



**Department of Teaching, Learning & Leading**  
**Applied Behavior Analysis III: Applications in Developmental Disabilities**  
**Spring 2025**

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| <b>Instructor:</b> Johanna Higgins, PhD, BCBA-D<br>Assistant Professor of Practice<br>Department of Teaching Learning & Leading<br>University of Pittsburgh<br><b>Email:</b> jhiggins@pitt.edu | <b>Day/Time:</b> Wednesday 6:00 – 8:30 PM<br><b>Location:</b> Wesley W. Posvar Hall 5602<br><b>Office hours:</b> by appointment<br><b>Preferred method of communication:</b> email<br><b>Phone:</b> |
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### School of Education Mission

**We ignite learning.** We strive for well-being for all. **We teach.** We commit to learner, family, and community success. **We commit to educational equity.** We advocate. We work for justice. **We cultivate relationships.** We forge engaged partnerships. **We collaborate.** We learn with and from communities. **We innovate and agitate.** We pursue and produce knowledge. We research. **We disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures.** We approach learning as intertwined with health, wellness, and human development. We address how national, global, social, and technological change impacts learning. **We shape practice and policy.** We teach with and for dignity. We think. We dream. **We lead with integrity.** We are the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh.

### Course Description

This is the third of seven courses meeting the total academic requirements for board certification as a behavior analyst. This course focuses on the application of principles and procedures covered in ABA 1, ABA 2, and ABA 7 to a wide range of behavioral challenges and support needs of individuals with developmental disabilities.

### Course Objectives

As a result of active participation and successful completion of requirements, learners will:

|  |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Understand the foundations of applied behavior analysis as it related to DDs | Identify and describe characteristics of developmental disabilities | Develop skills in assessment and intervention planning | Critically examine ethical and cultural considerations in aba service delivery | Apply behavioral strategies to promote independence and address specific challenges |
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## **Important Course Information**

### **Meetings**

- **General classes** are held in person on Wednesdays 6:00 – 8:30 PM in Wesley W. Posvar Hall Room 5602. If you are unable to attend, I will share the materials we used in class with a summary afterwards. Unfortunately, I will not be offering virtual attendance for this class as it largely discussion based.
- **No meeting** on 1/29 and 3/19. On these days, it is recommended that learners meet with team members to complete assignments. Learners will be asked to complete work asynchronously (on their own).
- **Behavior Skills Training (BST) Lab** will be held on 3/5 and 4/2
- **Meet in Dr. Higgins' office in Posvar Hall** to explore professional development materials on 2/26.

### **Communication**

Please sign up to have announcements pushed out to you! The instructor will use Canvas (Learning Management System; LMS) announcements to communicate most frequently with learners.

- Tutorial on signing up for announcements: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/doc-10624>.
- Please communicate with the instructor through Canvas or via email at [jhiggins@pitt.edu](mailto:jhiggins@pitt.edu).

### **Office hours**

Learners may schedule an individual meeting anytime by emailing the instructor at [jhiggins@pitt.edu](mailto:jhiggins@pitt.edu). The instructor is available to meet in person at her office in Oakland or via Zoom web conference.

### **Textbooks**

**Required:** Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L. (2020). Applied behavior analysis (3rd Ed.). Pearson Education, Inc. (ISBN-10: 0-13-475255-4; ISBN-13: 978-0-13-475255-6)

**Other Required Readings:** Various seminal and current journal articles relevant to lesson topics (provided via Canvas).

### **Web Sites of Interest**

**Behavior Analyst Certification Board:** [www.BACB.com](http://www.BACB.com)

**JABA Web Site:** [www.envmed.rochester.edu/wwwrap/behavior/jaba/jabahome.htm](http://www.envmed.rochester.edu/wwwrap/behavior/jaba/jabahome.htm)

**JEAB Web Site:** [www.envmed.rochester.edu/wwwrap/behavior/jeab/jeabhome.htm](http://www.envmed.rochester.edu/wwwrap/behavior/jeab/jeabhome.htm)

**ABAI Website:** <https://www.abainternational.org/welcome.aspx>

### **Participation expectations**

Learning is a social process. Attendance this semester will be tracked. Please aim to join us for all classes, log on to Canvas and work through the modules weekly, be an active participant during Journal Club and collaborate with other learners. In the event of prolonged absences in which you do not participate in the prior (due to sickness or family emergency), you should contact me via email ([jhiggins@pitt.edu](mailto:jhiggins@pitt.edu)). Extreme emergencies will be handled on an individual basis. Notes: **I will not grade attendance the first week of class. You may miss up to two classes with no impact on your grade.**

### **Due dates**

**Assignments and quizzes** are due on **Sunday by 11:59 PM** with one exception. **Journal club article** summaries are due immediately before class at 6:00 PM on Wednesdays.

Most assignments are due on **Friday by 11:59 PM**. Need an extension? Just ask. **Your instructor is happy to provide one!** Note: Assignments not due on Thursday will be noted on the course schedule.

### **Assignment submissions in Canvas**

**Important!** Please put your name on all assignments and when appropriate, save your file with last name followed by the assignment title (e.g., **Higgins\_reflection**).

### **Confidentiality**

You are responsible to maintain the confidentiality of all the learners you work with in field placements related to your coursework at the University of Pittsburgh. When writing or completing assignments for courses or speaking about your field experience and the learners you work with, use **pseudonyms** (not initials) for learner, teacher, and school names. In public, it is your responsibility to keep written assignments and any other materials bearing the names of learners, teachers, or staff secure from the view of others.

### **Feedback**

For most assignments, the instructor provides group-level summary for the entire class and/or individual feedback rubrics. The instructor analyzes highlights, patterns of strengths, points of improvements and posted as an announcement. Individual written feedback can be requested by a learner at any time.

### **Late assignments or request for extension**

Request for late assignments must be cleared ahead of time and for good reason as judged by the instructor. Given instructor permission in advance of due dates, assignments will be accepted within two weeks of due date.

### **Grades**

To receive a course letter grade of A-C, all required assignments, projects, and course materials must be completed. The instructor can consider an incomplete only if a substantial portion (50% or more) of the class assignments is completed with a satisfactory grade (A-B) at the time of request. In all other circumstances, learners should plan to withdraw from the course.

| Percentage (%) | Letter Grade |
|----------------|--------------|
| 94 - 100       | A            |
| 90 - 93        | A-           |
| 87 - 89        | B+           |
| 83 - 86        | B            |
| 80 - 82        | B-           |
| 74 - 79        | C            |
| 69 - 73        | D            |

## Graded Activities and Assignments

| Graded Activities & Assignments  | Learning Strategy          | Point Breakdown | Total Points | % Grade     |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Attendance (10)</b> <i>Learners receive points for attending class and seminars with presenters. Learners can miss two classes during the semester and still obtain the total points.</i> | Introduction<br>Illustrate | 12x5 points     | 60           | 14%         |
| <b>Behavioral Skills Training Participation (2)</b> <i>Learners practice implementing ABA procedures.</i>  | Reflection                 | 2x10 points     | 20           | 5%          |
| <b>Behavioral Skills Training Reflection (2)</b> <i>Learners reflect in written form on their experiences implementing ABA procedures.</i>   | Mastery                    | 2x15 points     | 30           | 7%          |
| <b>Journal Club Participant Summary (8)</b> <i>Learners complete a summary of two articles reviewed each week.</i>   | Practice                   | 8x10 points     | 80           | 19%         |
| <b>Journal Club Leader and Summary (2)</b> <i>Learners lead journal club two times during the semester and complete a summary of the articles reviewed.</i>                                  | Practice                   | 2x20 points     | 40           | 10%         |
| <b>Quizzes (10)</b> <i>Learners take 11 quizzes on readings and material. The lowest quiz grade is dropped.</i>  | Mastery                    | 10x10 points    | 100          | 24%         |
| <b>Self-Care Intervention Project</b> <i>Learners develop a plan in groups with data collection to teach self-care skills.</i>   | Mastery                    | 40 points       | 40           | 10%         |
| <b>Plan and Facilitate Community ABA Journal Club (1)</b> <i>Learners facilitate community ABA Journal club meeting</i>  | Mastery                    | 50 points       | 50           | 12%         |
| <b>Total</b>   |                            |                 | <b>420</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

## Technology Requirements

Learners will need the following technology to participate fully in this course.

- Active Pitt email address (if you forward your mail make sure to check regularly)
- Access to Canvas LMS (Learning Management System)
- Internet connection (preferably high -speed broadband wired or wireless)
- Supported Web browser (Google Chrome is strongly recommended)
- Word processor (such as Microsoft Word)
- Adobe Reader (to view PDF files)

**Note:** The instructor recognizes that not all learners may have access to the technology listed above. Please reach out to the instructor to discuss accommodations if needed.

## Tech Support

Contact Pitt IT for technical assistance by submitting a ticket to the helpdesk. Learners may also contact 412-624-HELP (437) or email [helpdesk@pitt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@pitt.edu).

## **Course, School, and University Policies**

### **Online Conduct**

Appropriate online academic conduct means maintaining a safe learning environment based on mutual respect and civility. All participants in Pitt online courses are expected to behave professionally by adhering to these standards of conduct: Never transmit or promote content known to be illegal. Respect other people's privacy as well as your own. Forgive other people's mistakes. Never use harassing, threatening, embarrassing, or abusive language or actions. Online communication that fails to meet these standards of conduct will be removed from the course. Repeated misconduct may result in being blocked from online discussions, receiving a grade penalty, or being dismissed from the course. Such misconduct online may be reported to officials for action in accordance with University policy. If you ever encounter inappropriate content in our course, please contact your instructor with your concerns.

### **Academic Integrity**

Learners in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any learner suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy.

### **Disability Services**

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other modifications, you need to notify the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located in 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.

### **TLL Departmental Grievance Procedures**

The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and learners in their relationships with each other. When a learner in TLL believes that a faculty member has not met his or her obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the learner should follow this procedure:

1. The learner should talk directly to the faculty member to attempt to resolve the matter.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the learner should talk to the relevant program coordinator.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, the learner should talk to the associate chair of TLL.
4. If needed, the learner should next talk to the SOE associate dean of learners.
5. If the matter still remains unresolved, the learner should file a written statement of charges with the dean's designated Academic Integrity Administrative.

### **Civility Commitment**

As future or current teachers, we will operate from a standpoint that everyone believes that all learners deserve a quality education in a safe setting. The same can be said for university learning. A university

classroom is, by definition, space where a free exchange of ideas must happen, but where consideration for others, their views, and their life experiences is also paramount. When you are uncomfortable with an idea, it is your right to speak up about that. As we learn with and about people with very different life experiences and beliefs from our own, it is imperative that we respect these perspectives and use respectful language in discussing challenging ideas. Carefully consider your language choices to ensure that all learners feel safe and valued. If at any time you are uncomfortable please feel free to speak out and/or speak to me privately.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The University of Pittsburgh is committed to the maintenance of a community free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment violates University policy as well as state, federal, and local laws. It is neither permitted nor condoned. It is also a violation of the University of Pittsburgh's policy against sexual harassment for any employee or learner at the University of Pittsburgh to attempt in any way to retaliate against a person who makes a claim of sexual harassment. Any individual who, after thorough investigation and an informal or formal hearing, is found to have violated the University's policy against sexual harassment, will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, termination, or expulsion. Any disciplinary action taken will depend upon the severity of the offense. For more information, see the Web site: <https://www.policy.pitt.edu/cs-20-sexual-misconduct-formerly-06-05-01>

### **Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

### **Names and Pronouns**

I will gladly honor your request to address you by your name and pronoun (that may differ from the school records). Please advise me of this preference early in the term so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. You may email me or tell me in person in class, whichever is most comfortable to you! I want to be sure you feel yourself and comfortable in our class community.

### **Statement on Classroom Recording**

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, learners may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the learner's own private use.

### **Copyright Statement**

These materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See Library of Congress Copyright Office and the University Copyright Policy.

### **G-grades**

If unforeseen events (such as major illness) prevent a learner from timely completion of course work, he/she may request a meeting with the instructor to discuss the possibility of earning a “G” grade for the term. If both learner and instructor agree to the “G” grade, they collaboratively write a document that describes, in detail, what the learner needs to do to complete the required course work and the time frame (not to exceed one academic year) within which he/she must do so. Upon receiving all work, the course instructor would evaluate the work and send forward to the Associate Dean a request for the permanent grade.

### **Food/Housing Insecurity**

Many learners, both undergraduate and graduate, experience housing and/or food insecurity that can impact their academic work and general health. Please know there are resources available to you that are confidential. Of course, you are welcome to speak with me if you need support in contacting the right people/offices. You may also consider exploring the Pitt Pantry or Off-Campus Housing Office.

**TLL 2566 Applied Behavior Analysis III: Applications in Developmental Disabilities**  
**Course Outline**

[This is a draft document and will be finalized by 1/15]

| W  | Class | Lesson Topics  | Assignments Due  |
|----|-------|--|--|
| 1  | 1/8   | <b>Lesson 1 Introduction to ABA 3: Dev Disabilities</b>  | Quiz #1 due 1/12 (Sunday)  |
| 2  | 1/15  | <b>Lesson 2 Characteristics of Individuals with DDs:</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Social-Communication</i></li> </ul>  | Quiz #2 due 1/19   |
| 3  | 1/22  | <b>Lesson 3 Characteristics of Individuals with DDs:</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Challenging Behavior</i></li> </ul>  | Quiz #3 due 1/26<br>Journal Club led by Team Higgins<br>Journal Club Participant Summary due 1/22  |
| 4  | 1/29  | <b><u>NO MEETING</u></b><br><b>Lesson 4 Framework for Delivering ABA Services to Individuals with DDs</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Asynchronous presentation provided and plan to meet with team members</i></li> <li><i>No quiz due</i></li> </ul>            |  |
| 5  | 2/5   | <b>Lesson 5 Critical Issues in ABA Service Delivery:</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Quality ABA services</i></li> <li><i>Compassion and cultural sensitivity in ABA</i></li> </ul>   | Quiz #4 due 2/9<br>Journal Club led by Team Higgins<br>Journal Club Participant Summary due 2/5  |
| 6  | 2/12  | <b>Lesson 6 Critical Issues in ABA Service Delivery</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Teaming and Collaboration</i></li> <li><i>Family-centered Services</i></li> </ul>   | Quiz #5 due 2/16<br>Journal Club led by Team B & D<br>Leader and Participant Summaries due 2/12  |
| 7  | 2/19  | <b>Lesson 7 Assessment and Planning for Services for Individuals with DD</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Functional analysis</i></li> </ul>   | Quiz #6 due 2/23<br>Journal Club led by Team C & G<br>Leader and Participant Summaries due 2/19  |
| 8  | 2/26  | <b>Lesson 8 Assessment and Planning for Services for Individuals with DD</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Skill-based assessments</i></li> <li><i>Visit Dr. Higgins' office today to explore tools!</i></li> </ul>   | Quiz #7 due 3/2<br>Journal Club led by Team D & F<br>Leader and Participant Summaries due 2/26   |
| 9  | 3/5   | <b>NO CLASS</b>  | <b>SPRING BREAK</b>  |
| 10 | 3/12  | <b>Lesson 9 Function-based Intervention Plans</b><br><i>Behavior Skills Training Lab (focus on teaching mands)</i>   | Quiz #8 due 3/9<br>Journal Club led by Team E & A<br>Leader and Participant Summaries due 3/5  |
| 11 | 3/19  | <b><u>NO MEETING</u></b><br><b>Lesson 10 Promoting Independence and Self-Care for Individuals with DD</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Plan to meet with team members as needed</i></li> <li><i>No quiz due, but <b>BST Lab Reflection due 3/19</b></i></li> </ul> |  |
| 12 | 3/26  | <b>Lesson 11 Interventions for Feeding Challenges</b>  | Quiz #9 due 3/30<br>Journal Club led by Team B & D<br>Leader and Participant Summaries due 3/25  |
| 13 | 4/2   | <b>Lesson 12 Interventions for Sleep &amp; Toileting</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Behavior Skills Training Lab (focus on self-care)</i></li> </ul>   | Quiz #10 due 4/6<br>Journal Club led by Team C & G<br>Leader and Participant Summaries due 4/2   |
| 14 | 4/9   | <b>Lesson 13 Considerations for Supporting Young Children &amp; Adults</b>   | Quiz #11 due 3/13<br>Journal Club led by Team D & F<br>Leader and Participant Summaries due 4/9  |
| 15 | 4/16  | <b>Lesson 14 Wrap up and prepare for Community Journal Club</b>  | Journal Club led by Team E & A<br>Self-Care Project Due due 4/16<br>Leader and Participant Summaries due 4/16<br>BST Lab Reflection #2 due |
| 16 | 4/23  | <b>Class Led Community Journal Club 7:00 PM</b>  | <b>NO FINAL EXAM</b>   |