

Animal and Human Personalities (Lecture course) Psychology 3850 N (CRN 31800) – Fall 2014

Instructor: Jean-Baptiste Leca

E-mail: jeanbaptiste.leca@uleth.ca

Office: C880 (University Hall)

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

Class Time: Wednesdays from 6:00 – 8:50 pm

Classroom: L1060

Teaching Assistant: Scott Semenyna (scott.semenyna@uleth.ca)

General content and objectives:

This class aims to provide elements of answers to the following questions: What defines who someone really is? How do we recognize/measure personality in humans and nonhuman animals? What is the source of the controversy over animal personality, and how (at least some of) these controversial issues could be resolved? What are the genetic bases, neuroanatomical substrates, and physiological mechanisms underlying personality variation? What are the environmental correlates of personality differences? How can personality affect individual survival, reproductive success, and well-being? What are the major personality disorders? Because of the winnowing effect of natural selection, and because some personality traits have important fitness consequences, how can we explain the evolution of personality (i.e., the existence of consistent inter-individual differences in behavioural tendencies)? Who cares about personality and why?

The list of topics addressed in this course includes:

- Introduction to personality research: Definitions and implications
- Theoretical perspectives on personality: How do theorists explain personality?
- Methodological approaches: How is personality measured?
- Overview of personalities across animal taxa
- Ontogeny of personality: Heritability
- Ontogeny of personality: Parental and other environmental influences
- Mechanisms underlying personality: genetic bases, neuroendocrine bases, and other physiological mechanisms
- Fitness consequences of personality
- Evolutionary perspective on personality
- Implications of personality research for conservation biology and animal welfare

Lecture materials and required readings:

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

- (1) Series of powerpoint slides (one series per topic) highlighting key theoretical concepts, methodological aspects, and providing detailed examples of selected case studies;
- (2) Several academic journal articles (either data-based papers or review articles). In general, the readings will be more conceptual, as opposed to empirical and data-rich, in scope;
- (3) I will also play a few videos in class to illustrate specific points.

Evaluation: Each student will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) three exams, (2) one term paper assignment, and (3) one oral group presentation.

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

- **Exam #1 – 20% of your final grade** (scheduled on Oct. 1st). This test will only include the lecture materials covered during the first four sessions (Sept. 3rd – Sept. 24th).
- **Exam #2 – 20% of your final grade** (scheduled on Oct. 29th). This test will only include the lecture materials covered during the next three sessions (Oct. 8th – Oct. 22nd).
- **Exam #3 – 30% of your final grade** (scheduled on Dec. 10th). This exam will be more comprehensive, in that it will include about 70% of questions related to the lecture materials covered during the final four sessions (Nov. 5th – Nov. 26th) and about 30% of questions related to all the lecture materials covered during the term.

Lecture materials will include:

- Lectures (based on powerpoint slideshows that I will post on Moodle before each class)
- Required readings (i.e., pdf copies also posted on Moodle, please see list below)
- Videos played in class (also available on Moodle)
- Possible in-class discussions (if/when applicable)

(2) Term paper assignment – 20% of your final grade (*format: word-processed APA-style short literature review due in class on November 19th, length: 1,000-1,500 words, not including the References section*):

This assignment is a good opportunity for you to go into animal/human personality research in greater depth and to practice your writing skills.

First, you should select from the literature two data-based articles (not literature reviews) that present two complementary/different approaches to answering a particular question about personality (e.g., two papers presenting different methods to investigate parental influences on offspring personality in the same species, or two papers presenting consistent results about the relationships between personality and predation risk in two different species, or two papers presenting contrasting results on the relationships between personality and health/disease, or two papers presenting different data-based implications of personality research on conservation/welfare issues). If you have a doubt about whether the papers you selected are suitable or not, feel free to send them to Scott or me for approval or further advice.

Second, you should prepare a short (1,000-1,500 words) essay (a) providing some background information on the question being addressed, (b) explaining how these two approaches are complementary/different, and (c) suggesting future research directions to further investigate this question.

The itemized evaluation sheet for term paper assignments will be available on Moodle.

(3) Oral presentation – 10% of your final grade

In this exercise, you are required to form a small group of students to prepare and give a short oral presentation about one data-based article taken from a large 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 personality research.

The ideal presentation will consist of a short Powerpoint slideshow summarizing the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections of the article in about 10-12 minutes (timing will also be part of the evaluation!). A brief (5 minutes) in-class discussion may follow, depending on whether the class has questions or not.

The ideal group size is 4 students per group. However, I will also allow groups ranging from 3 to 5 students. All group members will receive the same grade (whether you share the presentation time among group members or you select one group member to present on behalf of the rest of the group), based on the assumption that you all participated the same way in the preparation of the presentation.

From Sept. 5th at 10 am, an oral presentation schedule sheet will be pinned up next to my office door (C880, University Hall). Once your group is settled and you agreed on a presentation date, please come to my office and clearly write down the names of your group members and the reference number of the article you selected in one of the 16 options available, from Sept. 17th to Nov. 19th on a first come first served basis. Also, please make sure that the article you selected is not already mentioned on the schedule sheet. If so, please select another one. The deadline to have all the names and reference numbers written down on the schedule sheet is: Sept. 15th (Monday) 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 [psyc3850n], 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 first served basis. Note that there is no guarantee that all students will be able to achieve the maximum credit. Studies for the Fall semester will be running from September 12 to December 4, 2014 (please mark these dates on your calendar, and try not to register within the last few days, as you may not be able to get in). 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 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. 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) **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.

Required readings:

Introduction to personality research: Definitions and implications

Gosling SD. (2001). From mice to men: What can we learn about personality from animal research? *Psychological Bulletin*, 127, 45-86.

Nettle D, Penke L. (2010). Personality: bridging the literatures from human psychology and behavioural ecology. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences*, 365, 4043-4050.

Sih A, Bell AM, Johnson JC, Ziemba RE. (2004). Behavioral syndromes: An integrative overview. *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, 79, 241-277.

Theoretical perspectives on personality: How do theorists explain personality?

Itoh K. (2002). Personality research with non-human primates: Theoretical formulation and methods. *Primates*, 43, 249-261.

Methodological approaches: How is personality measured?

Bell AM, Hankison SJ, Laskowski KL. (2009). The repeatability of behaviour: a meta-analysis. *Animal Behaviour*, 77, 771-783.

Carter AJ, Feeney WE, Marshall HH, Cowlshaw G, Heinsohn R. (2013). Animal personality: what are behavioural ecologists measuring? *Biological Reviews*, 88, 465-475.

Overview of personalities across animal taxa

Gosling SD. (2008). Personality in non-human animals. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2, 985-1001.

Jones AC, Gosling SD. (2005). Temperament and personality in dogs (*Canis familiaris*): A review and evaluation of past research. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 95, 1-53.

Ontogeny of personality

Stamps J, Groothuis TGG. (2010). The development of animal personality: relevance, concepts and perspectives. *Biological Reviews*, 85, 301-325.

Groothuis TGG, Trillmich F. (2011). Unfolding Personalities: The Importance of Studying Ontogeny. *Developmental Psychobiology*, 53, 641-655.

Mechanisms underlying personality: genetic bases, neuroendocrine bases, and other physiological mechanisms

van Oers K, de Jong G, van Noordwijk AJ, Kempenaers B, Drent PJ. (2005). Contribution of genetics to the study of animal personalities: a review of case studies. *Behaviour*, 142, 1185-1206.

Coppens CM, de Boer SF, Koolhaas JM. (2010). Coping styles and behavioural flexibility: towards underlying mechanisms. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences*, 365, 4021-4028.

Fitness consequences of personality

Dall SRX, Houston AI, McNamara JM. (2004). The behavioural ecology of personality: consistent individual differences from an adaptive perspective. *Ecology Letters*, 7, 734-739.

Smith, B. R., & Blumstein, D. T. (2008). Fitness consequences of personality: a meta-analysis. *Behavioral Ecology*, 19, 448-455.

Evolutionary perspective on personality

Wolf M, Weissing FJ. (2012). Animal personalities: consequences for ecology and evolution. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 27, 453-461.

Reale D, Dingemanse NJ, Kazem AJN, Wright J. (2010). Evolutionary and ecological approaches to the study of personality. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences*, 365, 3937-3946.

Implications of personality research for conservation biology and animal welfare

Coleman K. (2012). Individual differences in temperament and behavioral management practices for nonhuman primates. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 137, 106-113.