

**PSYCHOLOGY 2700**  
**INTRODUCTION TO ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR**  
**Spring 2006**

**Course description:** *This course will examine the biological, social, and cultural processes responsible for shaping functionally organized behaviours in animals that solve basic life problems such as finding food, avoiding predators, attracting mates, rearing young, and living socially. In short, it will be aimed at answering the most fundamental question asked about animals and their behavior: “Why do they do what they do?”*

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**Teaching Assistants:**

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**Course web page:** <http://home.uleth.ca/~d.rendall/PSY2700.html>

**Lectures:** Tuesday & Thursday 10:50 – 12:05 PE250

**Prerequisites:** PSY1000 (Introduction to Psychology), or BIO1020 (Diversity of Life)

**Textbook:**

Dugtakin (2004) Principles of Animal Behavior. W.W. Norton. ISBN 0-393-97659-9

**Coursework:**

1. Quizzes (25%): Five quizzes (5% each) based on lectures and the textbook.
2. Exams (75%): One midterm exam (35% each) and one final exam (40%) also based on material from both lectures and the textbook.

**Grading:** Final letter grades for the course will be determined using the following scheme:

A+	> 95	C+	69 – 72
A	90 – 95	C	64 – 68
A-	85 – 89	C-	60 – 63
B+	81 – 84	D+	55 – 59
B	77 – 80	D	50 – 54
B-	73 – 76	F	< 50

## OUTLINE OF COURSE TOPICS

Course Sections and Specific Topics	TEXT READINGS
<b>A. PROCESSES THAT SHAPE BEHAVIOR</b>	
Natural Selection	Ch. 1 – 3
<i>The 'causes' of behavior at different organizational levels or timescales</i>	
Individual Learning, Social Learning, and Cultural Transmission	Ch. 4 – 5
<i>Associative learning, evolved learning biases, social learning, and culture</i>	
<b>B. PROBLEMS ANIMALS FACE</b>	
<b>I. ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS</b>	
Foraging, Habitat Choice, Territoriality	Ch. 10 & 13
<i>Diet choice, Optimal Foraging Theory, grouping and territoriality</i>	
Predation	Ch. 11
<i>Co-evolutionary arms races, foraging-predation tradeoffs</i>	
<b>MIDTERM EXAM (35%)</b>	
<b>II. REPRODUCTION PROBLEMS</b>	
Mating Systems and Sexual selection	Ch. 7 & 6
<i>Reproductive physiology, life history, and mating systems</i>	
<i>Sexual selection theory, variable mating strategies</i>	
<b>III. SOCIAL PROBLEMS</b>	
Parenting	Ch. 8 – 9
Kinship and Cooperation	
<i>Competition: the default behavioural program</i>	
<i>The puzzle of altruism and solutions: kin selection and reciprocity</i>	
Communication	Ch. 12
<i>Honesty and 'information'</i>	
Aggression and Play	Ch. 14 – 15
<i>Proximate and ultimate perspectives</i>	
<b>FINAL EXAM – REGISTRAR SCHEDULED (40%)</b>	