



**University of Lethbridge  
Faculty of Arts & Science  
Department of Psychology**

11790 – PSYC 4000 - A

“Competition and cooperation in humans and other animals”

**Associated term:** Spring 2018 (08-Jan-2018 - 14-Apr-2018)

**Levels:** Undergraduate, Graduate, Audit

**When and Where:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:15 pm to 1:30 pm in the Fine Arts Building, room W870

**Holidays:** Reading week (20-Feb-2018 and 22-Feb-2018, no classes)

**Instructor:** Flávia Koch, PhD

**Office:** C-460 Henzi Lab (University Hall)

**Email:** [flavia.koch@uleth.ca](mailto:flavia.koch@uleth.ca)

Please contact the instructor by email. Every effort will be made to respond with 48 hours excluding weekends and/or holidays

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Course Description:** Competition and cooperation are the main pillars of sociality in human societies. In humans, war, politics and morality are based on these two concepts. One way to better understand the importance of these aspects in human society is to investigate whether they also structure the societies of other animals, and if so, how. In this course, we will investigate how competition and cooperation influence the behaviour of other species, and how this compares with our own behaviour. How far can we take the comparisons between humans and other animals? What features do we share, and is there anything that makes human societies unique?

**Required material**

Mandatory PDF readings will be posted online (Moodle PSYC 4000 – A) every Friday by the instructor, following the topics:

- Ontogeny and development
- Altruism
- Reciprocity
- Punishment
- Collective action
- Religion
- Coalitions, alliances, and war
- Sex differences
- Hormones
- Audience-effect
- Morality

\*All topics will explore aspects of competition and cooperation in humans and other animals.

**Grading:** Your grades will be based on the reading summaries (35%), the essay (45%), and the group presentation (20%).

Grades	Percentage
A+	95 - 100
A	90 – 94.9
A -	85 – 89.9
B+	80 – 84.9
B	75 – 79.9
B -	70 – 74.9
C+	65 – 69.9
C	60 – 64.9
C -	55 – 59.9
D+	50 – 54.9
D	45 – 49.9
F	0 – 44.9

**Assignments:**

1) Reading summaries (35%)

The students must upload a summary (~200 words) of each of the mandatory readings a day before each class. Therefore, the summary of the paper to be discussed on Tuesdays should be uploaded until Monday at noon; and the paper to be discussed on Thursday should be uploaded by Wednesday at noon. The summaries will ONLY be graded if submitted in time and with the presence (or justified absence) in class for the discussion of the article summarized. The summaries must contain the general topic of the referred paper, main results, highlights, and main conclusions and implications. The main objective of the summaries is to verify the comprehension of the article; therefore, grammar and format will not be graded here. However, a clear and coherent text is expected.

\*failure in handing in a summary without proper justification will result in the application of a 5% penalty.

2) Essay (45%) **due on March 13<sup>th</sup>**

The structure of the essay should be the following:

- Description of a collective action problem (situation where individuals failed in cooperating to achieve a collective good). It can be a personal experience or not, for example an experience working in group, or being part of a sports team, or a military experience...
- The students should relate the described experience with the concepts explored in class (altruism, kinship, punishment, audience effect, free-riding and cheating...). With the use of

these concepts I expect that each student analyzes the reasons for the failure of their collective action.

- Finally, the student should make suggestions on what could have been improved or changed in the situation described to achieve success in the future.
- The argumentation must be based on scientific information, and the relevant references should be cited.

\*Students will have the option of improving their grade on the essay by providing a second version that includes the corrections and comments suggested by the instructor on the first version. The students who would like to do that will have a week after receiving the corrections on the first version to upload their second version.

\*The essay will be graded according to the marking rubric handed out with the course outline.

3) Group presentation (20%) to be scheduled for the last two weeks of class.

Topic: Cooperation and collective action in non-human animals.

Each group (4 students per group) will design a presentation of 20 to 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes for questions and discussion with the class) in which they will present aspects of cooperation and collective action in non-human animals. In order to avoid repetition, each group will be assigned with one of the following animal groups: insects, fish, birds, mammals, and non-human primates.

### **Late Assignments and Missed Exam Policy**

Failure to hand in assignments or attend examinations will result in a 0% on the work.

**Exceptions:** Exceptions can be made for students if they are attending conferences or participating in other University sanctioned activities (such as Pronghorn team events). Written proof of participation is required prior to assignment due dates. Medical emergencies or medically excused days are the exception to the prior to policy. All other exceptions will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

### **Plagiarism statement:**

The University of Lethbridge subscribes to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Please be advised that student work submitted for credit in this course may be submitted to this system to verify its originality. Students must be able to submit both electronic and hard copy versions of their work upon request.

## Seminar schedule

Class	Date	Topic
Class 1	<b>09-Jan</b>	<b>Welcome class</b>
Class2	11-Jan	<b>Groups</b>
Class 3	16-Jan	Foundations of cooperation
Class 4	18-Jan	
Class 5	23-Jan	
Class 6	25-Jan	
Class 7	30-Jan	Challenges for collective action
Class 8	1-Feb	Sex differences
Class 9	6-Feb	
Class 10	8-Feb	Altruism and kinship
Class 11	13-Feb	
Class 12	15-Feb	
No class	20-Feb	<b>Reading week break</b>
	22-Feb	
Class 13	27-Feb	Evolution of cooperation
Class 14	1-Mar	
Class 15	6-Mar	Audience-effect
Class 16	8-Mar	
Class 17	<b>13-Mar</b>	Religion and cooperation <b>*Essay deadline</b>
Class 18	15-Mar	Hormones
Class 19	20-Mar	
Class 20	22-Mar	
Class 21	27-Mar	Conflict
Class 22	29-Mar	
Class 23	03-Apr	
Class 24	<b>05-Apr</b>	<b>Group presentations</b>
Class 25	<b>10-Apr</b>	
Class 26	12-Apr	Catchup class and review