Designing an Undergraduate Content Course

1. Define course theme (e.g., community psychology)

2. Define course scope – what will and what will not be included (e.g., will include: behavior analysis approach, intervention research based, interventions/results target entire community/subset of community; will not include: studies for which primary DV is verbal report of behavior change, interventions targeting individual/small group, non-behavior analytic research)

3. Determine specific topics under course theme (e.g., introduction to community psychology, energy conservation, crime and violence prevention, driver and pedestrian safety, child safety, behavioral medicine, prosocial behavior and community involvement, littering and recycling)

4. Determine course/topic objectives (e.g., students can describe current state of behavior analytic community psychology and identify areas in which more research is needed; students will produce a behavior analytic community psychology research proposal)

5. Select and order textbook/reading materials for topics chosen (e.g., community level behavior analytic articles chosen from PsychInfo search)

6. Determine structure of courses (e.g., 8 units - 2 lectures then exam; 2 optional remedial exams; various assignments/activities)

7. Create course outline/sequencing – In what order will you present the material? Are some topics prerequisite to others?

8. Write study objectives for each unit – What are the important points from the readings and lecture that you want the students to learn? For an 8 unit – 2 lectures then exam course, approximately 30 study objectives per unit is reasonable. Include where to find the answers at end of each objective.

9. Design assignments/activities – What assignments and/or activities (in or out of class) would help facilitate learning and offer opportunities for practice? (e.g., conduct a litter assessment, design a behavior analytic energy reduction intervention, write a brief research proposal for a behavior analytic community level intervention of your choice).

10. Design/create coursepack (if using) – Include description of coursepack contents, study objectives, assignments, readings

11. Design powerpoints for lectures – Follow basic powerpoint design rules (e.g., six words per line, six lines per slide)
12. Design Exams – Questions should match study objectives. For very large courses, multiple choice may be only option. For smaller courses (up to 50 students) use test options that give you a better idea of whether students mastered concepts (e.g. short answer essay)

13. Create syllabus – include all required university material, description of course structure, goal/objectives of course, grading procedures, brief description of assignments, course calendar, etc. Your syllabus is your contract with the students, so include anything you want them to know about how you are running your course.

14. Offer under flexible course number (e.g., PSY 3960 in Psychology) while going through curriculum change.

15. Submit curriculum change form and syllabus to get permanent number assigned (see Curriculum Change Process document).