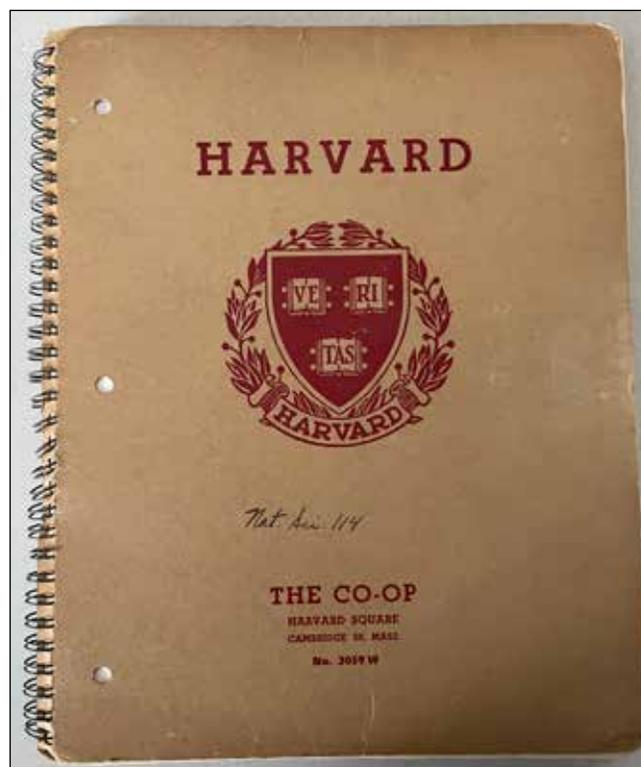




**From the Source:
Class Notes from B.F. Skinner's
Natural Science 114, Harvard University 1958**

William M. Baum

I was interested in animal behavior even as a child and did a research project with white mice when I was in high school. So when I arrived at Harvard College, I thought to concentrate in biology. At the start of spring semester of my freshman year, I was flipping through the catalogue to see what courses to take, when I saw one with “behavior” in its title: Nat Sci 114. I went to the first couple of classes and decided to take the course, taught by a professor called Skinner. He was not a great teacher, but the course was solid, and I found it interesting. The students were divided into two groups: everyone attended lectures and section meetings, but one group read the textbook (*Science and Human Behavior*), and the other group used the teaching machines to cover the material in the textbook. I was in the group using teaching machines, and I enjoyed the programmed instruction a lot. That was how I discovered that one could learn about behavior in the Psychology department, which at that time was considered a natural science, because all the social-science parts of psychology were in the Social Relations department. That suited me just fine. The next semester, I took Psychology 141 with R. J. Herrnstein, who convinced me to switch my concentration from biology to psychology. That is how I became a behaviorist.



What you find here are my lecture notes, scribbled in class and edited in my room afterwards. Skinner lectured twice a week, and smaller section meetings taught by a graduate student, probably Sandy Autor, occurred once a week. The notes are dated, and the ones from the section meetings are labeled as “section.” One or two hour-exams would have occurred during the semester and a final three-hour exam at the end.

(Editor’s note: These class notes are available as a downloadable pdf.)