



## Psyc 333 Animal Cognition

MWF 11-11:50pm

Spring 2019 syllabus

**Instructor:** Dr. Jody Lewis  
**Office:** D-233 Science Building  
**Office hours:** T/TH 11-12pm or by appointment  
**Phone:** 715-346-3675  
**e-mail:** Jody.Lewis@uwsp.edu

### **Course learning outcomes:**

1. Identify the primary cognitive abilities which occur across species
2. Explain how animal cognition research is conducted
3. Discuss how different cognitive abilities work and their adaptive functions
3. Discuss how the knowledge of animal cognition is important for professions in which people work with wild and companion animals

### **How this class will meet the learning outcomes for an interdisciplinary studies course:**

1. *Identify an issue or question related to the interdisciplinary course(s), and describe what each discipline contributes to an understanding of that issue.*

We will discuss the cognitive abilities of non-human animals such as perception, learning, memory, social cognition, theory of mind, and communication. We will also discuss how cognitive abilities can be adaptive.

2. *Explain the benefits of being able to combine these contributions.*

We will examine the relative contributions of psychology and biology to the study of animal cognition. Psychologists have studied primarily mechanistic explanations for cognition (i.e. how cognitive processes work). Biologists have primarily contributed functional explanations for these cognitive abilities (i.e. how the organism benefits by having the particular cognitive process). We can more fully understand a cognitive process when we study both how it works and what function it serves.

### **Teaching philosophy and classroom expectations:**

- I do not make judgments about a student's character based on their grades/performance in my classes.
- I do care very much about my teaching, how I run a classroom, and will do anything I can to help you get the best possible grade in this course.
- My goal in life is NOT to give busy work, torture students, and make their lives miserable –really, I have better things to do with my time.
- I consider all students adults which means that I believe that students are able to make decisions for themselves, have a life outside the classroom, and if students need help, they will come to me (I do not chase students around and I don't monitor their attendance closely).
- I think students learn more and get more out of a class when they read the book and come to class and participate in class.
- I expect that students will ask questions in class if they need me to repeat something, clarify what I said, and/or are curious about something
- Learning should be fun and relaxing, but difficult. Very few of us have sponge-like brains, so if you want to learn something you have to work hard.
- Please do not take video or audio recordings of me without my permission. I consider this not only CREEPY but a violation of my privacy.

## **Class Materials**

**Text:** Olmstead & Kuhlmeier (2015) Comparative Cognition. Cambridge University Press.

**Articles:** Hard copies of articles for discussions will be available in class. Electronic copies will be available through D2L.

**Internet Sources:** Course material will be provided through Desire to Learn (D2L). This will include the syllabus, lecture outlines, outside reading assignments, and anything else I come across that may be interesting and/or useful for class.

## **Course requirements**

**Exams:** There will be three exams that will cover the textbook, lecture, articles, and any other materials provided in class. I will provide make-up exams with a legitimate, documented excuse and if you contact me within 24 hours of the scheduled exam.

### **Assignments:**

*Article discussions:* In order to provide students exposure to research, students will be expected to read 2 articles and participate in group discussions relating to research in animal cognition. Students will be expected to take a brief quiz before discussion day in order to provide evidence that they read the article.

*Interdisciplinary paper:* To meet the learning objectives for an interdisciplinary course, students will be asked to write a short paper using the two articles from the article discussions. In this paper students will discuss the relative contributions of psychology and biology to the field of animal cognition and the benefits of combining fields. Details of this assignment will be provided in a separate handout.

*Application paper:* Students will be asked to apply concepts in animal cognition to practice. In this paper, students will be asked to discuss how research in animal cognition can be used to answer a research question pertinent to companion animals (e.g. pet ownership, veterinary science, animal shelters, animal training) or to captive wildlife (e.g. zoos, rehabilitation). Details of this assignment will be provided in a separate handout.

Late paper assignments will lose 10% of the available points per day.

**Grading:** Your grade is based on the number of points earned in the class.

### **Point distribution:**

Exams (80pts x 3)	240pts	69%
Article discussions (20pts x 2)	40pts	11%
Article quizzes (5pts x 2)	10pts	3%
Interdisciplinary paper	30pts	9%
<u>Application paper</u>	<u>25pts</u>	<u>7%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>350pts</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Letter grade cutoffs:**

A	93%-100%
A-	90%-92%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
C	73%-76%
C-	70%-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	60%-66%
F	<60%

### **Additional course information**

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected in this class. I do not keep a written record of attendance, however, my experience is that students do not perform well in a course if they miss a lot of classes. Please note that you will be responsible for any lecture material, announcements, or schedule changes given during class time.

**Academic honesty:** I do not tolerate violations of academic honesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and copying/buying papers off the internet. You are responsible for understanding and abiding by the university academic standards. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in the failure of the course. Please see Chapter 14, *Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures* of the *UWSP Community Rights and Responsibilities*. This can be found at <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights/>

**Disability accommodation:** Please contact me and Disability Services during the first two weeks of the semester if you are in need of any additional accommodations (346-3365).

**Religious accommodation:** Religious beliefs will be accommodated according to UWS 22.03 as long as you notify me within the first three weeks of the beginning of class of the specific dates on which you will request relief.

**Tutoring-Learning Center:** The center provides assistance such as group and individual tutoring, help with computer skills, and help with writing papers. They are located in 018 LRC (346-3568). They can also be found at <http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/>

**Withdrawal policy:** If you decide you no longer want to take the course you must follow the university procedures for officially dropping the course. If you stop attending and do not officially drop the course you will receive an F in the course. See the Registration and Records webpage for information about when the last day is to drop a course (click on Registration Dates and Information). <http://www.uwsp.edu/reg-rec/>

### Tentative Schedule

	<b>DATES</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>READINGS</b>	<b>DUE DATES</b>
<b>Foundations</b>				
<b>week 1</b>	<b>Jan 22-25</b>	Syllabus, history and course themes	Ch. 1	
<b>week 2</b>	<b>Jan 28- Feb 1</b>	Research methods		
<b>week 3</b>	<b>Feb 4-8</b>	Ecology and evolution	Ch. 1	<b>Article discuss 1 Feb 8<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>week 4</b>	<b>Feb 11-15</b>	Cognition, the brain, and evolution		
<b>week 5</b>	<b>Feb 18-22</b>	Animal welfare and ethics		<b>Exam 1 Feb 22</b>
<b>Basic processes</b>				
<b>week 6</b>	<b>Feb 25- Mar 1</b>	Associative learning –classical conditioning	Ch. 4	
<b>week 7</b>	<b>March 4-8</b>	Associative learning –operant conditioning	Ch. 4	<b>Article discuss 2 March 8</b>
<b>week 8</b>	<b>March 11-15</b>	Animal training and Captive animal enrichment		
<b>week 9</b>	<b>March 18-22</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
<b>week 10</b>	<b>March 25-29</b>	memory	Ch. 3	
<b>week 11</b>	<b>April 1-5</b>	memory	Ch. 3	<b>Exam 2 April 5</b>
<b>Complex processes</b>				
<b>week 12</b>	<b>April 8-12</b>	Sensation and Perception	Ch. 2	<b>Interdisciplinary paper due Mar 29</b>
<b>week 13</b>	<b>April 15-19</b>	Communication	Ch. 12	
<b>week 14</b>	<b>April 22-26</b>	Social competence – consciousness and theory of mind	Ch. 10	
<b>week 15</b>	<b>April 29-May 3</b>	Social and observational learning	Ch. 13	
<b>week 16</b>	<b>May 6-10</b>	Social and observational learning	Ch. 13	<b>Application paper due May 10</b>
<b>Week 17</b>	<b>May 13-17</b>	<b>Final: Wed May 15<sup>th</sup> 12:30-2:30</b>		<b>Exam 3</b>

**Finals:** (You may NOT reschedule your final except for an emergency or if you have 3 finals on that day)