**PSY 622 Animal Cognition 43362**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Vonk **Office Phone:** 2318

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**Office:** PRY 211 **Office Hours:** T Th 2:00- 3:00

**Class Time:** T 5:00 - 8:20pm **Class Location:** PRY 130

**Credit Hours:** 4 credits

**Catalog Description:** Theories and research related to classic and current studies of non-human cognition. Topics include theory of mind, causal reasoning, memory, metacognition, self-recognition, tool use, planning, cooperation, and social learning. Research discussed

covers a range of species including birds, cetaceans, carnivores and primates.

**Course Description:** This course is focused on how animals acquire, modify, store, and recall information about the environment or social partners to make adaptive decisions. This topic is an inherently difficult one: to investigate the contents of the minds of animals, one must confront difficult issues in the methodology of science and the philosophy of mind. An understanding of animal cognition, although interesting in its own right, also has important applications for understanding human cognition and cognitive neuroscience, conserving endangered species, and assuring animal welfare.

By the end of this course, you will (1) be able to explain the conceptual and methodological problems associated with investigating animal (and human) cognition, (2) evaluate the evidence for a unified theory of animal cognition based on universal, general processes versus taxon-specific adaptive cognitive specializations, (3) articulate the most important questions that remain to be answered in the field of animal learning and cognition, and (4) have learned how to intellectually discuss and critique an academic and popular scientific work.

**Evaluation**:

***Class Discussion***: Twice during the semester, each student will be responsible for summarizing one of the week’s required readings in a formal presentation and leading the class discussion on those readings for half the class period (approximately 90 minutes). The class discussion and participation in the class in general will count towards **40%** of the overall grade in the course (15% for each led discussion and 10% for participation in other topics).

**As a Presenter**: Please select two key readings on your topic (other than the ones assigned by the instructor) and make them available to the class one week prior to your presentation. On the day of your presentation you should be prepared to provide a 30-45 min overview on the topic and to lead a 45 minute discussion following your overview. You may allow for discussion during the formal presentation or wait until the end, as long as you fill the 90 minutes allotted to your topic and spend about 50% of the time as lead discussant. You may use PowerPoint or engage in more informal discussion and show videos etc. The format for your lecture is up to you. You will be graded on relevancy and accuracy of information provided along with your ability to stimulate and guide discussion.

**As a Participant**: Please come to each class with prepared questions for the presenters. You are expected to have done the required readings prior to the class for which they are relevant. Please be prepared to ask questions and comment on the discussion, being sure to be respectful to those with differing opinions.

***Exams***: Students will take one cumulative short essay exam during the semester worth **20%** of their overall grade.

***Research Proposal***: Students will prepare an APA style research proposal designed to investigate an unresolved issue in one of the content areas discussed in the course. The paper will consist of no more than 20 pages and no less than 12 pages and count towards **25%** of the overall grade in the course. In addition, prior to submitting the proposal for evaluation, students will present the ideas for their proposal to the class. Presentations will count for **15%** of the final grade.

**Policies:**

***Examinations and Homework:*** Exams must be taken at the time indicated on the syllabus. Missed exams can only be made up if you provide documentation of a legitimate University-approved excuse (e.g., medical emergency) within **24 hours** of the missed exam. This also applies to homework assignments (e.g., the presentations, review paper, and reflection pieces).

***Independent Work***: I expect all of the independent work you submit for a grade to be your own work. Plagiarism of any kind, dual submissions (turning in an assignment for this course that you have already submitted for a grade in a different course), plagiarizing information from the internet, and cheating on exams will result in a failing grade for that assignment and (depending on the seriousness of the infraction) possible evaluation by the university academic misconduct committee.

***Attendance Policy:*** Because of the small size of the class and the importance of in class discussion to gain a deeper understanding of the content material, attendance is strongly encouraged in class and part of the grade depends upon classroom performance. Consequently, students are expected to come to class each day prepared to contribute to the class discussions and class work.

A collection of journal articles and book chapters will be made available to students at least a week before the topic is covered. Electronic copies will be available on Dr. Vonk’s website [jennifervonk.com](mailto:jennifervonk@.com) under the Teaching/PSY 622 tabs. Please read the assigned readings prior to the class and be prepared to discuss the readings during class.

Note: Topics and dates of readings may change.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **WEEK** | **TOPIC COVERED** | **Required Reading** |
| **Sept. 06** | Overview of animal cognition / History of the field  Class logistics | De Waal & Ferrari (2010)  Shettleworth (2009)  Wynne (2007) |
| **Sept. 13** | Categorization | Herrnstein (1990) Cognition  Smith (2014) Psych Bull & Rev  Wasserman et al. (2014) Cognition  Basile et al. (2015) Animal Cog  Martinho & Kacelnik (2016) Science  Smirnova et al. (2015) CB |
| **Sept. 20** | Time and Space  Number | Gallistel (1989)  Haun et al. (2010)  Landau & Lakusta (2009)  Beran (2008)  Dehaene & Brannon (2010) |
| **Sept. 27** | Self-recognition  Theory of mind | Chang et al. (2015) CB  Gallup et al. (1995)  Heyes (1994/1995)  Premack & Woodruff (1978)  Penn et al. (2008) Call & Tomasello (2008)  Kaminski (2008)  Krachun et al. (2009) |
| **Oct. 4** | Episodic-like Memory  Metacognition/Metamemory | Correia et al. (2008) CB  Roberts et al. (2008) Science  Suddendorf & Busby  Foote & Crystal (2007)  Call (2010)  Smith et al. plus response (2014) |
| **Oct. 11** | Guest Lecture Jerome Cohen  Memory Processes | Wright (2007)  Muthukumaran et al. (2014)  Keshen & Cohen (2016) AC  Basile & Hampton (2011) CB |
| **Oct. 18** | Causal Reasoning  Tool Use | Premack & Premack (1994)  Blaisdell et al. (2006)  Dwer et al.  Girndt et al. (2008)  Silva et al. (2005)  Emery & Clayton (2009) |
| **Oct. 25** | Social learning | Range et al. (2007)  Kaminski et al. (2011)  Huber et al. (2012)  Heyes (2011)  Horner & Whiten (2005) |
| **Nov. 1** | Co-operation  Altruism/Prosocial Behavior | Plotnik et al. (2011)  Warneken & Tomasello (2009)  Drea & Carter (2009)  Cronin (2012)  Silk & House (2011)  Silberberg (2014) |
| **Nov. 8** | Communication  Individual Recognition | Premack (2004)  Pika (2008)  Savage Rumbaugh et al. (1986, 1987)  Seidenberg & Petitto (1987)  Breed (2014)  Sheehan et al. (2014)  Fox (2008) |
| **Nov. 15** | Animal Welfare  General Intelligence | Clark (2011)  Bethell et al. (2016) Beh Sci  Mason (2010)  Brown (2014)  Benson-Amran et al. (2015) PNAS  Burkart et al. (2016) BBS |
| **Nov. 22** | EXAM |  |
| **Nov. 29** | RESEARCH PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS |  |
| **Dec. 13** | RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE |  |

Policy on Academic Misconduct

The University’s regulations that relate to academic misconduct will be fully enforced. Any

student suspected of cheating and/or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students and,

thereafter, to the Academic Conduct Committee for adjudication. Anyone found guilty of

academic misconduct in this course may receive a course grade of 0.0, in addition to any

penalty assigned by the Academic Conduct Committee. Students found guilty of academic

misconduct by the Academic Conduct Committee may face suspension or permanent

dismissal. The full policy on academic misconduct can be found in the General Information

section of the Undergraduate Catalog.

Excused Absence Policy

University excused absences applies to participation as an athlete, manager or student trainer

in NCAA intercollegiate competitions, or participation as a representative of Oakland

University at academic events and artistic performances approved by the Provost or designee.

For the OU excused absence policy, see http://wwwp.oakland.edu/provost/policies-and-

procedures/

Faculty Feedback

As a student in this class, you may receive “Faculty Feedback” in your OU e-mail if your

professor identifies areas of concern that may impede your success in the class. Faculty

Feedback typically occurs during weeks 2-5 of the Fall and Winter terms, but may also be

given later in the semester and more than once a semester. A “Faculty Feedback” e-mail will

specify the area(s) of concern and recommend action(s) you should take. Please remember to

check your OU email account regularly as that is where it will appear.

Audio Recording Policy

Students who wish to audio-record lectures may request permission to do so. These

recordings may only be used for the purpose of personal study. Students may not share these

recordings with other individuals without the consent of the professor. At the conclusion of

the semester, students may request permission to keep these recordings if needed, otherwise

it is expected that all audio-recordings will be deleted from all electronic recording and

storage devices.

Veteran Support Services

The office of Veteran Support Services (VSS) is responsible for giving support services to

more than 300 veterans, service members, and dependents of veterans. VSS is staffed with

personnel who are veterans and current or former students. Any student veteran or

dependent of a veteran requiring assistance with navigating the Veterans Administration,

understanding service-related benefits, or requires referrals to campus and community

resources should contact one of the Veterans Liaisons by visiting 116 North Foundation Hall,

or phoning 248-370- 2010. http://wwwp.oakland.edu/veterans/

Your grade for this course will be based on the following scale:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Percentage** | **OU Grade** | **Percentage** | **OU Grade** |
| 100 | 4.0 | 79 | 2.9 |
| 99 | 4.0 | 78 | 2.8 |
| 98 | 3.9 | 77 | 2.7 |
| 97 | 3.9 | 76 | 2.6 |
| 96 | 3.8 | 75 | 2.5 |
| 95 | 3.8 | 74 | 2.4 |
| 94 | 3.7 | 73 | 2.3 |
| 93 | 3.7 | 72 | 2.2 |
| 92 | 3.6 | 71 | 2.1 |
| 91 | 3.6 | 70 | 2.0 |
| 90 | 3.5 |  |  |
| 89 | 3.5 | <70 | fail |
| 88 | 3.4 |  |  |
| 87 | 3.4 |  |  |
| 86 | 3.3 |  |  |
| 85 | 3.3 |  |  |
| 84 | 3.2 |  |  |
| 83 | 3.2 |  |  |
| 82 | 3.1 |  |  |
| 81 | 3.1 |  |  |
| 80 | 3.0 |  |  |

**Note: Two or more grades below a B (e.g. 3.0) will result in dismissal from the program. The first C grade will result in probation.**