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PSYX 352.R01: Comparative Psychology

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Syllabus: PSYX 352 – Comparative Psychology – Fall 2020

Instructor information

Allen Szalda-Petree

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Phone: 406.243.2093

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday, & Friday from 11 – 12, and by appointment

Required textbooks

Comparative Cognition – Olmstead & Kuhlmeier

Course description and objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide a balanced view of the major modern perspectives on animal behavior (human primates included). There are four primary goals of this course: 1) Develop an understanding of the biological bases of animal behavior, 2) Develop an understanding of the ways in which the environment and evolution shape animal behavior, 3) Gain an appreciation for the similarities and differences in the ways in which animals communicate, learn, and solve the day to day problems of living, and 4) Expose students to the logic of carrying out empirical investigations both within and across species.

The major topics to be covered include the History of Animal Behavior studies (history of animal behavior studies, modern evolutionary theory and research methods, genetics), Biological Bases (neural and chemical control of behavior, sensory systems and timing, migration and navigation, emigration and habitat selection), Learning & Cognition (learning, cognition, foraging, predator defense), and Reproduction/Social Behavior (reproductive processes, attraction, mating systems, parental care, communication, social groupings).

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to

1. describe typical research methods used to study comparative animal behavior
2. describe animal behavior using basic evolutionary, ecological, developmental, physiological, and psychological mechanisms
3. apply a basic comparative framework to understand behavior broadly
4. place human primate behavior within a broader animal behavior context

Course delivery - Remote

In accordance with UM COVID guidelines, Fall 2020 PSYX 352 – Comparative Psychology is a remote delivery course. The class will meet in real-time using Zoom during the assigned days/times in the course schedule (M-W-F 1:00 – 1:50 pm). Because the quality of internet access can vary greatly, the 'live' Zoom lectures will be recorded (including all questions by students and chatroom comments) and posted to the Moodle course supplement for later review. Exams and assignments will be delivered and completed online through the various Moodle tools. I will hold office hours, exam study sessions, and student meetings through Zoom.

I believe this format will allow the course to be delivered in a manner that is quite similar to the face-to-face format.

Please feel free to email any questions or comments you may have about this course delivery format.

Exams

There will be 3 midterm exams and a comprehensive final. Each exam, including the final, will be worth 60 points and will consist of 30 multiple choice items (1 pt each) and 1 short answer essay question (30 pts). You will be allowed to drop the lowest exam score of the four exams (including the final) and use the three highest exam scores for the calculation of your final grade. See the tentative reading schedule for exam dates.

Both lecture and book material will be covered on each exam in approximately equal proportions. As a general rule the multiple choice items will be drawn primarily from the text while the essay questions will be taken mostly from the lecture materials. **Critical Note:** You will be expected to read and study the assigned textbook chapters. My lectures will not cover all the material in the readings that will be used to create the exams.

Requests for reevaluation/re-scoring of test items (essays in particular) will be accepted until the date of the next exam.

Makeup exams will NOT be given except under unusual circumstances. This issue always becomes particularly sticky regarding the time and date for the final exam. Please note that we will adhere to the date published in the course schedule for the final exam. I will not give early finals except for **very** unusual circumstances.

Course guidelines and policies

General behavior

As a university student, certain behavior is expected of you. Most importantly, it is your responsibility to meet the requirements of this course.

You may expect me to be in the “classroom” on time, prepared & organized, and open to discussion/questions pertaining to the day’s subject material. I will expect you to be in the “classroom” on time, to be awake and attentive, to participate in demonstrations/discussions, and to be respectful toward the instructor and other students.

You should feel free to ask any questions in class. Also, please feel free to see the instructor about any classroom issue during office hours.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [Student Conduct Code](#).

The Student Conduct Code discusses plagiarism. However, it is a serious offense worth re-mentioning. This course requires students to adhere to APA format when citing, paraphrasing, or referencing sources. If you have plagiarized, either intentionally or accidentally, you will receive a zero on the entire assignment. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course.

Attendance

While attendance is not required it is HIGHLY recommended. Note that any changes in the reading or exam schedule will be announced in class and all students, attending or otherwise, will be required to conform to any modifications in the schedule.

Dropping/Adding/Changing grade option

Please refer to the Registrar’s [Drop/Add Policy](#) and the [Official Dates & Deadlines Calendar](#) for all questions related to dropping or adding or changing grade option for a course.

Disability modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Grading

Grades will be assigned using the adjacent performance criteria for all exams and final course grade. I will NOT be using the “+/-” grading system. All grades of “Incomplete” and CR/NCR will adhere strictly to university [Academic Policies and Procedures](#).

Grade scale

Grade	Percentage Correct
A	162 – 180
B	144 – 161
C	126 – 143
D	108 – 125
F	0 – 107

Tentative schedule

Dates	Topic
Aug 19 & 21	Chapter 1: History of Comparative cognition
Aug 24, 26, 28	Chapter 2: Sensory systems & Chapter 3: Memory
Aug 31, Sept 2 & 4	Chapter 4: Associative processing
Sept 7	Labor Day Holiday (No class)
Sept 9 & 11	Chapter 5: Orientation and Navigation
Sept 14	Exam 1 - Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Sept 16 & 18	Chapter 6: Timing and number
Sept 21, 23, & 25	Chapter 7: Decision making
Sept 28, 30, & Oct 2	Chapter 8: Causality and tool use
Oct 5, 7, & 9	Chapter 9: Categorization and concept formation
Oct 12, 14, & 16	Chapter 9 continued
Oct 19	Exam 2 – Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9
Oct 21 23, & 26	Chapter 10: Social competence
Oct 28, 30, & Nov 2	Chapter 11: Prosocial behavior
Nov 4, 6, & 9	Chapter 12: Communication
Nov 11	Veterans Day Holiday (No Class)
Nov 13	Exam 3 - Chapters 10, 11, 12
Nov 16	Return Exam 3 and Course wrap-up
Nov 18	Review for final exam
3:20 – 5:20 pm Thursday, Nov 19	Final Exam - Chapters 1-12