Lecture

WHI 105 MWF 10:30 – 11:20

Instructors

Dr. J. S. de Belle (895-3271) debelle@ccmail.nevada.edu
Office Hours: WHI 231 M 11:30 – 12:30 or by appointment

Dr. D. Wagner (895-4421) dwagner@ccmail.nevada.edu
Office Hours: WHI 124 W 11:30 – 12:30 or by appointment

Resources

Drickamer, Vessey and Jakob

Web Page: http://www.unlv.edu/faculty/debelle/bio486/

Course Description

Animal behavior is a broad discipline that includes aspects of anthropology, comparative psychology, ecology, ethology, evolution, genetics, neurobiology, physiology and zoology. This course will integrate these ultimate (evolutionary) and proximate (mechanistic) approaches to the study of animal behavior. The course and textbook are divided into five sections: (1) history & approaches, (2) genetics & evolution, (3) mechanisms, (4) food & shelter, and (5) social & mating systems. The course calendar, lecture notes, readings, assignments, answers to exam questions, grades and other relevant material will be available on the animal behavior web page (see above). 3 credits. Note that Friday, March 29th is the last day to drop courses without academic penalty.

Course Objectives

Students completing this course successfully will have basic knowledge of the ultimate and proximate causes of animal behavior. They will be familiar with the major approaches used to study animal behavior in the field and in the laboratory. Students will understand the role of ecological context in shaping the evolution of behavior and understand the major inherited and physiological mechanisms underlying behavior. Assessment of these objectives will be based on examinations, assignments and class participation.
Exams

Exams will emphasize reasoning, problem solving, and clarity of expression. There will be three midterm exams during regular lecture periods (see Course Calendar). A midterm exam may be taken as makeup exam only if arranged and approved by the instructors prior to the test date. The final exam will emphasize material presented since the previous midterm exam, and will also have a comprehensive section covering material from the entire semester. The final will be held in WHI 105 from 10:10 to 12:10 on Wednesday, May 15th during the final exam week. No makeup exam will be given for the final exam. The format of all exams is at the discretion of the instructors and may include multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

Assignment

Students will design, conduct, analyze and write up a study of animal behavior. Subject(s) of the study should be local animal species (birds and insects are especially good subjects), although zoo or aquarium animals might be appropriate for some research questions. You should not consider using your house pets as experimental animals for this assignment because (1) behavioral studies require appreciable sample sizes, (2) previous contact biases data collection, and (3) you would not benefit from a novel experience. You will receive detailed instructions in a few weeks, but begin considering topics and experimental subjects that interest you as soon as possible.

Participation

Participation will be evaluated from contributions during regular class meetings, as well as preparation for, and contributions to class activities. Students are encouraged to ask and answer questions, and to provide relevant comments both during class and office hours.

Grades

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<td>MIDTERM EXAMS (3 @ 150 EACH)</td>
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<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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<td>RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT</td>
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INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. to be prepared for each lecture;
2. to present the most important information in a clear and concise fashion;
3. to be available outside of the class to answer questions;
4. to reply to electronic mail promptly; and
5. to return homework and exams in a timely fashion.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. to be prepared for lectures, laboratory exercises and exams;
2. to seek assistance from the instructor or teaching assistants when appropriate;
3. to check electronic mail regularly;
4. to bring a pencil, pen, calculator and photo ID to all exams.

CHEATING, PLAGIARISM, AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

“No form of academic dishonesty is acceptable. Academic dishonesty includes any act that violates the academic process of the university. These acts include, but are not limited to, cheating on an examination, stealing examination questions, substituting one person for another at an examination, violating the procedures of a national or state examination, falsifying data, destroying or tampering with or stealing a computer program or file, and plagiarizing (using as one’s own the ideas or writings of another).” (UNLV Undergraduate Catalogue, 2000 – 2001, pp. 55-56). Students that cheat will be expelled from the course, receive a grade of “F”, and receive additional disciplinary action as outlined in the University and Community College System of Nevada document, Rules and Disciplinary Procedures for Members of the University Community.

DISABILITY

If you have a documented disability and require assistance in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center to coordinate your assistance (Reynolds Student Services Complex 137, (895-0866/TDD 895-0652).

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Students who plan to miss any of the required elements of this course because of a religious holiday must notify the instructor by Monday, January 28th (the last day of registration). In cases of such schedule conflicts, students will be permitted to write a makeup exam or hand in course material on the following day.