

Introduction to Animal Behavior

ZOO 4050

Syllabus for online course

Fall 2020 semester

I. Class Meetings

The entire course will be conducted online through the course Canvas website. You can directly access the Canvas login at <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>

II. Course Description and Prerequisites

The scientific study of the mechanistic and evolutionary causes of animal behavior, including communication, foraging and anti-predator behavior, spatial behavior, mating behavior, parental care, and social behaviors. 3 credits.

Prerequisites: BSC 2010/2011 and labs, or the equivalent, with a minimum grade of “C”. PCB 4674 is suggested (previously or concurrently) but not required.

III. Professor: Stefanie Gazda, Ph.D.

Email: Stefanie.gazda@ufl.edu

Office Hours: As this is an online course, my office hours are through Zoom. They will be held 1:30 to 3:30 pm EST on Thursdays. If you cannot make this time please feel free to contact me for an appointment.

IV. Course Goals and Objectives

This course is designed to incorporate the student-centered pedagogy known as Problem-based learning (PBL). PBL is a student-centered approach in which students learn about a subject by working in groups to solve open-ended problems. This problem is what drives the motivation and the learning. You will learn about core Animal Behavior theories and apply them to different case studies. PBL will be employed in small Module-specific assignments as well as larger ones that are more cohesive.

The course content is about the comparative evolutionary and biological study of animal behavior and the scientific method. You will study non-human and human animal behavior in the conceptual framework of evolution by natural selection. We consider this powerful unifying concept - What is it? How does it work? – and how it operates from DNA to populations. You will study the behavior of mammals, invertebrates, fishes and birds. We will consider each behavior from the perspective of genetics, phylogeny, development, neurology, endocrinology, and learning. How do those influence behavior? This course should be an integration (dot connecting) of all you have learned so far, with the new concepts and material of this course. You will accomplish this with readings, discussions, and writing multiple brief and a single lengthier assignment. Course emphasis is on conceptual understanding and synthesis with deep mastery of content, shown by being able to put concepts into your own words and apply them to new situations.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between the four types of questions that may be asked about animal behavior, and formulate hypotheses of each type to explain a given behavior.
- Explain how behavioral hypotheses are formulated, the procedures used to test them, and the types of data that can be collected.
- Identify some of the mechanisms involved in the production of a behavior by an animal.
- Describe the role of natural and sexual selection in the evolution of behavior.
- Explain how these principles can be used to understand human behavior.
- Evaluate scientific observations, protocols, and explanations of animal behaviors.

V. Expectations

Each student is solely responsible for reading and following the instructions, guidelines and schedules in this syllabus. **Not having read the information in this syllabus or in instructor announcements will not constitute an excuse for missing an assignment, exam, or other assessment.**

VI. E-mail Communication

All e-mail correspondence to me must **originate from your ufl.edu account, have your full name in the body of the e-mail, and contain your course number in the subject line.** E-mails not meeting these requirements may not be recognized by our e-mail filters, and thus may not be answered. For the timeliest responses, use the Inbox Tool in Canvas.

VII. Course Resources

A. Textbook

Animal Behavior: Concepts, Methods, and Applications, 2e by Shawn E. Nordell & Thomas J. Valone. Oxford University Press (publisher), 2016.

A copy of this textbook is NOT on reserve at the Marston Science Library due to COVID-19 restrictions. We will have additional readings as well, distributed via Canvas.

B. Course Website (e-Learning)

Class material including the syllabus, discussion readings, problem sets, exam results, some lecture slides and other information related to the course will be posted on the course e-Learning website (<http://lss.at.ufl.edu>). The course is found under “e-Learning in Canvas”. You are responsible for **all** Announcements made in lecture and/or posted on the course website for this class. For help with e-Learning, call the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357, or visit the e-Learning support website: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

VIII. Online Instruction Information

As part of ZOO 4050 you are required to complete online assignments. If at any time you have questions about these assignments, please contact me. A schedule will be posted on e-Learning with the due dates for each assignment. **All assignments must be completed by the stated due date and time for credit. Extensions will NOT be**

given because of technical or personal issues that occur within 24 hours of the assignment deadline. Many assignments will also have a set time limit, so make sure you have time to devote to that assignment before you begin. You are expected to work by yourself on the assignments and cheating will not be tolerated. Note that all due dates for assignments are clearly posted on course website and reflect the most up-to-date information.

Communication with Your Online Instructor:

When you have a question about the assignments, check the following sources first to see if it is already answered, **before** e-mailing me:

- Course Syllabus
- e-Learning Announcements (this is the primary means that you I have to communicate with you in a timely manner)
- e-Learning General Posts
- General Course Questions

If you still cannot find the answer to your questions:

- If it is a question that others might find useful to know the answer to as well, post it in the General Course Questions section in Module 0.
- If it is a question specific to you (e.g. account or grade specific), e-mail me. Barring unusual circumstances, expect a reply with 24 hours (**48 hours on weekends; do not expect an immediate response in the evenings**). E-mails and e-Learning Discussion posts are checked at least once per day, but sometimes not more than that.

IX. Assessments and Grading

There are several different types of assignments that you will have to complete. Any assignments that require a file upload **MUST** be uploaded in PDF format. For most assignments, you will receive a grade based on the grading rubric provided. **There are no make-ups available for assignments.** Once assigned, assignments are available online at all times up until the deadlines. Because they are assigned well ahead of time, documentation of illness or a serious personal matter must be provided for at least five of the seven days of the week of the assignment's deadline for any accommodations to be made. This documentation must go through the Dean of Students Instructor Notifications page (<https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/>). It is especially important not to wait until just before the deadlines to complete assignments. A computer problem happening just before the deadline is not a valid excuse for not completing the assignment. If there is a technical problem with accessing the website or a particular assignment within *Canvas*, you must contact *eLearning* technical support **first** (and then me) at least 48 hours prior to the deadline, so appropriate steps can be taken to fix the issue and extensions can be given if necessary. Thus, check early that you can access the assignments. You will **not** be granted an extension for technical problems if you do not contact me before the deadline. It is best to get your assignments done at least two days early. It is your responsibility to have and maintain all the equipment and services necessary to participate in an online course.

Repeated for emphasis: technical problems must be reported to me at least 48 hours prior to the submission deadline, no exceptions!

A. Exams

There will be two exams. Each exam will cover material from video lectures, comprehension checks, learning activities, the online discussions, and the assigned reading in the textbook. The exams will not be “formally cumulative”, though by the end of the class you will be linking components you learned early on to ideas and themes covered in the last unit. All exams will feature a variety of short-answer questions. We will not shy away from real numbers and real theory, but I will never expect you to memorize equations or constants, nor will you have to do complicated math.

All exams will be essay style and will be administered using HonorLock. Each exam will have roughly 15 short essay style questions; you will be responsible for answering any 10 of them that you choose. **Each student must have a webcam in order to take the exam.** For detailed instructions about HonorLock go to the “HonorLock” tab in the “Start here” section on the course website.

Exams will be available for review one week after the exam has been graded. Exams will **not** be available for review after the semester has ended.

Exam Re-grades: Occasionally, mistakes are made when your exams are graded. If you feel there is an error, you can request a re-grade. Re-grade requests must be in writing and will not be done “on the spot.” Questions to exam scores will NOT be answered the day that they are graded. I will not argue about point assignments. When asking for a re-grade, you need to include the following (if you do not follow these rules your exam will be returned without review):

- An email explaining what needs to be re-graded. Do not just say “re-grade question 3”; you need to explain why your answer deserves more credit than was given.
- Re-grade requests must be turned in within the week of when the exam was handed back. They will be returned to you one week later.

Exam Extra Credit: All students will be able to correct their FIRST exam and submit their new answers to earn half-credit on any points missed, for a maximum of 10 points (i.e., you can in theory raise your exam grade one full letter). For instance, if you missed a 4-point short answer, submit a correction to earn up to 2 points. If you were awarded 2 out of 8 points (6 missed points), correct it to earn up to 3 points. This extra credit is available to all students, no matter their original score. You cannot answer questions you did not attempt. Exam corrections are due two weeks after grading, and applies to the first exam only.

Make-up Exams: No make-up exams will be given without prior permission or documentation of illness. Students that will be missing an exam due to a pre-arranged university-approved excused absence (sports, etc.) should let me know **a minimum of two weeks in advance**. These students may be required to take the make-up exam *before* the scheduled in-class exam.

In case of illness on exam day, a letter from the student's primary care provider is required. This letter must state that the student was unable to complete the exam on the scheduled date (i.e., a letter stating only that the student was seen in a clinic is not

sufficient). A personal matter requires a note from the Dean of Students (P202 Peabody Hall). These notes must be received within five business days after the exam. Make up exams may be short-answer or essay format.

B. Comprehension checks

Each module will contain one comprehension check per chapter. These checks are based on the readings in the book. You will then answer questions by taking a quiz in Canvas. You will be graded based on number of questions answered correctly out of total number of questions on the quiz. You will have TWO chances to complete the quiz. Your final quiz grade will be the HIGHEST score from the two quiz submissions.

C. Group Study Questions

For each Module, group study questions (1 to 2) will be assigned on Canvas. The questions are essay style, and are designed as an incentive to keep yourself up-to-date, and to help you lock-in important concepts before they appear on exams. These questions will require you to participate in a group discussion and submit a summary answer as a group. You will be graded on the quality of your participation, not only on the accuracy of the response. An answer will be provided after the due date to aid you in your studying for the exams.

D. Projects

There are two scaffolded project assignments, *Create Your Own Ethogram* and *Community Science Project*. Both require Peer Review at different steps during the process. More details are available on Canvas.

The purpose of the *Community Science Project* is to expose you to Animal Behavior research in an area of your interest. You will gain experience in research methodology while making a valuable contribution to an ongoing project.

In the *Create Your Own Ethogram* project, you will execute a brief behavioral study based on an ethogram that you will design and modify (based on peer feedback). The goal is to give you hands on experience on one of the most critical and basic methods of collecting data on animal behavior.

E. Individual Assignments

Throughout the semester, there are specialized videos and activities that you will need to complete individually. The videos are interactive and will require you to answer questions as you proceed. The activities will require you to answer questions in Canvas after you work through a digital resource. These assignments, unless otherwise stated, will be graded based on the specific grading rubric for each assignment. Rubrics for each activity are available in their module section. It is advisable to look at the rubrics prior to submitting your assignment to make sure you have included all of the required information for the assignment.

F. Research Paper

The intent of the Research Paper is to allow you to gain more knowledge in an area of Animal Behavior that is of personal interest. You will learn how to design a small-scale hypothetical research project using real world funding parameters. This paper will be a 1500-word research proposal paper on a topic related to animal behavior. More information is available on the course Canvas website.

G. Grading Summary:

Exams (2)	40 % (20% each)
Comprehension checks	12.5 %
Group Study Questions	12.5 %
Projects	12.5 %
Individual Assignments	10 %
Research Paper	12.5%

Assignment totals are subject to change at my discretion. All grades will be posted on e-Learning, and it is the responsibility of the student to check their grades on e-Learning to make sure they are accurate. **If there is a discrepancy, you must let me know within ONE week of the grade being posted on e-Learning.**

Minimum grade cutoffs are listed to the right. Because each exam may be curved individually (see section X-A, above), the scores for the course as a whole will not be scaled (i.e. these grade cutoffs will not be lowered) except under extremely rare circumstances (i.e., unless I tell you otherwise these cutoffs will not be lowered, so do not ask). However, these cutoffs will not be raised; in other words, if you receive 90% of the possible points, you are guaranteed to earn an A grade. Final scores will NOT be rounded (i.e., 89.99% is not 90%).

Note that the current UF policy for assigning grade points is available at the following undergraduate catalog web page:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Point Range (%)	Letter Grade
≥ 93.00	A
≥ 90.00	A-
≥ 87.00	B+
≥ 83.00	B
≥ 80.00	B-
≥ 77.00	C+
≥ 73.00	C
≥ 70.00	C-
≥ 67.00	D+
≥ 63.00	D
≥ 60.00	D-
<60.00	E

E. Special Treatment

Please do not request individual special treatment regarding grading at the end of the semester; **I do not adjust grades for individuals for any reason.** Plan to do well on all exams and other assessments from the beginning of the semester; if you are having difficulty in the class, please let me know *before* the exams rather than after.

F. Drop/Add/Withdrawal

A student can drop/add during the drop add period with no penalty. After drop/add, a student who drops will receive a W until the date listed in the academic calendar. After that date, the student may be assigned an “E” (fail). Note: it is the responsibility of the STUDENT to withdraw from a course, not the instructor. Failure to participate/complete the class is NOT a drop.

X. Computing Requirements

It is the responsibility of the student to maintain a functioning computing system and internet connection that can meet the minimum requirements of the course. These requirements can be found in the Orientation Module in *Canvas*. Computing/internet connectivity issues will NOT be acceptable excuses for missed deadlines unless they are brought to my attention **at least 48 hours prior to the deadline** and accompanied by the ticket number from technical support. See Resources for Technical Support contact information. Microsoft Office programs are required for many of the assignments; it can be accessed by current UF students through GatorCloud.

XI. Academic Honesty

All students registered at the University of Florida have agreed to comply with the following statement:

“I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”

In addition, on all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied:

“On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

If you witness any instances of academic dishonesty in this class, please notify me or contact the Student Honor Court (392-1631) or Cheating Hotline (392-6999). You are expected to review and abide by the University of Florida Academic Honesty Guidelines at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx#honesty>. Cheating, including plagiarism will result in consequences which many range from a 0 on the assignment to a failing grade for the entire course. Sanctions for cheating may be applied in a retroactive manner.

XII. Attendance

Students are expected check the course website regularly for announcements, assignment due dates, and other course related information. Students are to complete all assigned work (quizzes, activities, discussions, and exams) by the due date. Students are strongly encouraged to read the assigned chapters before attempting any of the assignments as this will make it easier to comprehend the material.

XIII. Time Commitment

The UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences assumes that each student will devote 3-4 hours per week per credit hour to each course, including time in lectures and labs. Because ZOO 4926 is 3 credits, each student should therefore expect to devote 9-12 hours per week to this course during a regular semester, or 11-15 hours per week during the summer. A recommended time allocation is to the right.

Activity	Hours/Week
Lectures/Videos	1
Online Exercises	2-4
Textbook Readings	2-3
Review and Study	2-4

If you find yourself spending more than the recommended number of hours per week on average on these activities, discuss this with me to see if you can refine your study habits. If you find yourself spending less than the recommended number of hours per week on average, you should recognize that you may have difficulty learning and comprehending the material in this time, and this will probably be reflected in poor performance on the various assessments, causing you to receive a lower overall course grade.

XIV. Conduct in Class

Please review the “**Netiquette guide**” for online courses in the “*Start Here*” section on the course website.

XV. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who will require a classroom accommodation for a disability must contact the Dean of Students Office of Disability Resources, in Peabody 202 (phone: 352-392-1261). Please see the University of Florida Disability Resources website for more information at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>. Note that the student should provide documentation of a requirement for accommodation **by the second week of classes**. No accommodations are available to students who lack this documentation, and **accommodations are not retroactive**. It is the policy of the University of Florida that the student, not the instructor, is responsible for arranging accommodations when needed. Once notification is complete, the Dean of Students Office of Disability Resources will work with the instructor to accommodate the student.

XVI. Counseling Center and University Support Services

College can be a very stressful time in a person’s life. Resources are available on campus to help students meet academic goals and solve personal problems, which may interfere with their academic performance. If you find that you are having difficulty emotionally or academically, there is substantial support available. See “*A Self Help Guide for Students*” or contact one of the following services:

- UF Counseling and Wellness Center, Radio Rd Facility, 392-1575
- Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601
- CLAS Academic Advising Center, Farrison Hall, 100 Fletcher Drive, 392-1521
- UF Field and Fork Pantry, 564 Newell Dr., 294-3601

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261) for support. Furthermore, please notify your me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess.

XVII. Course Evaluation

Anonymous course evaluations will be open via UF’s online evaluations system (<https://evaluations.ufl.edu>) near the end of the semester, you will receive e-mail notifications of when the evaluations open. Evaluations are stored and reported in a completely anonymous manner. Authentication for evaluation submission is only to ensure that only one evaluation is submitted per student per instructor.

XVIII. Course Schedule

This is a tentative schedule; the dates and coverage of specific topics are subject to change. **Please note** that due to the shortened fall schedule, some Modules are combined.

Module #	Open Date	Close Date	Subject
0	Aug 31	Sept 6	Orientation
1	Sept 6	Sept 13	Levels of Analysis
2	Sept 13	Sept 20	Observational Studies of Behavior
3	Sept 20	Sept 27	Development of Behavior
4	Sept 27	Oct 4	Control and Organization of Behavior
5	Oct 4	Oct 11	Social Living
6	Oct 11	Oct 18	Predators
7	Oct 18	Oct 25	Food
8	Oct 25	Nov 1	Reproduction and Mating Systems I
-	Oct 28	Oct 29	EXAM I, Modules 1-7
9	Nov 1	Nov 8	Reproduction and Mating Systems II
10	Nov 8	Nov 15	Home and Movement
11	Nov 22	Nov 29	Communication
12	Nov 29	Dec 6	Parental Care
13	Dec 6	Dec 13	Humans
	Dec 15	Dec 16	EXAM II, Modules 8-13