

Course Syllabus:

Animal Behavior BIOL 862, 3 credits

Spring 2017

Instructor:

Dr. Letitia Reichart
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NOTE: Email is my preferred method of contact if you inquire about a personal issue. General questions about the course can be posted on the Frequently Asked Questions Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Office Hours: TBA and/or Email to arrange a time for a phone discussion

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the science of ethology. The course will examine behavior, genetics, physiology of behavior, ecology of behavior, and the evolution of behavior. Assigned readings from the scientific literature, exams, inquiry based activities/assignments, and online discussions will be used to explore these topics. Plan to spend several hours each week on reading, writing, responding to topic discussions, and participating in activities.

Course Objectives:

- 1). Gain familiarity with the study of animal behavior
- 2). Examine and discuss recent research for current topics in animal behavior
- 3). Learn historical background and theory for animal behavior concepts
- 4). Learn techniques used to study animal behavior in a variety of different organisms and identify potential research questions from discussions of current literature

Instructor Role: As your instructor I will provide feedback to students in two ways. First, I will participate in directing online class discussions by providing background information where appropriate, providing initial topics for discussion, reading comments posted by students, and providing clarification or summary information for student comments. In addition I will likely comment on individual student posts, but I may not comment on every single post for every student. Any comments or observations I post will be made available to all students via the general discussion board, unless they concern a personal matter. Second, students will receive individual feedback for several major assignments.

Required Texts:

- 1) Alcock, J. 2013. Animal Behavior: An Evolutionary Approach. Tenth Edition. ISBN-13: 978-0878939664
- 2) Sherman, P.W. and J. Alcock. 2013. Exploring Animal Behavior: Readings from American Scientist. Sixth Edition. ISBN-13: 978-1605351957

Required Hardware/Software: Students should refer to the following eCampus website to make sure you meet the minimum hardware/software and internet connection speed required by all UNK eCampus students.

eCampus requirements: <http://www.unk.edu/academics/ecampus/resources-info/students/technology/requirements.php>

Academic Integrity: UNK’s Policy is the maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found in violation of the standards of academic honesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: Cheating, Fabrication and Falsification, **Plagiarism**, and Other Acts of Academic Dishonesty. You are expected to uphold the UNK standard of Student Conduct relating to Academic Integrity. You assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the work you submit. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course and plagiarism will not be tolerated. All assignments will be scanned through Safe Assignment via Blackboard. **Students who plagiarize will fail this course.**

Grading System: Grades will be determined according to the following scheme:

| <u>Assignments</u> | <u>Points</u> |
|---|---------------|
| 1) Personal Introduction | 10 |
| 2) Student Research Topic | |
| <i>Topic</i> | 20 |
| <i>Outline</i> | 30 |
| <i>One-page Summary</i> | 50 |
| 3) Discussion Board | |
| <i>7 of 13 Discussions will be graded at random</i> | 70 |
| <i>(10pts each, 2 posts required)</i> | |
| 4) 3 Exams (Essay/Short Answer, 100pts each) | 300 |
| 5) Activities and Assignments (3 @ 50pts each) | 150 |
| 6) Powerpoint presentation | 100 |
| 7) <u>Field Observations & Notebook</u> | <u>100</u> |
| Total Course Points | 830 |

Grading Scale:

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 100%-93% = A | 79%-78% = C+ |
| 92%-90% = A- | 77%-73% = C |
| 89%-88% = B+ | 72%-70% = C- |
| 87%-83% = B | 69%-68% = D+ |
| 82%-80% = B- | 67%- 60%= D |
| | ≤59.99%= F |

Students with disabilities or those who are pregnant:

Students with disabilities or those who are pregnant are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities or those who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services for a disability, students must be registered with UNK Disabilities Services Coordinator, David Brandt, in the Academic Success Office, 163 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email unkdso@unk.edu. For those needing accommodation due to pregnancy, you need to visit with Student Health. The following link provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-faqs-college-and-graduate-students>

If you have an accommodation plan, please see Dr. Reichart as soon as possible, so any necessary arrangements can be made for your learning. **No accommodations can be provided until a Reasonable Accommodation Plan is in place. Please remember, plans are not retroactive and cannot be used for assignments prior to the date of the instructor's signature.** To the greatest extent possible, University Representatives, shall observe confidentiality with respect to any request for accommodation.

Reporting student sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual assault: Reporting allegations of rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking enables the University to promptly provide support to the impacted student(s), and to take appropriate action to prevent a recurrence of such sexual misconduct and protect the campus community. Confidentiality will be respected to the greatest degree possible. Any student who believes she or he may be the victim of sexual misconduct is encouraged to report to one or more of the following resources:

Local Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault Advocacy Agency 308-237-2599

Campus Police (or Security) 308-865-8911

Title IX Coordinator 308-865-8655

Retaliation against the student making the report, whether by students or University employees, will not be tolerated.

If you have questions regarding the information in this email please contact Mary Chinnock Petroski, Human Resources Director (petroskimj@unk.edu or phone 8655).

Class Schedule & Assignments: A general class schedule and reading assignments can be found below. There will be a recorded video lecture each week for general lecture topics, posted Wednesday each week. In addition, appropriate readings from the primary scientific literature will be assigned each week. A discussion topic will be provided that examines the general topic with respect to the reading from the primary literature. Exams will be essay and will cover topics discussed during the semester. Due dates must be followed and assignments are due by midnight CST on the date given, specific dates will be specified when the assignment is posted. For assignments turned in late a penalty of 5 points per day will be deducted.

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to modify the class schedule and assignments if necessary; however, students will be informed of minor modifications via blackboard announcements.

Student topic assignment: (Current Animal Behavior)

The field of animal behavior is diverse and encompasses a variety of topics, which results in a large number of publications each year. During the lecture/discussion part of this course I will introduce some of the basic conceptual background for study of animal behavior, provide specific examples on different ways to study animal behavior, but it will not be possible to cover the entire scope of topics in this course. Therefore, the class will work together to write and present a series of topics to summarize key areas of research within the field. Students will choose a topic from a list provided during the second week of class. Students will prepare a short one-page summary of the topic and include an appropriate paper from the primary scientific literature. Students will also then prepare a short 12 – 15 minute presentation, on the topic. During the last three weeks of class, students will be responsible for watching, commenting and discussing topics presented by the class. At the end of the course, topic summaries will be provided to the entire class to serve as a resource for those teaching and/or conducting research in animal behavior in the future.

To prepare the one-page summary and presentation, students should read several key papers on your topic from the relevant literature (e.g., journals such as *Animal Behaviour*, *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, *Evolution*, *Behavioral Ecology*, etc.). Also, most likely we will use VoiceThread to record student presentations. During student topic presentations, we will use group discussion boards to identify interesting points brought out by the presentations and written summaries.

Field Notebooks & Observation Activities

In addition to the above, students will also complete observations of animal behavior in the field. Activities will be assigned to practice basic analysis of animal behaviors. Multiple observation periods will be required throughout the course and field notebook will be used to document observations, species, and behaviors observed. There are 4 required observation activities where you must provide evidence of completion; however, students are encouraged to participate in additional observation activities throughout the course.

Expectations: Students are expected to keep up with assigned course material and are responsible for checking announcements and assignments each week. All grades will be based on participation and the quality of the assignment or discussion board post. For most discussion board posts, content should be a critical evaluation of the topic we discuss and should not be a brief thoughtless

response, such as “this was a really cool study,” OR “I agree with the other members of the group,” etc. I expect students to spend time thinking about ideas, providing quality comments and/or posing articulate questions for each discussion topic. Most weeks will require two or more discussion posts per student. I **will not require** all discussion board posts to have comments with citations; however, I expect students will be able to use information gleaned from lectures or assigned primary literature to provide appropriately detailed comments.

In addition, I expect students to use appropriate language (e.g., profanity and derogatory comments are unacceptable), to respect differences in opinion, and to show evidence of knowledge on the subject matter (i.e., gleaned from assigned readings).

NOTE: Topics and Assignments are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. Exam dates will NOT change.

| Biol 862 Animal Behavior Spring 2017 | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|-------------------------|--|---|
| Week | Date | Assignments | Discussion Board | Lecture Topics | <u>Readings</u> Primary Lit. |
| 1 | Jan 9-13 | Personal Introduction, Introductory Activities | 1 | Introduction to Animal Behavior | |
| 2 | Jan 16-20 | | 2 | Behavioral Ecology & the Evolution of Altruism | |
| 3 | Jan 23-27 | Activity | 3 | The Evolution of Social Behavior | |
| 4 | Jan 30-Feb 3 | | 4 | The Evolution of Communication | |
| 5 | Feb 6-10 | Exam 1, DUE Feb. 13th, midnight CST | | | |
| 6 | Feb 13-17 | | 5 | Avoiding Predators & Finding Food | |
| 7 | Feb 20-24 | | 6 | Evolution of Habitat Selection, Territoriality, & Migration | |
| 8 | Feb 27-Mar 3 | Activity | 7 | Evolution of Reproductive Behavior | |
| 9 | Mar 6-10 | | 8 | The Evolution of Mating Systems & The Evolution of Parental Care | |

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|----|--------------|---|----|--|--|
| 10 | Mar 13-17 | Exam 2, DUE Mar. 17th, midnight CST | | | |
| | Mar 20-24 | SPRING BREAK | | | |
| 11 | Mar 27-31 | Activity | 9 | Proximate & Ultimate Causes of Behavior | |
| 12 | Apr 3- 7 | | 10 | The Development of Behavior | |
| 13 | Apr 10-14 | Student Presentations | 11 | Evolution, Nervous Systems, and Behavior | |
| 14 | Apr 17-21 | Student Presentations | 12 | How Neurons and Hormones Organize Behavior | |
| 15 | Apr 24-28 | Student Presentations | 13 | The Evolution of Human Behavior | |
| 16 | May 1- 4 | Exam 3, DUE May. 3rd, midnight CST | | | |