

# ***TIBI Online Syllabus for BEHG 415: Basic Autism Intervention Methods***

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[This is another installment in the series of syllabi for TIBI's online courses. Each syllabus appears in *Behaviorology Today* basically in the same form as it appears online. The series continues whenever there are syllabi that have yet to be printed, or that require reprinting due to substantial revisions. Locate additional syllabi through the *Syllabus Directory* at the back of the most recent issue.—Ed.]

**Note #1:** This syllabus contains some notes that supplement the more traditional syllabus parts. Each note is

numbered for convenient reference. Some notes, like this one, have multiple paragraphs.

*This syllabus is a long document.* It is longer than a syllabus for a face-to-face course as it contains material that the professor would otherwise cover in person. *Hence it was designed to be printed out for reading!* Furthermore, it was designed to be used *as a task check-off list.* Please print it out and use it these ways.

The only activity in this course for which you might need access to a computer, before the web-log, is to print this syllabus as a reference for how this course works so you can follow the directions to complete this course. This is a matter of access, student access to education, so that everyone who wants this course can take it regardless of whether they own several computers or only have access to one in their local library or in a friend's home.

Students can, if they wish, study the topics of this course free of charge, perhaps to fulfill their own interests. They would do so simply by completing the activities described in this syllabus.

Students can also study the topics of this course for TIBI (The International Behaviorology Institute) credit, perhaps toward a TIBI certificate. They would do so by paying the necessary fee to be assigned a professor to provide feedback on, and assessment of, their efforts. (This course can be part of several TIBI certificates, including the Effective Autism Intervention Certificate. Contact TIBI or visit [www.behaviorology.org](http://www.behaviorology.org) for details.)

Also, students can study the topics of this course for regular academic credit; they would do so by contacting any accredited institution of higher education that offers behaviorology courses accepted by TIBI, such as the State University of New York at Canton (SUNY-Canton) at [www.canton.edu](http://www.canton.edu) which is SUNY-Canton's web site. At SUNY-Canton this course is offered as *SSCI 375: Basic Autism ABA Methods*. TIBI automatically accepts A or B grades from the academic-credit version of this course as equivalent to its own course toward its certificates (and C and D academic-credit grades can be remediated through TIBI for TIBI credit; contact TIBI for details). Alternatively, the work done completing this course through TIBI may make taking the course for academic credit easier; ask the professor who teaches SUNY-Canton's equivalent course about this.

The parts of this syllabus cover many topics. While the headings may be different, these include (a) the course content and objectives, (b) the text, study, and assessment materials, (c) the grading policy, (d) the necessary work-submission methods and professor feedback, and (e) the study-activity sequence and completion timelines.

**Note #2:** The prerequisite (or corequisite) for this course is BEHG 101: Introduction to Behaviorology I. If you have not had this prerequisite course (or its academic-credit equivalent such as SSCI 245: Introduction to the Science

and Technology of Behavior, from SUNY-Canton), then you need to take it either before taking the current course, or at the same time as you take the current course.

### **Course Description**

*BEHG 415: Basic Autism Intervention Methods.* This course examines the application of the natural science and technology of behavior to the interventions for children with autism, and related developmental disabilities, using fundamental applied behaviorology methods (known to many as ABA—Applied Behavior Analysis—methods). Exercising a systematic and data-based behaviorological orientation, the course topics include (a) the evaluation of different approaches for effectiveness, (b) the skills to be taught to children with autism, (c) the behavior engineering practices and skills needed to teach autistic children effectively, (d) the different roles of professionals and para-professionals involved in autism intervention efforts, (e) the organizational and legal supports available to autistic children and their families, (f) the roles of different autism treatment team members, (g) the organizational and legal interactions between families with autistic children and their local schools, and (h) the answers to the common questions asked about autistic children. Examination of autism training curricula, programs, practices, data sheets, settings, and case histories are also part of the course.

*Note #3:* To check out other behaviorology courses offered by TIBI, visit their locations on the TIBI web site ([www.behaviorology.org](http://www.behaviorology.org)). To check out other behaviorology courses offered by SUNY-Canton, see the list and descriptions—and in some cases, the syllabi for the asynchronous versions—on the faculty web page of the professor who teaches them (which currently is Dr. Stephen F. Ledoux; click Ledoux in the faculty directory at [www.canton.edu](http://www.canton.edu)).

### **Course Objectives**

The main objective of this course is to *expand the student's behavior repertoire* measurably in relevant areas of behaviorological course content. The student will:

- ❧ Compare autism intervention approaches and strategies, and evaluate their relative effectiveness;
- ❧ Analyze the range and depth of the behavior skills to be taught to children with autism by autism intervention personnel;
- ❧ Apply the behavior engineering practices and skills that autism intervention personnel develop to conduct autism intervention programs in the standard settings (i.e., center-based and home-based programs) in a professional and effective way;
- ❧ Compare the depth and range of the differing behavior engineering activities, roles, and qualifications of

both professionals and para-professionals involved in effective autism intervention;

- ❧ Analyze the benefits of the variety and sources of organizational and legal supports available for families with autistic children;
- ❧ Evaluate the roles of the various professionals who are members of autism intervention teams, such as speech-language pathologists;
- ❧ Interpret the organizational and legal considerations relevant to the interactions between families with autistic children and their local schools;
- ❧ Synthesize comprehensive and professional answers to the common and difficult questions asked by parents of autistic children.

### **Additional Objectives**

- ❧ Successful, A earning students will use (at an accuracy level of 90% or better) basic disciplinary terminology both when discussing behaviorological knowledge, and when applying behaviorological skills, relevant to autism interventions.
- ❧ Such successful students will also ask questions, seek answers, converse about, and act on the uses and benefits of this discipline for humanity.
- ❧ Such successful students will also behave more effectively in other ways with respect to themselves and others.

### **Required Materials (in their order of use)**

- ❧ Maurice, C., Green, G., & Luce, S.C. (Eds.). (1996). *Behavioral Intervention for Young Children with Autism*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. (ISBN 0-89079-683-1)
- ❧ Ledoux, S.F. (2003). *Study Questions for Maurice et al's "Behavioral Intervention for Young Children with Autism."* Canton, NY: ABCs. (ISBN 1-882508-18-1)
- ❧ Maurice, C. (1994). *Let Me Hear Your Voice*. New York: Ballantine Books. (ISBN 0-449-90664-7)
- ❧ New York State Department of Health Early Intervention Program. (1999 [Publication No. 4216]). *Clinical Practice Guideline Quick Reference Guide (for Parents and Professionals): Autism / Pervasive Developmental Disorders*. Albany, NY: New York State Department of Health.

Each resident of New York State can order a free single copy of this book by sending a request, *with their name and address*, to this address:

Publications  
New York State Department of Health  
PO Box 2000  
Albany NY 12220

For a small fee for each copy, others can order a single copy, or anyone can order multiple copies, by calling 518-439-7286 to place a credit card order, or by contacting Health Education Services at this address:

Health Education Services  
PO Box 7126  
Albany NY 12224

In either case, include this information with your request for the book: "*Clinical Practice Guideline Quick Reference Guide: Autism / Pervasive Developmental Disorders, Assessment and Intervention for Young Children (Age 0-3 Years)*, 108 pages, 1999 Publication No. 4216.

### Recommended Materials

These are references to materials that, while *not* required for the course, may also be of interest to those who wish to go deeper into the course topics and extensions:

✻ Latham, G.I. (2-part video program). *The Making of a Stable Family*. Logan, UT: P&T ink.

✻ Latham, G.I. (2-cassette, or 2-CD, program). *An Angel Out of Tune*. Logan, UT: P&T ink.

✻ Latham, G.I. (1-cassette tape program of a presentation at an international conference covering autism). *Behind the Schoolhouse Door: Eight Skills Every Teacher Should Have*. Garden City, NY: Eyedears A/V (phone 516-739-8864 and ask for tape #20-ASAT-12). (Or, get this tape from P&T ink.)

*Note #4:* You can order most of the required *books* and *A/V items* through the publishers, including *Pro-Ed* at—toll free—1-800-897-3202, *ABCs* at 315-386-2684, and *P&T ink* either at 435-752-5749 or—toll free—(for credit-card orders only) at 1-888-750-4814. You may also order these materials through the online bookstore at [www.behavior.org](http://www.behavior.org) which is the web site of the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies.

Also, this course is grounded in the Shaping Model of Education which is informed by behaviorological science (rather than the Presentation Model of Education which is informed by psychology). In the shaping model, teaching is not seen as mostly talking (nor is learning seen as mostly listening). Instead, teaching is the scientifically grounded design, arrangement, and application of educational materials, methods, and contingencies in ways that generate and maintain small but continuously accumulating behaviors the short and long range consequences of which are successful in producing an ever wider range of effective responding (i.e., learning) on the part of the student.

### Grades

Grading policy does not involve curves, for you are not in competition with anyone (except perhaps yourself). That is, all students are expected to produce the academic products demonstrating that they have, individually, achieved at least mastery of the subject matter, if not fluency. Therefore, all students are expected to earn

an A or a B (although inadequate products will produce a lower result that requires remediation before it can become a passing grade). Also, all students will receive the grades they earn. This holds even if the expectation for which the course is designed—that all students earn *As*—is met: If all earn *As*, then all receive *As*.

Passing grades are limited to A and B, and are earned according to the amount of assigned work that is successfully completed:

✻ Earning an A consists mainly of satisfactorily completing 90% or more of the work on all assignments.

✻ Earning a B consists mainly of satisfactorily completing more than 80% of the work on all assignments (but not more than 90% on them).

For convenience a point-accumulation system is invoked to keep track of progress through the course. All but one of the 21 assignments (one on each of the 21 chapters) in the Maurice *et al* book are worth 10 points each, for a total of 200 points. The assignment on the teaching programs chapter, Chapter 5, is worth 20 points. The book review assignment on *Let Me Hear Your Voice* is worth 50 points. And the web-log assignment is worth 30 points. This provides a grand total of 300 possible points. The percentage used to consider what grade you are earning is the percentage of these possible points that you actually earn.

However, point accumulation is not the grade determiner but is merely used as a convenient way to track progress *on the presumption that all course tasks are in progress*. This is because doing work on *all* of the tasks for the course is the more relevant determiner of grades than is the accumulation of points. (For example, a student who tries to accumulate just enough points, on some easier tasks, to get a B—while ignoring other course tasks—would not that way actually meet the criteria for a B and so would have to continue and complete all the required work satisfactorily to earn one of the passing grades.)

Also, students should expect to be asked occasionally to complete various test-like assessments. The level of success on these assessments helps gauge the extent to which the work on the course assignments is actually producing the learning implied by the completion of that work.

These practices are in place because the scientific research-data based Shaping Model of Education recognizes the student/professor relationship as a professional relationship in which coercive practices (i.e., aversive educational practices) are seen as inappropriate (so long as extreme conditions do not exist making such practices unavoidable). Instead, the more effective, efficient, and productive non-coercive practices of carefully designed and sequenced assignments emphasizing added reinforcement for timely work well done is generally seen as more appropriate. So, your effort and cooperation are expected

and presumed; please do not disappoint either your professor or yourself.

### ***About Using the Texts & Study Question Books***

Unless specified otherwise, you need to write out your answers in longhand. The reason you are to write out your answers by hand is that this type of verbal response brings about more learning than merely saying—or even typing—the answer. This is because—as taught in another advanced behaviorology class (i.e., BEHG 355: Verbal Behavior I)—writing the answer in longhand involves both point-to-point correspondence and formal similarity between the stimuli and the response products of the answer.

### ***The Maurice et al Book***

The Maurice *et al* textbook introduces the basic practices and considerations derived from the natural science of behavior, behaviorology, and applied to autism interventions. (The authors have made this book look mostly like a behavior analysis book for historical reasons as discussed in the “Introduction to Behaviorology Origins” paper covered in the prerequisite course.)

### ***The Maurice et al Study Question Book***

The study questions were prepared to help you absorb the material from each of the chapters in the Maurice *et al* textbook. You are to complete each chapter’s study questions in the sequence assigned. Learning occurs when responses are made (like writing question answers) and reinforced, especially responses that automatically provide their own reinforcing consequences (like being right) as does writing out study question answers correctly. You complete the assigned study questions, *after reading the chapter through*, by *writing out* the answer to each question when you come to it as you *reread* the chapter. You *write out* the answers right in the *Study Question* book. Write out your answers in full sentences that incorporate the questions.

The study question book starts with a section titled To the Student and Teacher. *Read this section first!* It explains more on how to do the study questions successfully. (You will also find it helpful to mark the number of each study question in the margins of the textbook at the location of the study question’s answer...) Study question assignments are provided in the *Assignment Sequence* section. Submit your work according to the method specified in the *Submitting Your Work* section.

*Note #5:* Since you are to write out your answers to the study questions directly in the study question book, you need to have your own study question book. To assure that this is followed by everyone equally, you need to fill out and send in to your professor (by regular postal mail)

the original ownership form in the rear of your study question book.

### ***The Book Review Assignment***

This assignment involves reading Maurice’s *Let Me Hear Your Voice* and then writing a three to five page *typed* review of this book. You may begin this assignment anytime *after* completing Chapter 4 of the Maurice *et al* book. You should submit this assignment *before* you finish Chapter 17 of the Maurice *et al* book (a period of eight weeks at most). Submit your work according to the method specified in the *Submitting Your Work* section.

### ***The Web-Log Assignment***

This written assignment requires you to create a two to three page *typed* log (like a diary) from a two to three hour visit to the autism-related parts of two specific web sites. The two sites you are to visit are the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies site ([www.behavior.org](http://www.behavior.org)) and the Los Horcones Community site ([www.loshorcones.org.mx](http://www.loshorcones.org.mx)). Your log should include not only the times, visited page names, visited page sequences, and page-visit durations, but also your account of the best things you learned at these sites, plus any interesting discoveries worthy of return visits. You may begin this assignment anytime *after* completing Chapter 4 of the Maurice *et al* book. You should submit this assignment *before* you finish Chapter 17 of the Maurice *et al* book (a period of eight weeks at most). Submit your work according to the method specified in the *Submitting Your Work* section.

### ***Submitting Your Work***

Different assignments have different work submission methods. These only apply if you are taking the course for TIBI credit. (Any addresses and phone/fax numbers that you may need will be clarified upon enrollment.)

To submit your study question answers, which must be hand-written, you can scan and fax to your professor the pages that have your answers for each assignment. However, your professor would prefer that you photocopy those pages and send them to your professor by regular postal mail.

To submit your book review and web log, you may email your work to your professor (but do not use email attachments). Or, you may scan and fax the work to your professor. However, your professor would prefer that you print out your work (although it too may be handwritten), photocopy it, and send it to your professor by regular postal mail.

In all cases, you are to keep the original of your work. This insures against loss and enables you and your professor to communicate about your work (as you will then both have an identical copy). Note, however, that for study question answers, email and email attachments are

neither reliable enough, nor identical enough, for this purpose, so they are not to be used for this purpose.

Your work will be perused and points will be allocated according to the quality of your work. Should any inadequacies be apparent, you will be informed so that you can make improvements. While sometimes your professor will provide a metaphorical pat on the back for a job well done, if you do not hear of any inadequacies, then pat yourself on the back for a job well done even as you continue on to the next assignment.

### Assignment Sequence

Students should work their way through the course by reading and studying the texts and materials, and sending in their work for each assignment. The slowest reasonable self-pacing of the coursework (presuming a typical 15-week semester) is this sequence which can be used as a check-off list:

- Week 1: The Maurice *et al* book, Preface & Ch. 1.
- Week 2: The Maurice *et al* book, Ch. 2.
- Week 3: The Maurice *et al* book, Ch. 3.
- Week 4: The Maurice *et al* book, Ch. 4, and begin the book review and the web-log assignments.
- Week 5: The Maurice *et al* book, Ch. 5.
- Week 6: The Maurice *et al* book, Ch. 6.
- Week 7: The Maurice *et al* book, Ch. 7.
- Week 8: The Maurice *et al* book, Chs. 8 & 9.
- Week 9: The Maurice *et al* book, Chs. 10 & 11.
- Week 10: The Maurice *et al* book, Chs. 12 & 13.
- Week 11: The Maurice *et al* book, Chs. 14 & 15, and finish the book review and the web-log assignments.
- Week 12: The Maurice *et al* book, Chs. 16 & 17.
- Week 13: The Maurice *et al* book, Chs. 18 & 19.
- Week 14: The Maurice *et al* book, Chs. 20 & 21.
- Week 15: (This is a spare week to complete any unfinished work.)

Do the assignments in this sequence, even if you do them at a faster pace than the pace presented here. If you go slower than this schedule, assignments could easily back up on you to the point where insufficient time remains to complete them in a satisfactory manner.

*Note #6: Be sure that everything you submit is readable and contains your name!*

*Note #7: The usual higher education workload expectation for a course is about 150 hours. (The typical face-to-face course features about 50 in-class contact hours with the university expecting about 100 more hours of additional study at the average rate of about two hours out of class for each hour in class.) This can be accomplished at rates ranging from about 50 hours per week over three*

weeks to about ten hours per week over the typical 15 weeks of a semester. Of course, some students may take a little less than 150 hours, while others may take more than 150 hours, to do the work to the same acceptable and expected standard.

You can—and are encouraged to—go through the assignments as rapidly as your schedule allows. This could mean spending a typical 15 weeks on the course. Or it could mean doing the whole course in as little as—but not in less than—three weeks, as one would progress through the *single* allowed course in a three-week summer school term. That is, you could work on the course anywhere from minimum part-time (i.e., at the rate of about ten hours per week, as described in the *Assignment Sequence* section) to maximum full-time (i.e., at the rate of about 50 hours per week).

If you are to be successful, you need to exercise some self-management skills by starting immediately and keeping up a reasonable and steady pace on the course work. You need to do this because your professor will *not* be reminding you that the products of your work are due; all the course work is set forth in this syllabus and so is automatically assigned. You are expected to follow through on your own. You need to set an appropriate pace for yourself (or accept the pace in the *Assignment Sequence* section) and adhere to that pace, and thereby get the sequence of assignments done and submitted to your professor. This will assist your success.

At various points in the course, you will be provided with feedback about your work. Upon completing all the coursework, you will be provided with your earned grade. (The grade is provided solely for the person whose work earned the grade.) We at TIBI are sure that the outcomes of your efforts to study this aspect of behaviorological science will benefit both you and others, and we encourage you to study further aspects. ☺

