

SPSY 7507 - Principles of ABA in School Psychology

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 01, CRN 41162,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Elizabeth Christani

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Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title: Elizabeth Christani, Ed.S., Adjunct Instructor

Instructor Professional Qualifications: Ed.S., School Psychology, Youngstown State University (2017); M.S., Intervention Services, Youngstown State University (2015); B.S., Interventions Specialist, Kent State University (2013).

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Course Description

7507. Principles of ABA in School Psychology. This course will develop and strengthen knowledge, understanding, and practical skills related to basic principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and behavior modification techniques. Candidates will gain knowledge of the principles and components imperative in conducting functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and developing effective behavior intervention plans (BIP) in the educational environment. At the conclusion of this course, candidates will be able to construct a functional assessment interview (FAI), conduct an FBA utilizing appropriate data collection methodologies to address behavior(s) of concern, develop a BIP utilizing FBA data, select appropriate empirically supported intervention(s), and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented intervention(s). Prereq.: EdS in SPSY candidate. Coreq.: SPSY 7506. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	The Verbal Behavior Approach: How to Teach Children with Autism and Related Disorders.	Barbera, M.L. & Rasmussen, T.	
Required	Functional Behavioral Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment, Second Edition: A Complete System for Education and Mental Health Settings.	Cipani, E. & Schock, K. M.	
Required	Functional Assessment and Program Development for Problem Behavior: A Practical Handbook (3rd Ed.)	O'Neill, R. E., Albin, R. W., Storey, K., Horner, R. H., & Sprague, J. R.	

Additional and Optional Readings:

Arnold, K. D. & Stephens T. M. (2004). Integrated Functional Behavior Assessment Protocol (IF-BAP). Universal Publishing, PA. (Provided by Instructor).

Benner, G., Nelson, J.R., Sanders, E., & Ralston, N. (2012). Behavior intervention for students with externalizing behavior problems: Primary-level standard protocol. *Exceptional Children*, 78 (2), 181-198.

Campbell, A. & Anderson, C. M. (2011). Check in/check out: A systematic evaluation and component analysis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 44, 315–326.

Debnam, K., Pas, E., & Bradshaw, C. (2012). Secondary and tertiary support systems in schools implementing school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports: A preliminary descriptive analysis. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 14 (3), 142-152.

Horner, R. H., Kincaid, D., Sugai, G., Lewis, T., Eber, L., Barrett, S., Rossetto D. C., Richter, M., Sullivan, E., Boezio, C., Algozzine, B., Reynolds, H., & Johnson, N. (2014). Scaling up school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports: The experiences of seven states with documented success. *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, 16, 197-208.

Sprague, J. R., Walker, H., Golly, A., White, K., Myers, D. R., & Shannon, T. (2002). Translating research into effective practice: The effects of a universal staff and student intervention on key indicators of school safety and discipline. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 24 (4), 495-511.

Sugai, G., O'Keeffe, B. V., & Fallon, L. M. (2012). A contextual consideration of culture and school-wide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 14, 197-208.

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
Thu	8/27	n/a	Course Introduction & Foundations of Applied Behavior Analysis • Syllabus and course expectations • Foundations and principles of ABA • Introduction to data-based decision-making • Reliability and data collection	Research-to-Practice Assignment: Introduction to literature analysis and presentation requirements FBA/BIP. Introduction to Rich Center critical task and case expectations
Thu	9/3	Readings: O'Neill et al. (2015), Chapters 1–2; Barbera & Rasmussen (2007), Chapters 1–2	Behavioral Principles & Introduction to Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) • Purpose and components of FBA • Function-based assessment and intervention • Behavioral principles underlying assessment	Research-to-Practice Milestone: Begin identifying research related to the behavioral concerns, assessment, and/or intervention needs relevant to your case
Thu	9/10	Cipani & Schock (2011), Chapters 1–2; O'Neill et al. (2015), Chapter 2	Indirect Assessment & Defining Behavior • Student/staff/parent interviews • Functional Assessment Interviews (FAIs) • Identifying behaviors of concern • Operational definitions • Introduction to direct observation	FBA/BIP Milestone: Begin record review, interviews/FAIs, and identification of target behavior(s)
Thu	9/17	Barbera & Rasmussen (2007), Chapter 3; O'Neill et al. (2015), Chapters 2–3	Multiple Sources of FBA Data & Hypothesis Development • Cumulative record review • Direct behavior ratings • Integrating indirect assessment data • Introduction to hypothesis generation • Functional analysis concepts	FBA/BIP Milestone: Develop/refine operational definition(s) and plan direct observation/data collection
Thu	9/24	O'Neill et al. (2015), Chapter 2 and Appendices B, C, D, & G; Cipani & Schock (2011), Chapter 2	Direct Observation, ABC Analysis & Behavioral Data • Direct observation methods • ABC data collection and analysis • Identifying behavioral patterns • Graphing behavioral data • Introduction to single-case design concepts	FBA/BIP Milestone: Conduct direct observations and begin collecting ABC/baseline data
Thu	10/1	O'Neill et al. (2015), Chapters 2–4; Cipani & Schock (2011), Chapter 2; Barbera & Rasmussen (2007), Chapter 4	Analyzing FBA Data & Developing a Functional Hypothesis • Integrating indirect and direct data • Identifying antecedent and consequence patterns • Hypothesis development and confirmation • Skill versus performance considerations • Identifying potential reinforcers	FBA/BIP Milestone: Continue direct observations; begin analysis of patterns and development of hypothesized function

Thu	10/8	O'Neill et al. (2015), Chapters 3–4; Cipani & Schock (2011), Chapter 3	FBA Interpretation & Professional Communication • Interpreting assessment findings • FBA report writing • Communicating behavioral assessment results • Legal and ethical considerations	FBA/BIP Milestone: Graph and interpret assessment data; refine hypothesis of function Research-to-Practice Milestone: Identify 3–5 scholarly, peer-reviewed studies relevant to your case
Thu	10/15	O'Neill et al. (2015), Chapter 3 and Appendix F; Cipani & Schock (2011), Chapter 4	Function-Based Behavioral Intervention • Reinforcement-based interventions • Extinction and planned ignoring • Response reduction procedures and ethical considerations • Shaping and chaining • Generalization and maintenance	Research-to-Practice Milestone: Analyze and synthesize selected research; identify implications for your FBA and BIP
Thu	10/22	O'Neill et al. (2015), Chapter 5	Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) • Connecting function to intervention • Selecting replacement behaviors • Antecedent/prevention strategies • Teaching and reinforcement strategies • Ohio forms and requirements • Supporting implementation • Progress monitoring	FBA/BIP Milestone: Develop function-based BIP from FBA findings
Thu	10/29	n/a	Individual Case Consultation & FBA/BIP Development • Individual candidate meetings with instructor as needed • Review of assessment data and hypothesized function • Function-based intervention planning • Progress-monitoring planning	FBA/BIP: Provide current FBA /BIP materials and available data to instructor in Blackboard Research-to-Practice: Continue synthesis of 3–5 selected studies and development of literature analysis and presentation.
Thu	11/5	Barbera & Rasmussen (2007), Chapters 5–11, as assigned; Cipani & Schock (2011), Chapters 4–5.	Evaluating Intervention Effectiveness & Data-Based Decision-Making • Evaluating target and replacement behaviors • Assessing intervention effectiveness • Treatment fidelity and implementation considerations • Modifying intervention based on data • Generalization and maintenance • Additional intervention considerations for students with intensive learning and behavioral needs	FBA/BIP Milestone: Implement BIP when feasible; collect and analyze intervention/progress-monitoring data.
Thu	11/12	n/a	Research-to-Practice Presentations – Group 1 • Candidates 1–6 • Research synthesis • Connections to FBA findings and hypothesized function • Connections to BIP decisions • Research-to-practice implication	Research-to-Practice Presentation Due – Group 1 • Approximately 15-minute presentation • Approximately 5-minute Q&A/discussion • Presentation materials submitted as directed
Thu	11/19	n/a	Research-to-Practice Presentations – Group 2 • Candidates 7–12 • Research synthesis • Connections to FBA findings and hypothesized function • Connections to BIP decisions	Research-to-Practice Presentation Due – Group 2 • Approximately 15-minute presentation • Approximately 5-minute Q&A/discussion • Presentation materials submitted as directed
Thu	11/26	no class - Happy Thanksgiving!		
Thu	12/3	n/a	Rich Center Individual FBA/BIP Presentations – Group 1 • Candidates 1–6	Critical Task Due – Group 1: Finalized, redacted FBA/BIP materials submitted as directed. Upload required Critical Task materials to Taskstream/SLL by the established deadline.
Thu	12/10	n/a	Rich Center Individual FBA/BIP Presentations – Group 2 • Candidates 7–12 • Course synthesis and closure	Critical Task Due – Group 2: Finalized, redacted FBA/BIP materials submitted as directed. Upload required Critical Task materials to Taskstream/SLL by the established deadline.

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.