

BEHAVIOR THEORY

Professor: Tim Weil

Hello, I'm Doctor Timothy Weil. I'd like to welcome you to behavior theory. My particular training in behavior analysis started at Florida State University back in the '90s and moved on to University of Nevada, Reno, where I conducted graduate studies. In my particular experience as an undergraduate, I was a psychology major, but I really wasn't excited about anything that I was learning in my psychology classes.

It wasn't until I happened upon a particular piece of paper hanging in a hallway, in the psychology department at Florida State, that said, we need volunteers to help with children diagnosed with autism. And I went ahead, realizing that I needed some experience in order to get a job when I graduated, to go down this road of behavior analysis, which I'd never heard before.

From that particular experience on through to my very first class in behavior modification, I realized that this was the field for me. And the reason is because it's practical, it's applied, it actually helps people. The information that you learn in our classes applies directly to not only the people that you help and work with, but your own life.

One of the coolest things about this class isn't just that we bring together everything else in our field, but that it informs how we do what we do. So the decisions that we make are really based in our theoretical system.

What we're trying to do is help you develop an understanding of the theoretical orientation called radical behaviorism. We then take this into an area called functional contextualization. This is a more contemporary approach to behaviorism, or behavior analysis, in general. And so, our goal, for you, is to understand, again, why we do what we do, how we think how we think, and where these particular procedures come from in such a way that there is a cohesion between the three cornerstones of our field that being science, practice, and theory.

When it comes down to this particular class and the study type of behavior that you should engage in, it's going to be slightly different than the stuff that you experienced in your other coursework. So with regards to the other courses, they are mostly didactic, which means, as you probably have experienced, that they're mostly lecture based. And in that situation, there's a little bit less focus on the particular interaction style or interaction between individuals. In other words, opinions matter less in those classes.

In this particular class though, your opinion matters a great deal. And your opinion helps to inform your readings as well. And so I urge you to take very seriously the objectives that we provide for you for each of the chapters in the readings, so that you have a better understanding of what other people say about theory, about radical behavioral theory, and functional contextualization, but also so that you can then input your own particular opinion on those. And that's where the requirement for the discussion board is so very important for this class. What happens in that

situation is you have the opportunity to discuss not just what you've learned in terms of the readings, but also in terms of your opinion on the readings.

Again, I'd like to welcome you to this course, and I hope you find it to be not only entertaining, but also very informative. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us. We want to make sure that you're successful every step of the road.

Thank you and take care.