

Biopsychology and Learning Notes

Week One

Lecture One

- **Learning:** the acquisition of a new response or the suppression of an existing response or behaviour due to experience.
- “**A relatively permanent change in behavioural potentiality that occurs as a result of reinforced practice**”.
 - Characteristic of behaviour
 - How behaviour is altered by experience
 - Behavioural mechanisms of learning and conditioning
 - Neurophysiology of learning
- **Non Associative Learning:** Learning resulting from impact of one particular stimulus.
- **Noticing and Ignoring:** Need to notice important events but learn to ignore events that occur repeatedly without consequence.
 - **Habituation:** Decline in the tendency to respond to an event that has become familiar / insignificant through repeated presentation; can be short or long term.
 - Cues draw our attention → if important we continue to attend =
 - **sensitisation.** If unimportant we learn to ignore = **habituation.**
 - **Orienting response:** Move toward / attending to new event.
 - **Dishabituation:** Recovery in responsiveness to an already habituated stimulus.
 - **Startle Responses in Rats:** Tone stimulus causes the rat to startle → repeated presentations results in progressively less startle responses.
 - Light + Tone dishabituation (of habituation → return of startle response).
 - **Sensitisation:** An increase in the strength of elicited behaviour that may result from repeated presentations of the same stimulus.
 - This occurs when we are anticipating an important stimulus so that we are prepared for important cues → mother listening for a baby's cries.