

BIO 298 Human & Animal Biology Honors Discussion

PRISM course #2130 section G001

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point at Wausau, Spring 2019

Paul Whitaker

Rm. 285C

paul.whitaker@uwec.edu

715-261-6284

Class meets	TBA
Office hours	Thurs 10:30 AM – 3 PM in 285C &/or 271, or make an appointment, or just stop by.
Course materials	Drew, L. 2017. <i>I, Mammal: The Story of What Makes Us Mammals</i> . Bloomsbury Sigma. Other readings will be on D2L as needed.
Prerequisites	Concurrent or prior enrollment in BIO 171 or BIO 285 or BIO 286 AND one of the following: graduation in top 15% of HS class OR GPA of 3.5 or better after taking 12 college credits OR ACT of 27 or better OR consent of instructor.

Course description This course is run as a journal club in which your main assignments will be reading, answering some questions based on the readings, and contributing to group discussions of the readings. For this year, I have selected Liam Drew's book *I, Mammal* as the core reading. Drew is a British neurobiologist whose interest in the unique aspects of mammalian biology was especially piqued when his wife gave birth to their first daughter. In this book, he lays out a fascinating outline of why mammals are the way they are, and the evolutionary factors that have shaped what it means to be a mammal. His coverage of paleontology, anatomy, physiology, reproductive and developmental biology and more is nicely punctuated with bits of great humor and personal anecdote. I think you'll find this book fascinating.

Because the book is aimed at a general audience and this is an honors biology course, we will read the book, but also read excerpts of some of the author's sources and other related scientific articles or book excerpts in order to explore the scientific basis for his comments. Each week, I will post on D2L the reading assignment and discussion questions to guide your reading for the following week's discussion.

I will provide readings and lead the discussions for the first week or two. For the rest of the semester, each student will generate the discussion questions and lead the discussion for one week. Once all students have led a discussion, I will lead any remaining discussions.

Because finding and obtaining scholarly sources (usually scientific research articles) is an important skill, each student will need to find and submit three scholarly (peer-reviewed) articles or book excerpts that would be suitable for reading and discussion in this course. More details are included in the grading section of this syllabus.

Tentative course schedule

Week	Topic / assignment	Leader	Week	Topic / assignment	Leader
1	Course intro/finding sources	Paul Whitaker	9	Ch 7	
2	Introduction & Ch 1	Paul Whitaker	10	Ch 8	
3	Ch 2		11	Ch 9	
4	Ch 3		12	Ch 10	
5	Ch 4		13	Ch 11	
6	Ch 5		14	Ch 12	
7	Ch 6		15	Ch 13	

Grading & attendance policies

You can earn a total of 500 points in this course, as follows:

- 110 pts (10 pts/session except the first class meeting & the one you lead) – Attend all class meetings and participate actively in each discussion. This is not a “gimme” – you’ll need to convince me that you’ve read the assignment thoughtfully and attempted to answer the discussion questions. Your lowest score (or absence) will be dropped.
- 330 pts (30 pts/session except the first class meeting & the one you lead) – Submit written responses to the discussion questions at the end of each discussion **except** the one you lead. These may be confident answers, educated guesses, or specific questions about things you would need to know before you could answer the question. I will evaluate your answers for correctness, quality of writing, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, creativity, and evidence of honest effort. You must bring a hard copy to class. Your lowest score will be dropped.
- 15 pts – By 5 PM on Friday, February 15, e-mail me with three possible peer-reviewed articles or book excerpts so that I can accept or reject them. For each possible reading, send me:
 - a complete citation (authors, date, article title, publication title, volume, and pages);
 - either the abstract or the complete article if you can get it as full text;
 - the name of the database you searched and the search terms you used; and
 - a sentence or two explaining why you think it might be a good choice for a discussion.

The readings can be about any topic relevant to this book, and you should try to find readings that you'd actually

want to use for a discussion (even though we won't have time to read them in this course).

30 pts – Discussion leaders: prepare a set of ~6 questions for your section of the book. Prepare your questions **using the template on D2L** and e-mail them to me as an attachment no later than 5 PM on the day that is 8 days before your book discussion. You'll be graded on correct formatting and submission, quality of the questions, and punctuality.

15 pts – Everyone: Lead an effective discussion of your reading. Discussion leaders do not need to submit written answers to their own discussion questions.

NOTE: If you know in advance that you must miss a discussion, please let me know. In such cases, I will accept your written work with no late penalty if you submit them to me before the class meets. You may also earn up to full credit for the discussion by listening to the recorded discussion and writing a thoughtful reaction (~1 pg single spaced) to the discussion, including what you learned from the discussion and what nagging questions, if any, you still have. If you did not give advance notice of missing class, with convincing evidence of unusual circumstances, I will not accept written answers to the discussion questions for credit nor allow you to listen to and react to the recorded discussion for participation points.

General suggestions for all of the readings we'll discuss this semester:

- 1) As you come across words you don't understand, look them up or make a note and ask.
- 2) Try to follow the arguments or lines of reasoning, and don't get bogged down by details.
- 3) Try to identify the evidence that is being used to support those arguments.
- 4) See if you can develop a one sentence summary of the reading, then a one paragraph summary.
- 5) Beyond answering the assigned questions, please share any questions or insights that arose as you read the assignment.

Tentative grading scale 90's = A 80's = B 70's = C 60's = D <60 = F

+ and - will be added to scores within 2% of a cutoff; e.g., 88-89.9% = B+, 90-91.9% = A-

You will only earn honors credit on your transcript for this course if your final grade in this course is a B or better.

Academic integrity I encourage you to discuss the readings with other students or use other sources to help you understand the readings. However, if you do so, please be sure that you write up your work on your own in your own words.

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's wording or ideas and representing them as your own, intentionally or not, and is a serious violation of UW standards of academic conduct. I examine all assignments as closely as possible to ensure that the submitted work is solely the work of the student(s) whose name(s) is/are on it. Plagiarism in any form is entirely unacceptable and I WILL take action against students who commit plagiarism.

I will actively address ALL suspected incidents of academic misconduct in accordance with Chapter 14 of the University of Wisconsin Administrative Code (see [https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/UWS 14-1.pdf](https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/UWS%2014-1.pdf)), which states that academic misconduct includes but is not limited to: cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented as solely your own and contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another; tampering with another student's experiment or data; and representing plagiarized work as your own.

To avoid plagiarism:

1. You must write up your work in your own words and using your own organization of ideas (not those of your friend, a textbook, a website, etc.). The best way to avoid plagiarism is to read whatever source you are using until you understand it, put it aside, then write the ideas in your own words without referring back to the source. Or, if working with another student, discuss the answer, then write it up in your own words at some point in the future.
2. You must list your collaborators and sources (sources include people, printed matter, websites, etc.). Direct quotations are almost never appropriate in science writing, so don't use quotations. Even so, anything you paraphrase needs to be cited because the information and ideas are not your own.