligns with ABAI graduate training standards, including depth, rigor, and competency expectations.
 - Whether major assignments, assessments, and readings meet current professional expectations.
- If a course does not clearly map onto the required content areas—or if coverage is incomplete—the university cannot award transfer credit.

Why Some Courses May Need to Be Repeated

- Different universities organize ABA content in different ways. For example:
- One program may cover ethics and supervision in a single course, while another splits them into separate courses.
- Some programs embed behavior-change procedures across multiple classes instead of teaching them as a standalone course.
- A course you previously took may include partial content from several BACB categories but not enough to satisfy any one category fully.
- Because the BACB and ABAI require precise content allocation, a course that appears similar in title or topic may still not meet the specific requirements. As a result, students are sometimes required to repeat courses to ensure full compliance with certification standards.

Determining Remaining Coursework

- After the review is complete, the university will provide you with:
- A list of approved transfer courses
- A list of courses that did not meet transfer requirements
- A personalized plan of study outlining which additional courses must be completed to graduate and to meet BACB/ABAI requirements
- This process ensures that all graduates meet the competencies needed for high-quality practice and eventual certification as behavior analysts.

Applied Behavior Analysis Program's Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Access Statement

Everyone can achieve the highest outcomes with the right access and equitable opportunities. Our mission is to create behavior analysts who represent all backgrounds and experiences and consistently reflect upon their own identities to ensure they provide culturally humble services to consumers. To do this, we incorporate diversity into all aspects of our curricula and practicum experiences, create a culture where everyone is valued, and ensure equitable opportunities and access for all.

Academic Integrity

At Webster University, we value academic integrity as our mission is to ensure high-quality learning experiences that transform students for global citizenship and individual excellence. Our community plays a critical role in upholding our values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

That means we expect original content — we pride ourselves in upholding the highest standards of academic conduct. We understand academic work is challenging — it asks us to think critically about our understanding of others' arguments and our world position. Nonetheless, do your own work and write your own future.

Student Support

Maintaining academic integrity comes from understanding how colleges and universities in the U.S. require you to employ source material. Some students may not be accustomed to putting ideas “in your own words” because it is a sign of disrespect. You may come from a culture where group work and collaboration are the norms or were using another’s words and ideas as your own is common and even encouraged.

For others, academic dishonesty may not have been discussed clearly or come from flawed research or writing habits. These are all situations that may result in not fully understanding the standards required of you in your coursework. That’s why we’ve developed resources for you to use to help understand academic integrity, develop techniques to avoid academic dishonesty, and deliver appropriate citations for used sources.

Disciplinary Actions

In most cases, the instructor will address issues of academic dishonesty within the confines of the student's course. The instructor may decide an appropriate consequence, including the following options: a written warning; the assignment of a written research project about the nature of plagiarism and academic honesty; a reduced grade or partial

credit on the assignment; requiring the student to repeat the assignment; or issuing a failing grade to the student of the course.

Students may be placed on academic probation or dismissal as a result of receiving an unsatisfactory grade (F) due to academic dishonesty. In extreme cases, a dishonesty violation may warrant consideration for dismissal, suspension, or other disciplinary action. These disciplinary actions require a formal judicial process as outlined in the [Student Handbook](#) under Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures.

Academic Integrity Education Program

Higher education holds students accountable for the quality and integrity of the work they submit for academic review. Our Code of Conduct and Academic Honesty Policy are available in the [Student Handbook](#). When these policies have been compromised due to plagiarism, students may be referred to the Academic Integrity Education Program (AIEP). The AIEP addresses plagiarism on two fronts: first, by educating students on Webster University's academic honesty policy as well as common standards of academic writing and documentation and, secondly, by having students incorporate those principles into their own work. The AIEP stresses that academic honesty can be upheld by understanding plagiarism, developing effective strategies in the writing process, and incorporating source material appropriately and with proper citation. The objectives of the AIEP are to provide students with a thorough understanding of those concepts as well as strategies to avoid or correct issues that arise in their work so that future academic assignments will maintain academic standards. Completing the program should take no more than 12 weeks. At the conclusion of 12 weeks, if the student has not completed all components of the program, they will be sent a letter notifying them of their enrollment dates and current status. They will then be deactivated from the course; an Academic Advising hold will be placed on their account, and they will be unable to enroll in additional coursework at the University.

Resources

Additional information on definitions and procedures can be found on the academic integrity website <https://www.webster.edu/academics/academic-integrity.php>

ABA Curriculum

Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is an area of psychology that focuses on improving specific behaviors, such as academics and adaptive behavior while decreasing maladaptive behaviors. The master's in applied behavior analysis prepares candidates with the knowledge and concepts needed to engage in behavior analytic practice in schools, community agencies, residential centers and family settings to enhance the skills and abilities of persons with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities.

The program is designed to prepare candidates with the coursework-based content knowledge and skills required to apply to sit for the Board-Certified Behavior Analyst® Examination offered through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). Successful completion of the Webster University Master of Arts in applied behavior analysis does not guarantee that the candidate will be approved to sit for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst® Examination. Candidates who plan to apply for BCBA certification should carefully review the requirements, published by the BACB (www.bacb.com).

Students pursuing the master's in applied behavior analysis are expected to have an association, professional or voluntary, with community service providers, agencies or educational organizations which provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities and/or behavioral challenges, to fully benefit from the coursework.

MA APBA Objectives

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of behavior analysis principles, encompassing operant and respondent conditioning, reinforcement, punishment, extinction, and stimulus control, enabling them to effectively analyze and modify behavior in diverse organizational contexts.
- Conduct comprehensive behavioral assessments, including functional behavior assessments (FBA) and functional analysis (FA), and employing appropriate measurement techniques to gather precise data on behavior, facilitating evidence-based decision-making in organizational behavior management.
- Design, implement, and assess behavior change interventions rooted in behavior analysis principles, encompassing both behavior reduction and skill acquisition programs, to address organizational challenges and enhance workplace effectiveness.
- Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in their practice, adhering to the highest standards of integrity and professionalism outlined in the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Professional and Ethical Compliance Code
- Utilize effective collaboration skills, enabling them to work seamlessly with diverse professionals, including educators, therapists, and caregivers, and provide expert consultation on behavioral interventions, fostering

interdisciplinary teamwork and promoting the implementation of evidence-based practices in organizational settings.

Courses Required for the MA

This program has 33 credit hours.

APBA 5000 Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)
APBA 5110 Principles of Behavior Analysis (3 hours)
APBA 5120 Single-Subject Research Design (3 hours)
APBA 5130 Ethics and Professional Issues in Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)
APBA 5140 Behavior Change Procedures in Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)
APBA 5150 Functional Behavioral Assessment (3 hours)
APBA 5160 Supervision and Staff Performance in Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)
APBA 5170 Basic Experimental Analysis of Behavior (3 hours)
APBA 5180 Verbal Behavior (3 hours)
APBA 5950 Portfolio Review: Applied Behavior Analysis (0 hours)
APBA 6000 Thesis: Applied Behavior Analysis (1- 6 hours)

ABA Portfolio Review (0 Credit Hours)

The **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Portfolio Review** is a **required, pass/fail, zero-credit course** for all Master's students in the ABA program. The portfolio serves as a comprehensive demonstration of each student's knowledge, applied skills, and ethical competence in behavior analysis, integrating work completed across coursework, supervision, and clinical experiences.

Course Overview

Students gain access to the Portfolio Review course after their **first semester** and may begin collecting work samples at any point during the program. The portfolio course remains open throughout enrollment, allowing students to gradually compile and refine artifacts that reflect their professional growth. **Final submission occurs during the student's last semester.**

Purpose

The portfolio is designed to showcase mastery of applied behavior-analytic competencies, including assessment, intervention, evaluation, and ethical practice across diverse populations and settings. It represents a culmination of the student's learning and professional readiness for practice as a behavior analyst.

By completing this portfolio, students demonstrate their ability to:

- Conduct behavior assessments
- Design and implement effective, data-based interventions
- Evaluate outcomes and make data-driven decisions
- Adhere to the **BACB Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (2022)**

Assignments and Scoring

Students must complete and submit the following portfolio components:

Assignment	Points
Preference Assessment	5
Reinforcer Assessment	5
Descriptive Assessment	5
Functional Analysis	5
Comprehensive Intervention Plan	10
Behavior Intervention Plan	10
Six Teaching Programs (5 points each)	30
Three Skills Assessments (must include VB-MAPP; 10 points each)	30
Reflective Statement	Required, not scored separately

Total: 100 points (Pass/Fail)

To pass, all components must meet the rubric standards. Students are allowed **one revision opportunity** for any component that does not initially meet criteria.

Submission and Review Timeline

- **Week 4 (Final Semester):** All portfolio components due
- **Week 7:** Deadline for revisions of any items not meeting standards
- **Week 8:** Faculty communicate final pass/fail decisions

Students are encouraged to submit artifacts developed during their coursework or supervised experience, provided they meet professional and ethical standards.

Ethical and Professional Standards

All work samples must:

- Be based on real client work completed under supervision
- Protect client confidentiality (remove identifying information)
- Include documentation of informed consent

- Represent the student's authentic and ethical practice

Passing Requirements

This course is graded on a **Pass/Fail** basis. To pass:

- All portfolio components must meet minimum performance standards.
- Ethical and professional requirements must be followed.
- The Reflective Statement must be submitted to complete the review.

Failure to meet these requirements by the end of the revision window will result in a **Fail**, and the student will be required to re-enroll in the portfolio course in a subsequent term.

Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis

This 21-credit online graduate certificate program prepares candidates with the knowledge and concepts needed to engage in applied behavior analysis in schools, community agencies, residential centers and family settings to enhance the skills and abilities of persons with autism spectrum disorder, significant disabilities and other developmental conditions.

The program provides training in functional behavior assessment, analysis, and intervention within the context of ethically guided and evidence-based practices. Candidates are introduced to the conceptual foundations of applied behavior analysis, research methodology, principles and practices of behavioral instruction, support and intervention and the ethical and professional guidelines needed for effective services.

The program is designed to prepare candidates with the coursework-based content knowledge and skills required to apply for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst® Examination offered through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). Successful completion of the Webster University advanced graduate certificate program in applied behavior analysis does not guarantee that the candidate will be approved to sit for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst® Examination. Candidates who plan to apply for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst® Examination should carefully review the requirements, published by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (www.bacb.com).

Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis Objectives

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a thorough understanding and knowledge of the concepts and principles that underlie applied behavior analysis.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the principles involved in functional behavior observation, assessment and analysis.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the principles that govern the application of behavior analysis to alleviate the behavioral challenges and

problems experienced by persons with disabilities or socio-emotional challenges.

- Understand the ethical and legal principles and responsibilities in the application of behavior principles.

Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis Required Courses

APBA 5000 Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)

APBA 5110 Principles of Behavior Analysis (3 hours)

APBA 5120 Single-Subject Research Design (3 hours)

APBA 5130 Ethics and Professional Issues in Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)

APBA 5140 Behavior Change Procedures in Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)

APBA 5150 Functional Behavioral Assessment (3 hours)

APBA 5160 Supervision and Staff Performance in Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)

Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis Organizational Behavior Management

The graduate certificate in applied organizational behavior management (OBM) is a comprehensive 18-credit hour program designed to equip professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively manage and improve organizational behavior within diverse workplace environments. This program blends theory and practical application to address the complexities of human behavior in organizational settings.

This graduate certificate program is offered entirely online, providing flexibility for working professionals to balance their studies with professional and personal commitments. Courses are delivered asynchronously, allowing students to access course materials and participate in discussions at their convenience.

Graduates of the program are prepared to pursue various career opportunities in human resources, organizational development, management consulting, and related fields. They possess the knowledge and skills to analyze organizational behavior effectively, implement evidence-based interventions, and drive positive change within organizations.

Students pursuing the graduate certificate in applied organizational management are expected to have an association, professional or voluntary, with an agency or company in which they can do applied work to fully benefit from the coursework.

ABA OBM Certificate Objectives

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of Organizational Behavior Management (OBM) principles, encompassing analysis and modification of behavior to enhance organizational performance, and apply these principles to real-world organizational challenges, demonstrating proficiency in data collection, analysis, and intervention design.
- Display advanced skills in behavior analysis, including identifying antecedents and consequences influencing behavior and designing performance management systems that effectively reinforce desired behaviors, leading to improved organizational performance and employee engagement.
- Demonstrate expertise in applying OBM principles to drive organizational change, assessing readiness for change, developing change strategies, and evaluating change outcomes, supported by proficiency in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and using data to inform decision-making and organizational change initiatives.
- Exhibit ethical leadership, understanding and addressing ethical considerations in applying OBM principles in organizational settings, including privacy, consent, and confidentiality, while effectively collaborating with diverse professionals to address complex organizational challenges.
- Develop leadership skills, including effective communication, motivation, and leading change initiatives, alongside critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, enabling them to identify and analyze complex organizational problems and develop innovative solutions, supported by ongoing professional development to stay current with advancements in the field of OBM.

ABA OBM Certificate Required Courses

APBA 5000 Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (3)

APBA 5010 Introduction to Organizational Behavior Management (OBM) (3)

APBA 5011 Performance Management (3)

APBA 5012 Behavioral Systems Analysis (3)

APBA 5013 Organizational Behavior Management in Business (3)

APBA 5014 Applied Organizational Behavior Management (3)

Course Descriptions

Course descriptions can be found in the current Webster University catalog which is available here: <https://www.webster.edu/catalog/index.html>

Thesis

Each student in the Master's program will be required to complete a thesis in applied behavior analysis over the course of two terms.

The Thesis Committee formed during the end of the first year. The director will assist the student in determining a possible Thesis Chair. The Thesis Chair will assist the student in selecting a Thesis Committee of faculty members who will guide their research and will also serve on both the Prospectus and Thesis Committees. The Committee will include two to three (2-3) faculty members and a Thesis Chair. The Thesis Chair and the Committee Members must meet the criteria for faculty discussed below. Committee Members will work with the student to determine a plan of study and guide the Thesis. While researching and writing the Thesis, the student will be responsible for maintaining consistent communication with the Thesis Chair and each Committee Member. Developing a schedule of meetings will be helpful. Each Committee Member will vote to determine if and when a student completes their Thesis. Committee members will also vote to determine whether the thesis proposal/prospectus meets the necessary standards to continue.

Thesis Chair

The Thesis Chair must be a full-time faculty member at Webster University (core faculty member as defined by ABAI) who is also a BCBA.

See: Checklist for the Thesis Chair.

Committee Members

Thesis Committee Members can be full-time or adjunct faculty/staff at Webster University. Any Thesis Committee Member(s) from outside of Webster University need(s) to be approved by the program Director on a case-by-case basis. The student's Thesis Committee Members should be selected according to each faculty member's content expertise. This should include topic interest or subject matter expertise, experience in Thesis guidance, or methodology expertise. Individuals who are not Webster University faculty may serve on Committees if vetted by the Director. All the student's Committee Members share responsibility for ensuring that the student produces high-quality scholarship. A checklist of each Committee Member's responsibilities is on the important forms page. See: Checklist for the Thesis Committee Members

Ideally the Thesis Chair and the Committee will remain consistent throughout the Prospectus and Thesis Phases. There may be times when a change is necessary. Should this occur, the student must submit a new Thesis Committee Members Form. See: Thesis Committee Members Form

Thesis Process

Please review the specific forms and policies that govern all thesis conducted at Webster University here:

<https://libanswers.webster.edu/loader?fid=21256&type=1&key=6d541f0f2e27c43ba630677e150c9106>

All projects will undergo the same basic process: committee selection, prospectus, research phase, and thesis defense.

Detailed Behavior Analysis Thesis Process (Two-Semester Sequence)

Pre-Thesis Requirements (Prior to Enrollment)

Before enrolling in the thesis sequence, students must:

1. Secure an Approved Thesis Site

- a. The site must be approved by the program and meet ethical and professional standards for behavior-analytic research. This process is outlined in [another section of the handbook](#).
- b. The site must allow data collection, access to participants, and supervision by a qualified BCBA or faculty member.
- c. Students must submit a [Thesis Site Approval Form](#) documenting site permissions and supervisor credentials.

2. Identify a Possible Thesis Chair and Committee

- a. The chair must be a full-time core member of the program faculty with expertise in applied behavior analysis.
- b. The committee typically consists of at least two members (chair + one additional faculty or professional member).

3. Develop a Preliminary Research Idea

- a. In consultation with the chair, students draft a 1–2 page concept paper outlining the proposed topic, rationale, and general research questions.

Semester 1: Thesis Proposal and Preparation

Goal: Develop, defend, and obtain approval for the thesis proposal; complete all preparatory steps for data collection.

Milestones:

1. Week 1–2: Orientation and Planning

- a. Meet with thesis chair to review timeline and expectations.
- b. Establish weekly or biweekly supervision meetings.

- 2. Week 3–6: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**
 - a. Conduct a comprehensive literature review.
 - b. Define key concepts, research questions, and variables.
 - c. Develop an operational definition of target behavior(s) and intervention(s).
- 3. Week 7–10: Research Design and Methodology**
 - a. Select appropriate single-subject design (e.g., reversal, multiple baseline, alternating treatments).
 - b. Draft detailed methodology including setting, participants, data collection procedures, and experimental design.
 - c. Prepare all study materials (data sheets, graphs, procedural scripts).
- 4. Week 11–13: Proposal Writing**
 - a. Write the full thesis proposal (Introduction, Literature Review, Methods).
 - b. Obtain feedback from chair and revise.
- 5. Week 14–15: Proposal Defense and IRB Submission**
 - a. Conduct a **proposal defense meeting** with the committee.
 - b. Incorporate committee feedback and finalize the proposal.
 - c. Submit the study to the **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** and any required site-level review.

Deliverables by End of Semester 1:

- Approved thesis proposal
- IRB approval
- Completed data collection materials and reliability systems

Semester 2: Data Collection, Analysis, and Final Defense

Goal: Conduct research, analyze data, write final thesis, and successfully defend.

Milestones:

- 1. Week 1–4: Data Collection Phase 1**
 - a. Begin baseline and intervention phases as approved by IRB.
 - b. Maintain regular supervision and data review with chair.
 - c. Conduct interobserver agreement and procedural fidelity checks.
 - d. Begin preliminary graphing and visual analysis.
- 2. Week 5–8: Continued Data Collection and Preliminary Analysis**
 - a. Continue experimental sessions until data stability or design completion.
 - b. Continue graphing and visual analysis.
 - c. Address any procedural modifications with chair and, if necessary, IRB.
- 3. Week 9–11: Data Analysis and Writing**
 - a. Complete visual and statistical analyses as appropriate.
 - b. Write the Results and Discussion chapters.

- c. Integrate findings with existing literature and discuss implications for practice.
- 4. **Week 12–13: Draft Review and Committee Feedback**
 - a. Submit full draft to chair and committee.
 - b. Incorporate feedback and prepare for defense.
- 5. **Week 14–15: Final Defense and Submission**
 - a. Conduct **thesis defense** with committee (oral presentation and Q&A).
 - b. Submit final, committee-approved thesis to the department.
 - c. Prepare a professional poster or conference submission (optional but encouraged).

Deliverables by End of Semester 2:

- Completed and defended thesis
- Final approved manuscript submitted to program repository
- Possible dissemination plan (poster, presentation, or publication submission)

Continuation and Completion Policies for Thesis

Third-Term Enrollment (In-Progress Thesis)

If a student does not complete all thesis requirements by the end of the second semester, they may enroll in a **third thesis continuation term**.

- **Purpose:** The continuation term allows students additional time to complete data collection, analysis, writing, or the defense.
- **Requirements:**
 - The student must demonstrate satisfactory progress (e.g., completed proposal, IRB approval, partial data collection).
 - The thesis chair must approve continuation and outline specific goals for the additional term.
 - Students must maintain active enrollment in the thesis continuation course until the thesis is completed and approved.
- **Grading:** The course will remain **“In Progress (IP)”** until the final thesis is successfully defended and approved by the committee.

Failure to Make Satisfactory Progress or to Complete the Thesis

If a student fails to make adequate progress or does not complete the thesis within the allowed timeframe, the following may occur:

- The student may receive a grade of **“No Credit”** or **“Fail”** for the thesis course, depending on program policy.
- Failure to complete the thesis may delay or prevent degree conferral.

- The student must meet with their thesis chair and program director to determine next steps, which may include:
 - Reenrollment in the thesis sequence,
 - Development of a new research plan, or
 - Substitution of a non-thesis capstone or alternative culminating project (if program policy permits).

Students are strongly encouraged to maintain consistent communication with their thesis chair throughout the process to avoid delays or unsatisfactory progress designations.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Several university faculty members sit on the university's IRB. The Board reviews and approves all human subjects' research conducted by Webster University faculty, staff, and students. The IRB process *must* be completed before any contact with human subjects.

For more information about IRB process, go to <https://www.webster.edu/academic-affairs/institutional-review-board.php>.

Publication

As part of the final process of the defense, students must submit their Thesis for publication on ProQuest. See the "ProQuest Instructions for Electronic Submission" section in the "Graduate Thesis & Thesis General Guidelines" handbook. Students will be required to publish the DDP at a designated site.

For information on publishing, please contact:

Heidi Vix
 Acquisitions Library/Library Online Resources
 Emerson Library
 Webster Groves Main Campus (WEBG)
 314-968-695

Process for Site Approval as an Approved Research Site

Step 1: Site Inquiry and Initial Screening

- A potential site expresses interest or is identified by a student or faculty member.
 - Students may submit their site at the beginning of their program or any time prior to enrolling in thesis.
 - An approved site is required in order to enroll in the thesis course.
 - Sites are submitted via the [form](#).
- The program provides the [Research Site Qualification Form](#), which lists all mandatory requirements, recommendations, and additional considerations.
- The site completes and submits the form to the Program Director at dpizzella76@webster.edu.

Step 2: Program Director Review

- The Program Director verifies that all **Mandatory Requirements** are met:
- If any requirements are not met, the site is notified that approval cannot proceed.
- If all requirements are satisfied, the Program Director reviews **Recommendations and Additional Considerations** to evaluate overall fit and feasibility.

Step 3: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- If approved, Webster University prepares an [MOU](#) outlining:
 - Confirmation that mandatory requirements are satisfied.
 - Acknowledgment of recommended best practices.
 - Expectations for collaboration, data handling, IRB compliance, and student support.
 - Duration of approval (e.g., 3 years, subject to renewal).
- The MOU is sent to the site for signature.
- The site signs and returns the MOU to the Program Director.

Step 4: Final Approval and Registration

- Once the signed MOU is received, the Program Director issues a formal **Site Approval Letter** to the site and the student(s).
- The approved site is added to Webster University's **Approved Research Site Registry**.
- Students may then propose research at the site as part of their thesis process, subject to IRB review and faculty oversight.

Step 5: Ongoing Oversight

- Sites are subject to periodic review by the Program Director to ensure compliance.
- Any changes (e.g., loss of BCBA supervisor, policy updates) must be reported to the Program Director immediately.
- Renewal of the MOU is required at the end of the approval period.

*All students are able to conduct research at Webster University rather than an outside site if they so chose.

Additional Course Information

Course Content Matrix

[illegible]

3										
5120 Single Subject research design 3		48								
5110 Principles of Behavior Analysis 3	48									
5160 Supervision 3						48				
5000 Intro to Behavior Analysis 3			48							
5170 Basic experimental analysis of Behavior 3									48	
5140 Bx Change procedures 3				48						
5190 Verbal Behavior 3			24				24			
5150 FBA 3					48					
6000 Thesis 6										90
Totals for ABAI areas	48	48	72	168				48	48	90

Syllabi

Note that textbooks may be subject to change and you must contact your instructor prior to purchasing.

Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis APBA 5000

Course Description

This graduate-level course delves into the foundational concepts and principles of behavior analysis, with a focus on conceptual analysis. Over the duration of eight weeks, students will explore the history and philosophy of behaviorism, theoretical approaches to understanding behavior, and the interpretation of behavior through the lens of behavior analysis. Through a combination of theoretical discussions, historical analysis, critical readings, and practical applications, participants will develop a deep understanding of behavior analytic concepts and their real-world implications.

ABAI Content Areas

Conceptual Analysis

Contact hours: 48

Purpose: To develop competence in the history and philosophy of behaviorism, theoretical approaches to understanding behavior, and interpretation of behavior in terms of the concepts and principles of behavior analysis

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Understand the history and philosophical foundations of behaviorism, including its emergence as a scientific discipline.
- Analyze major branches of behavior analysis, such as radical behaviorism and the experimental analysis of behavior.
- Distinguish the science of behavior from the philosophy of behaviorism.
- Differentiate radical behaviorism from methodological behaviorism and mentalism.
- Apply conceptual analysis techniques to examine and interpret behavior in terms of behavior analytic principles.
- Provide behavior analytic interpretations of various types of behavior.
- Identify the mentalistic underpinnings of traditional interpretations of behavior.

Required Textbooks

- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). Applied Behavior Analysis (3rd Edition). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Chiesa, M. (1994). Radical behaviorism: The philosophy and the science. Authors Cooperative.
- Johnston, J. M. (2014). Radical behaviorism for ABA practitioners. Sloan Publishing.
- Skinner, B. F. (1974). About Behaviorism. New York: Vintage/Random House.

Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis APBA 5110

Course Description

This graduate-level course expands on foundational concepts and principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), with an emphasis on the science of learning in both human and nonhuman organisms. Students will examine classic and contemporary research through a behavior-analytic lens, focusing on the fundamental processes and operations that give rise to learning. Readings, lectures, and class discussions will build a strong conceptual foundation in the psychology of learning from a behavioral orientation.

The course also provides an in-depth overview of empirically established behavior-change procedures used to develop new behavior and to reduce problematic behavior using non-punishment-based methods. By integrating theory, research, and application, students will gain the analytical skills needed to understand how principles of behavior are discovered, defined, and implemented within basic and applied research contexts.

ABAI Content Areas

Principles of Behavior

Contact hours: 48

Purpose: To develop competence in understanding how principles of behavior are discovered and described in the context of basic research.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe and explain the fundamental concepts and principles of behavior, building upon foundational knowledge in behavior analysis.
- Summarize classic and contemporary research on learning highlighting behavior-analytic conceptualizations of learning.
- Analyze research studies to identify the processes and operations that lead to behavior change, including operant and respondent conditioning.
- Integrate theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence to explain behavioral phenomena from a research-based standpoint.
- Examine behavior change procedures to identify the underlying principles of behavior that account for their effects.
- Evaluate experimental evidence regarding behavior change procedures to understand the functional relationships between environmental variables and behavior.

- Interpret observed behavior in terms of empirically demonstrated principles of behavior rather than applied outcomes alone.
- Engage in critical thinking and problem-solving to assess the strengths, limitations, and generality of behavior-analytic research findings.
- Collaborate with peers to discuss and analyze research articles, experimental data, and case studies to enhance understanding of behavioral principles.
- Demonstrate mastery of the principles of behavior through analysis of experimental data, class discussions, and research-based assignments.

Required Textbook

- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). Applied Behavior Analysis (3rd Edition). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.

Single-Subject Research Design APBA 5120

Course Description

This course provides an in-depth exploration of single-subject research designs (SSRD), a core methodology in behavior analysis. Students will begin by learning the fundamentals of SSRD and baseline logic, followed by focused weekly instruction on individual research designs. The course concludes with advanced applications including parametric, component, and comparative analyses. Students will learn to design, interpret, and critique SSRD research with an emphasis on internal validity, treatment integrity, and social validity.

Course Objectives

Student will be able to

- Explain the logic and purpose of single-subject research design.
- Describe the rationale and mechanics of baseline logic including prediction, verification, and replication.
- Differentiate among various SSRD types and identify their appropriate applications.

- Analyze the strengths and limitations of each design with respect to experimental control and data interpretation.
- Develop a hypothetical SSRD proposal including design selection, measurement procedures, and visual display.
- Apply component, parametric, and comparative analysis techniques to evaluate intervention effects.
- Evaluate treatment integrity and social validity within single-subject studies.

ABAI Content Areas

Research Methods

Contact hours: 48

Purpose: To develop competence in measurement of behavior, data collection analysis and graphic representation, and experimental design with particular emphasis on single subject design.

Required Textbooks

- Kennedy, C. H. (2005). Single-case designs for educational research. Pearson/A&B
- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). Applied behavior analysis (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ethics and Professional Issues in Applied Behavior Analysis APBA 5130

Course Description

This graduate-level course delves into the intricate ethical considerations within the field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Over the course of eight weeks, students will engage in a comprehensive examination of ethical principles, dilemmas, and decision-making processes pertinent to professionals practicing ABA. Through a combination of theoretical discussions, case studies, practical applications, and ethical reasoning exercises, participants will develop a deep understanding of how to navigate complex ethical situations inherent in behavior analytic practice.

ABAI Content Area

Ethics

Contact hours: 48

Purpose: To understand legal constraints and ethical guidelines as pertinent to behavioral research and practice.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify and articulate foundational ethical principles relevant to ABA practice.
- Apply the BACB Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts to real-world scenarios.
- Utilize ethical decision-making frameworks to analyze and resolve complex ethical dilemmas in ABA.
- Implement legal and ethical standards regarding confidentiality, privacy, and data security in ABA assessments and interventions.
- Establish and maintain appropriate boundaries and professional relationships within the client-therapist dynamic.
- Obtain informed consent from clients or guardians and respect client rights throughout the therapeutic process.
- Evaluate ethical considerations in behavior assessment procedures, intervention planning, and data collection methods, considering cultural competence.
- Provide effective supervision and consultation while upholding ethical standards and promoting professional growth among supervisees.
- Critically assess ethical issues in research design, data collection, and dissemination of research findings in ABA.
- Develop a personal ethical code of conduct and decision-making framework aligned with professional standards for future ABA practice.

Required Textbooks

- Bailey, J., & Burch, M.: (2022). Ethics for behavior analysts (4th ed.). Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Ethics-for-Behavior-Analysts/Bailey-Burch/p/book/9781032056425>
- Beirne, A., & Sadavoy, J.A. (2019). Understanding Ethics in Applied Behavior Analysis: Practical Applications (1st ed.). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429453168>

<https://www.routledge.com/Understanding-Ethics-in-Applied-Behavior-Analysis-Practical-Applications/Beirne-Sadavoy/p/book/9781032041353>

Behavior Change Procedures in Applied Behavior Analysis APBA 5140

Course Description

This graduate-level course delves into the fundamental principles and advanced strategies of behavior change within the framework of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Grounded in empirical research and practical application, students will explore the intricate mechanisms underlying human behavior and the techniques used to modify it effectively. Students will be able to practice these procedures in a hands on manner and explore multiple methods of implementation.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate the need for behavior-analytic services by reviewing client records, identifying socially significant behavior, and prioritizing appropriate, ethical behavior-change goals.
- Conduct behavior-analytic assessments (e.g., preference assessments, skill assessments, functional assessments) to identify relevant behavioral deficits, excesses, and environmental variables that influence behavior.
- Design and implement antecedent- and consequence-based interventions to strengthen desired behaviors and reduce problem behavior, including reinforcement, extinction, stimulus control procedures, and motivating operation manipulations.
- Develop new skills using behavior-change technologies, including imitation training, shaping, chaining, discrete-trial instruction, incidental teaching, and rule-governed behavior strategies.
- Apply Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior to teach communication skills, categorize verbal operants, and select appropriate instructional procedures for each operant.
- Construct and apply contingency-based intervention plans, including token economies, group contingencies, contingency contracts, self-management systems, and other behavior-change packages.
- Plan for generalization and maintenance by arranging programming that promotes skill transfer across people, settings, and contexts, and by selecting strategies that support long-term behavior change.

- Evaluate and modify interventions based on ongoing data, ensuring that decisions are conceptually systematic, effective, and aligned with ethical standards.

ABAI Content Areas

Applied Behavior Analysis

Contact hours: 48

Purpose: To develop competence in the application of the principles of behavior and multiple areas of investigation and practice.

Required Textbooks

- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). Applied Behavior Analysis (3rd Edition). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.
- American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Functional Behavioral Assessment APBA 5150

Course Description

This graduate-level course provides in-depth training in functional assessment within the context of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Over the span of eight weeks, students will explore the theoretical foundations, assessment methodologies, and practical applications of functional assessment techniques. Through a combination of theoretical lectures, hands-on activities, case studies, and experiential learning opportunities, participants will develop the skills and competencies necessary to conduct comprehensive functional assessments and inform effective behavior intervention strategies.

ABAI Content Areas

Applied Behavior Analysis

Contact hours: 48

Purpose: To develop competence in the application of the principles of behavior and multiple areas of investigation and practice.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to

- Understand the theoretical foundations and importance of functional assessment in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) practice.
- Identify and operationalize target behaviors using the ABCs of behavior (Antecedents, Behaviors, Consequences).
- Demonstrate proficiency in conducting direct observation methods, including ABC data collection and scatterplot analysis.
- Utilize indirect assessment techniques, such as interviews, checklists, and rating scales, to gather information about behavioral function.
- Design and conduct functional analysis procedures to experimentally identify the function(s) of behavior.
- Integrate information from direct and indirect assessment methods to develop comprehensive Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs).
- Develop individualized Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) based on FBA results and evidence-based intervention strategies.
- Analyze and interpret data collected from functional assessments to inform behavior intervention planning and decision-making.
- Collaborate effectively with interdisciplinary teams in the development and implementation of behavior intervention plans.
- Evaluate ethical considerations in functional assessment and behavior intervention planning within the context of ABA practice.
- Reflect on personal and professional growth in conducting functional assessments and developing behavior intervention plans.
- Explore emerging trends and future directions in functional assessment within the field of ABA.

Required textbooks

- Matson, J. L. (2021). Functional assessment for challenging behaviors. New York: Springer.
- Cipani, E. (2018). Functional behavioral assessment, diagnosis, and treatment: A complete system for education and mental health settings. New York: Springer.
- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). Applied behavior analysis (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

- O'Neill, R. E., Albin, R. W., Storey, K., Horner, R. H., & Sprague, J. R. (2015). Functional assessment and program development. Nelson Education.

Supervision and Staff Performance in Applied Behavior Analysis APBA 5160

Course Overview

This graduate-level course is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively supervise staff and enhance performance within the context of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Over the span of eight weeks, students will engage in a comprehensive exploration of supervision theories, strategies, and practical applications tailored to the unique needs of behavior analytic settings. Through a combination of theoretical discussions, case studies, role-playing exercises, and hands-on experiences, participants will develop the competencies required to provide high-quality supervision and support the professional development of behavior analytic practitioners.

ABAI Content Areas

Applied Behavior Analysis

Contact hours: 48

Purpose: To develop competence in the application of the principles of behavior and multiple areas of investigation and practice.

Course Objectives

Student will be able to

- Apply various supervision principles and models effectively.
- Identify factors influencing staff performance and utilize performance indicators.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills, including feedback and reinforcement.
- Design and implement goal-setting techniques and performance management systems.
- Develop and deliver effective training programs for staff learning.
- Recognize and address challenging staff behavior using behavior analytic principles.

- Integrate cultural competence considerations into supervision practices.
- Analyze ethical responsibilities of supervisors and apply ethical decision-making principles.
- Reflect on personal supervisory style and professional growth.
- Develop a comprehensive supervision plan for a hypothetical ABA program or organization.

Required Textbook

- Reid, D.H., Parsons, M.B. & Green, C.W. (2021). The Supervisor's Guidebook: Evidence-Based Strategies for Promoting Work Quality and Enjoyment Among Human Service Staff. North Carolina Habilitative Management Consultant, Inc

Basic Experimental Analysis of Behavior APBA 5170

Course Description

This graduate level course expands on the basic concepts and principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and evaluates the basic principles of experimental analysis and research. We will focus on the basic branch of field of behavior analysis. The basic branch, known as the experimental analysis of behavior (EAB), establishes the foundational principles of the field by systematically examining the relationships between behavior and the variables that influence it, typically through controlled laboratory studies with individual organisms. Applied behavior analysis (ABA), in contrast, uses these foundational principles to address socially significant behaviors and improve outcomes in real-world contexts. Both branches are grounded in the philosophy of radical behaviorism, which shares some features with earlier behaviorist approaches (e.g., Watson's methodological behaviorism) but differs in critical ways essential for understanding the science of behavior. This course introduces students to the principles and methods of behavior analysis, with a primary focus on EAB, while also exploring the philosophical underpinnings of radical behaviorism.

ABAI Content Areas

Basic Behavior Analysis
Contact hours: 48

Purpose: To develop competence in understanding how principles of behavior are discovered and described in the context of basic research.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the core principles of behavior and the behavior-analytic framework for examining psychological processes.
- Explain the significance of experimental analysis of behavior (EAB) and the critical role that basic research plays in advancing both the science and applied practice of behavior analysis.
- Apply foundational behavior principles to interpret and analyze both routine behaviors and socially meaningful behavior challenges.
- Describe how behavioral principles can be systematically employed to induce behavior change
- Critically evaluate published experimental analyses of behavior, examining the basic behavioral processes under investigation; the theoretical rationale and hypotheses; the rigor of the experimental design; the precision and reliability of measurement and observation methods; the appropriateness of data analysis techniques; and the extent to which the conclusions are valid, data-based, and consistent with principles of the experimental analysis of behavior
- Develop an introductory awareness of contemporary methodological, empirical, and theoretical discussions that shape the ongoing evolution of the experimental analysis of behavior (EAB), including how these developments interface with, but are distinct from, trends in applied behavior analysis (ABA).

Required Textbooks

- Pierce, W. D., & Cheney, C. D. (2017). Behavior analysis and learning: Sixth Edition. Psychology Press.
- Catania, A. C. (2012). Learning (5th ed.). Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY: Sloan

Verbal Behavior APBA 5190

Course Description

This 8-week graduate course in verbal behavior provides an in-depth exploration of the principles, theories, and applications of verbal behavior analysis. Grounded in the

foundational work of B.F. Skinner and expanded upon by contemporary researchers, the course delves into the complexities of language acquisition, verbal operants, and the functional analysis of verbal behavior. Through a combination of theoretical discussions, empirical studies, and practical applications, students will develop a comprehensive understanding of verbal behavior and its relevance to various fields including psychology, education, speech pathology, and applied behavior analysis.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze the verbal repertoire: Identify, define, and differentiate the primary verbal operants (mand, tact, intraverbal, echoic, autoclitic) and explain their functional relations to environmental variables.
- Apply behavior-analytic principles: Demonstrate the ability to design and implement interventions targeting verbal behavior, using foundational principles of behavior analysis to teach socially significant communication skills.
- Interpret verbal behavior research: Critically evaluate empirical studies on verbal behavior, assessing experimental design, measurement, analysis, and the validity of conclusions.
- Address complex verbal behavior issues: Use knowledge of motivating operations, reinforcement contingencies, and functional relations to analyze and modify complex verbal behavior in diverse populations.
- Integrate conceptual and applied perspectives: Explain how the conceptual framework of verbal behavior informs both basic research and applied behavior-analytic practice, promoting ethical and effective interventions.

ABAI Content Areas

Applied Behavior Analysis

Contact hours: 24

Purpose: To develop competence in the application of the principles of behavior and multiple areas of investigation and practice.

ABAI Content Areas

Conceptual Analysis

Contact hours: 24

Purpose: To develop competence in the history and philosophy of behaviorism, theoretical approaches to understanding behavior, and interpretation of behavior in terms of the concepts and principles of behavior analysis

Required Textbooks

- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (3rd Edition). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.
- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal Behavior*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/11256-000>

Portfolio Review APBA 5950

Course Description

This graduate-level course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to consolidate and demonstrate their understanding of advanced topics in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) through a comprehensive portfolio review. Students will synthesize their knowledge gained from previous coursework and practical experiences to create a portfolio that showcases their proficiency in key areas of ABA practice, including assessment, intervention design, implementation, and evaluation. Emphasis will be placed on critical thinking, analysis of case studies, ethical considerations, and application of evidence-based practices.

Note: This course is designed as a 0-credit hour course, focusing solely on portfolio development and review. Students will not receive academic credit, but successful completion of the course demonstrates proficiency in advanced topics in ABA practice.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to

- Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of key concepts, principles, and methodologies in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) through the development of a comprehensive portfolio.
- Apply critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate various assessment tools, behavior intervention strategies, and evidence-based practices in ABA.

- Design effective behavior intervention plans (BIPs) based on functional assessments and individualized client needs, considering ethical guidelines and best practices.
- Implement behavior interventions with fidelity across diverse settings, demonstrating competency in data collection, progress monitoring, and collaboration with stakeholders.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of behavior interventions through systematic data analysis and make data-based decisions to modify intervention plans as needed.

Required Textbook

None

Thesis APBA 6000

Course Description

The Thesis Seminar in Applied Behavior Analysis is designed to guide graduate students through the process of conceptualizing, designing, executing, and presenting an original research project in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). This course spans two terms to provide students with sufficient time and support to complete their thesis.

Note: This course will be conducted over two terms to allow students ample time to complete their thesis projects. Regular meetings with the instructor, peer feedback sessions, and individualized support will be provided throughout the duration of the course to facilitate progress and ensure successful completion of the thesis.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to

- **Research Design and Proposal Development:** Students will learn the principles of research design and develop a comprehensive thesis proposal under the guidance of the instructor. Emphasis will be placed on selecting appropriate research questions, designing sound methodology, and establishing clear hypotheses.

- **Literature Review:** Students will conduct an in-depth review of the relevant literature pertaining to their research topic. They will critically evaluate existing research studies, identify gaps in the literature, and synthesize findings to inform their own research.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Students will implement their proposed research design, collect data, and employ appropriate statistical analyses to evaluate their hypotheses. Through hands-on experience, students will gain proficiency in data collection methods commonly used in ABA research.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Ethical principles and guidelines governing research involving human participants will be discussed in depth. Students will learn to navigate ethical dilemmas, obtain institutional review board (IRB) approval, and ensure the protection of participants' rights throughout the research process.
- **Thesis Writing:** Through structured workshops and individualized feedback, students will develop their thesis chapters, including the introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion sections. Attention will be given to clarity, coherence, and adherence to APA style guidelines.
- **Presentation Skills:** Students will prepare and deliver a formal presentation of their thesis research to their peers and faculty members. They will learn effective strategies for presenting complex scientific information clearly and persuasively.
- **Revision and Finalization:** Following feedback from the instructor and peers, students will revise and finalize their thesis manuscripts. Emphasis will be placed on addressing critiques, strengthening arguments, and ensuring the overall quality of the written work.

Required Textbook

- American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). Author.