

Primates in Perspective (Lecture course)
Psychology 3000 N (CRN 20237)
Summer 2016 (Session II/III)

Lecturer: Noëlle Gunst

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Office: B834 (University Hall)

Office Hours: Wednesday from 2:00 – 4:00 pm or by appointment

Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 – 8:50 pm

Classroom: AH116

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?

In this course, we will explore a number of primate 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, 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 behaviors 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 behavior of conspecifics.

Lecture materials:

There is no textbook for this course. The lecture materials (available on Moodle) will consist of:

- (1) A series of powerpoint slides highlighting key theoretical concepts, methodological aspects, and providing detailed examples of selected case studies;
- (2) As far as possible, I will also play short videos in class to illustrate specific points.

Evaluation: Each student will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) two exams, and (2) one oral group presentation.

(1) Exams (*format: in-class written-format exams with multiple choice, matching, and/or short answers*):

- **Exam #1 – 40% of your final grade** (scheduled on July 26th). This test will only include the lecture materials covered during the first 6 sessions (July 5th – July 21st).
- **Exam #2 – 40% of your final grade** (scheduled on August 16th). This test will only include the lecture materials covered during the last 5 sessions (July 28th – August 11th).

Lecture materials will include:

- Lectures (based on powerpoint slideshows that I will post on Moodle before each class)
- Videos played in class (also available on Moodle)
- Possible in-class discussions (if/when applicable)

(2) Oral presentation – 20% of your final grade

In this exercise, you are required to form a pair of students to prepare and give a short oral presentation about one data-based article taken from a list of suitable articles available on Moodle (with reference number for each article). I made this list to provide you with a wide array of possible implications of primatology research.

The ideal presentation will consist of a short Powerpoint slideshow summarizing the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections of the article in about 12 minutes (timing will also be part of the evaluation!). A brief (2-3 minutes) in-class discussion may follow, depending on whether the class has questions or not.

The group size is set at 2 students/group. Both group members will receive the same grade (whether you share the presentation time with your group mate, or you select one group member to present on behalf of the pair), based on the assumption that both group members participated the same way in the preparation of the presentation.

From July 6th at 2 pm, an oral presentation schedule sheet will be pinned up on my office door (B834, University Hall). Once your group is settled and you agreed on a specific paper and presentation date, please come to my office and clearly write down the names of your group members next to the article you selected in one of the options available, from July 12th to August 11th on a first come first served basis. The deadline to have all the names written down on the schedule sheet is: July 12th (Tuesday) at 6 pm. The itemized evaluation sheet for oral presentations will be available on Moodle.

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, once you have signed in you may change your password. Please go to <http://psychleth.sona-systems.com> and sign in.

There will be NO transfer of credits between courses. 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 to which you want your credits to be assigned. If you complete the same study twice, your credits in both courses will be taken away and your Sona accounts deactivated.

If you are experiencing problems, please contact Leanne Wehlage-Ellis at wehlage@uleth.ca.

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

A+: 93.1 – 100	B: 77.1 – 81.0	C-: 61.1 – 65.0
A: 89.1 – 93.0	B-: 73.1 – 77.0	D+: 57.1 – 61.0
A-: 85.1 – 89.0	C+: 69.1 – 73.0	D: 50.0 – 57.0
B+: 81.1 – 85.0	C: 65.1 – 69.0	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) 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 will be returned to you and corrected versions of the exams will be posted on Moodle. Exam #2 will not be returned but can be reviewed during office hours or by appointment. 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 (noelle.gunstleca@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 Accommodated Learning Centre, please contact them at 403-329-2766. Students who have not registered with the Accommodated Learning 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)

July 5 – Overview of the course and lecture:

- **Topic #1:** Introduction to primate diversity (Part 1)

July 7 – Lecture:

- **Topic #1:** Introduction to primate diversity (Part 2)

July 12 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #2:** The basics of primate evolution

July 14 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #3:** Theories and methods

July 19 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #4:** Primate cognition: Hypotheses for the evolution of the brain and cognitive abilities in primates
- **Topic #5:** Primate physical cognition: Spatio-temporal cognition and technical intelligence (Part 1)

July 21 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #5:** Primate physical cognition: Spatio-temporal cognition and technical intelligence (Part 2)

July 26 – Exam #1 (duration: 120 min)

July 28 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #6:** Primate social cognition: Knowledge of social relationships, theory of mind, social regulation, and prosociality (Part 1)

August 2 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #6:** Primate social cognition: Knowledge of social relationships, theory of mind, social regulation, and prosociality (Part 2)

August 4 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #7:** Primate communication

August 9 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #8:** Social learning and cultural behaviors in non-human primates

August 11 – Lecture and oral presentations:

- **Topic #9:** Primate conservation

August 16 – Exam #2 (duration: 120 min)