

**Introduction to Primatology (Lecture course)**  
**Psychology 2850 A (CRN 20099)**  
**Summer 2013 (Session I)**

**Lecturer:** Jean-Baptiste Leca

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**Office:** D851 (University Hall)

**Office Hours:** Thursday from 1:00 – 3:00 pm or by appointment

**Class Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 – 11:50 am

**Classroom:** L1060

**General content and objectives:**

What are the characteristic features of primates? What is their evolutionary history? How many living species of primates are there today? How are they classified? Where do they live? What do they eat? How do they move, communicate, socialize, and mate? How do non-human primates and humans compare in terms of brain evolution and cognitive abilities? What are the major threats they face? How and why do primatologists address all these questions?

In this introductory course, we will provide an overview of research on all the major primate taxa (i.e. prosimians, monkeys, and apes) to illustrate the great variety in the anatomy, physiology, behaviour, and ecology within the Primate Order. We will explore a number of primates' adaptations, as well as basic evolutionary concepts, current trends and theories in the field of Primatology. By focusing on primates – one of the most diverse groups of mammals – we will address the following topics: evolutionary history, taxonomic classification, diet, predation, social systems, kin selection, cooperation, reproductive strategies, cognition, communication, and conservation.

Because this course is offered by the Department of Psychology, we will put a special emphasis on how evolved cognitive/psychological processes contribute – along with biological, social and cultural processes – to shape adaptive behaviours expressed by primates, as a way to solve their daily ecological and social problems, such as monitoring food availability in space and time, extracting embedded food items, moving as a group, avoiding predators, as well as predicting and manipulating the behaviour of conspecifics.

**Required textbook:**

For each lecture, you are required to read at least one chapter of a textbook that encapsulates many fundamental aspects of primate evolution, while simultaneously engaging the reader. Because most of the lecture contents are drawn from this book, it is a strongly recommended purchase. This book is available at the campus bookstore. The full citation of the book is:

Dean Falk (2000). *Primate Diversity*. W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 0-393-97428-6

**Evaluation:** There will be three written-format in-class exams:

**Exam #1 – 30% of the final grade** (scheduled on May 27<sup>th</sup>). This test will only include the lecture materials and the textbook chapters covered during the first four sessions (May 8<sup>th</sup> - May 22<sup>nd</sup>).

**Exam #2 – 30 % of the final grade** (scheduled on June 12<sup>th</sup>). This test will only include the lecture materials and the textbook chapters covered during the next four sessions (May 29<sup>th</sup> – June 10<sup>th</sup>), as well as the videos played in class after Exam #1 on May 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Exam #3 – 40 % of the final grade** (scheduled on June 26<sup>th</sup>). This exam will be more comprehensive, in that it will include about 70% of questions related to the lecture materials and textbook chapters covered during the final three sessions (June 17<sup>th</sup> - June 24<sup>th</sup>), the videos played in class after Exam #2 on June 12<sup>th</sup>, and about 30% of questions related to the entire textbook and all lecture materials covered during the term.

Lecture materials will include: 1) lectures (based on the textbook and a series of slides that I will post on Moodle before each class), 2) videos played in class, and 3) possible in-class discussions (if/when applicable).

The format of the exams will be multiple choice, matching, and/or short answers.

**Bonus – Participation in studies in the Department of Psychology:**

After your final grade has been calculated, you can have an additional 2% (maximum) added onto your final grade if you have participated in the research studies in the Department of Psychology. This will give you an opportunity to experience how psychological research is conducted.

Directions for studies: You will receive an email with your Login name and password. It is IMPORTANT that you keep this information. You will use your user name and password [psyc2850a], once you have signed in you may change your password. Please go to <http://psychleth.sona-systems.com> and sign in.

NOTE: There will be NO transferring of credits. If you are registered in another course that offers credits (a second email will be sent to you with a different email and password). Sign up in the course that you want your credits to be assigned. Further studies and timeslots will be added, please keep checking but remember this is on a first come basis. Note that there is no guarantee that all students will be able to achieve the maximum credit. The last date to participate in studies is June 21, 2013. If you are experiencing problems, please contact Leanne at [wehlage@uleth.ca](mailto:wehlage@uleth.ca).

**Grading:** The following ranges will be employed in assigning grades in this course:

A+: 93.1 – 100	C+: 69.1 – 73.0
A: 89.1 – 93.0	C: 65.1 – 69.0
A-: 85.1 – 89.0	C-: 61.1 – 65.0
B+: 81.1 – 85.0	D+: 57.1 – 61.0
B: 77.1 – 81.0	D: 50.0 – 57.0
B-: 73.1 – 77.0	F: < 49.9

In accordance with the University of Lethbridge Calendar,

A = Excellent  
B = Good  
C = Satisfactory  
D = Poor  
F = Fail

**Lecture organization:**

*Classroom regulations:*

- (1) Please arrive to class on time. If you are late, sit at the back to minimize disruption. The instructor will be careful not to run overtime so please remain seated until the end of class.
- (2) If you are disrespectful to other members of the class, you will be asked to leave.
- (3) Please turn off your cell phones while in class (this falls under being disrespectful).
- (4) If you want to use a laptop in class please sit along the back row or at the sides of the lecture theatre to minimize distractions.
- (5) Relevant interruptions and class participation are welcomed but please raise your hand in order to ask questions or to make comments. Questions that are emailed may also be discussed in class.

*Exam regulations:*

- (1) Exams #1 and #2 will be returned to you and corrected versions of the exams will be posted on Moodle. Exam #3 will not be returned but can be reviewed during office hours or by appointment. Marks will be posted on Moodle about one week after exams are taken. If you feel that you were marked unfairly or that marks were missed on your exam, please prepare a short statement explaining the problem. The question will then be re-graded and marks adjusted (up or down as is warranted) at the instructor's discretion.
- (2) No accommodation will be made for poor performance on exams. Additional work will not be assigned for those who wish to improve their grades.
- (3) Students can write missed exams **only on two conditions:**
  - a) They must notify the instructor ([jeanbaptiste.leca@uleth.ca](mailto:jeanbaptiste.leca@uleth.ca)) **BEFORE** the exam
  - b) They must provide an appropriate documentation (i.e. a medical certificate). Non-medical reasons for missed exams (e.g. a death in the family) must also be supported with appropriate documentation.

These two conditions must be met before a make-up test can be scheduled. If not, missed exams automatically receive a score of zero.

*Academic accommodations:*

It is the students' responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodations and have not registered with the Disabilities Resource Centre, please contact them at 403-329-2766. Students who have not registered with the Disabilities Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodations. You are also required to discuss your need with your instructor no more than 14 days after the start of the course.

**Lecture schedule:**

(Note: This schedule may be subject to some changes depending how quickly material is covered)

May 8 – Overview of the course, Readings: Introduction and chapter 1 (“*The basics of primate evolution*”) with an emphasis on the evolution of primate cognition

May 13 – Readings: chapter 2 (“*Methods and theory for studying living primates*”), with an emphasis on the mechanisms of primate cognition

May 15 – Readings: chapter 3 (“*Galagos, lorises & tarsiers*”) and chapter 4 (“*Lemurs*”)

May 22 – Readings: chapter 5 (“*Monkeys of the New World: the Callitrichines*”) and chapter 6 (“*Other neotropical monkeys: Cebidae and Atelidae*”)

May 27 – **Exam #1** (duration: 90 min) followed by videos illustrating the course

May 29 – Readings: chapter 7 (“*Old World Monkeys: the leaf-eating colobines*”), chapter 8 (“*Old World cheek-pouched monkeys: the shift to terrestriality*”), and chapter 9 (“*Macaques and savanna baboons: sexual politics and human evolution*”)

June 3 – Readings: chapter 10 (“*Gibbons, the lesser apes*”), chapter 11 (“*Orangutans: the shy ape*”), and chapter 12 (“*Gorillas, the largest primates of all*”)

June 6 – Readings: chapter 13 (“*Our cousins: the chimpanzees*”)

June 10 – Readings: chapter 14 (“*The earliest hominids*”)

June 12 – **Exam #2** (duration: 90 min) followed by videos illustrating the course

June 17 – Topic #1: Evolution of the brain and cognitive abilities in primates.

Readings: Roth G, Dicke U. (2012). Evolution of the brain and intelligence in primates. *Progress in Brain Research*, 195, 413-430.

June 19 – Topic #2: Primate physical cognition: Spatio-temporal cognition and technical intelligence.

Readings: Byrne RW. (2004). The manual skills and cognition that lie behind hominid tool use. In: *The Evolution of Thought: Evolutionary Origins of Great Ape Intelligence* (Russon AE, Begun DR, eds), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 31-44.

June 24 – Topic #3: Primate social cognition: Regulation and knowledge of social relationships, theory of mind, cooperation, social learning, and culture.

Readings: Call J, Tomasello M. (2008). Does the chimpanzee have a theory of mind? 30 years later. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 12, 187-192.

June 26 – **Exam #3** (duration: 120 min)